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“Liquid Writing: When Subjectivity Colours Writing”  
A revision of Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and  
his letters.

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## Index

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Theoretical Considerations .....	10
3. Analysis and Interpretation.....	25
3.1. A Past, Two Journeys and a Reflection.....	25
3.2. A Glance to the Past .....	27
3.3. His attitude towards previous Art and History .....	30
3.4. The Grand Tour .....	32
4. Final Reflections.....	53
5. References .....	57

## Introduction

Travelling has been a relevant theme –which Guillén describes as the issue that leads writers to compose for a better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon, moreover imprinting their personal and subjective attitude about life and literature on it (296-297)- in Western Literature since the beginning of Modernity, which provided ideal circumstances to its rising in Romantic times. Travelling was one of the most popular activities –and became accessible for more people as time went by– during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Thompson 15). Enlightenment brought technology and in turn, this brought economic stability and the raise of middle class, which led to the spread of activities that were previously reserved for aristocracy. Under this frame, tourism was born and through time, it was adapted according to the traveller and his ideologies, and within these, I will focus on the notion of the romantic traveller, the reactionary tourist of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It was not just that romantics travelled because they had the means to do it but because they had a reactionary ideology based on the desire to escape –or at least taking distance– from the reality that framed their lives. Modernity provided them both paradigms, on the one hand it gave them better conditions to live in, but to enjoy them it required writers to give up their bond with nature and their interiority to merge with rationalism and technological devices, therefore placing their imagination under death threat. These senses of irruption of their reality and menace against the creative gift were the main reasons that attracted romantics to the adventure quest, mainly because travelling without economic nor any other material purpose was an irrational decision in the rationalist perspective of the epoch (Thompson 3). Rationalists thought that these authors displaced from their native lands lacking any specific purposes, but they had them: they were looking for experiences to feed their souls, escaping or taking distance from their reality by nourishing and exploiting their gift of imagination, which was an essential part of their talents (Bowra 13). Hence, this journey will carry some attitudes and features such as representing a gain of material and stimuli for the creation of new poetical works. Travelling through Europe satisfied their needs for sensations that could get along with their inner feelings of discrepancy against Rationalism; seek that led them to pursue uncomfortable agendas that

demanded “risk-taking and pains” (Thompson 3); others withdrew from society through the divinization of nature along with a turning to their own subjectivity, and dedicated their journeys to the aesthetic appreciation focused on reaching a better understanding of both nature and their inner self, which was expressed into their writings. This turning to themselves and the physical displacement that the romantic travellers experienced brought an awakening of inner feelings and consciousness, a predominance of subjectivity that ruled the world of every romantic writer.

Due to this dominance, I will set my object of study on the travelling experience as originator of manifestations of subjectivity in referential and poetic works, in the context of Romanticism. However, since this phenomenon is such a broad topic to be covered in this dissertation, I will concentrate on the works by the English poet, George Gordon Byron, better known as Lord Byron. The selection of this author responds to his exceptional poetic works, erratic personality, and travelling experiences. As an anti-tourist, he was one of the writers that used the travelling experiences and inspiration to write in a divergent way compared to what was common in the epoch, the travelogues (Thompson 44-45). Lord Byron engaged in two main periods of travelling, the first when he embarked upon a pleasure trip that took two years, his Grand Tour<sup>1</sup> (1809-1811) and a second –his second and last instance of auto-exile–, in company of Percy and Mary Shelley between 1816 and 1818. However, this dissertation will comprehend the study of the first period of travels.

Lord Byron enjoyed the option of alienating himself from his country, a process which consequently prompted him towards a self-imposed exile –a decision that some writers took in order to escape from an oppressive context, and/or seeking for creative inspiration (Sánchez 3)–, by travelling to other lands, experiencing different cultures and enriching his subjectivity. Having in mind that he was travelling, it seems peculiar that he did not keep a diary, memorials nor similar texts in order to register them. He took a divergent alternative. Lord Byron transformed his gaining of experiences into a great

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<sup>1</sup> “El Grand Tour fue un itinerario de viaje por Europa que tuvo su auge a mediados del S. XVII y que puede considerarse como antecesor del turismo moderno. Este tipo de viaje es conocido sobre todo a través de la literatura inglesa. Fue especialmente popular entre los jóvenes británicos de clase media-alta, considerándose que servía como una etapa educativa y de esparcimiento, previa a la edad adulta y al matrimonio”. (“El Grand Tour, antecesor del turismo moderno”)

amount of letters. From these years, many authors collected and compiled his correspondence –including part of the letters addressed to him–. whose content was devoted to the narration of his adventures. It seems curious to notice –due to his nature, and the size of the compilation– that he almost never turned into himself allowing introspection in any sense, an unusual way of acting for a writer who was considered as narcissistic ("The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters And Journals, Vol. 1"; Villablanca 30). This aspect led this dissertation into examining his evolution, both as a author and writer. Having in mind Lord Byron's wide personality, it seems unlikely the fact that a turn to himself had no place in this author's writing. By this reasons, it was decided to analyse both types of his writing: referential –letter writing– and lyrical –or poetical– enunciation. This decision allowed to narrow down the corpus of this study, deriving into the examination of both type of Byron's writing during the years in which he travelled around Europe in his Grand Tour. These texts correspond to a narrative poem; and his letters –a selection of them–.

Byron, as many other writers, considered his romantic imagination as his talent, and being this such an important feature of himself, besides his narcissistic nature, he wanted to enrich his writing by including some aspects of his life into it. Inspired by the adventures that the trip brought him, he composed one of his most extensive works, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* –a poem considered as one of the most important exemplars of Romanticism, after Milton's *Paradise Lost* (Academy of Americans Poets)–, which gave rise to a new type of lyrical hero, his '*Byronic Hero*', in which the heroic character is built upon different and contradictory features, carrying the conflictive spirit of Romanticism. Because of the previous reasons, this poetic work will constitute the first part of the corpus under examination.

On the other hand, the selection of letters –which were taken between the years of travelling, constraining the amount of letters to just the ones in which he communicates to his mother and best friends– allows to appreciate the essence of Lord Byron in splendour, his personal style, and the way in which he used to express himself.

While reading both types of writing, an issue becomes notable. As previously mentioned, the lack of an explicit process of introspection but the existence of hints of his inner self imprinted within his letter writing, seemed peculiar and incongruous. On the other side, his lyrical work shows transference of subjective impressions –which are very

similar to the ones recorded in his letters— into his verses. When combining the previous mentioned situations, it could be noticed that Lord Byron’s writing presented a particularity: his writing was hybrid. It is in this sense that what began as inspiration –his experiences gained while travelling that were moulded and written in his referential texts, the letters- ended colouring his poetic works with impressions, memories, attitudes and even complete landscapes as backgrounds for the adventures of his Byronic hero, character that corresponds to the poeticization of his own subjectivity, but this effect creates another; as travelling experiences are translated through romantic imagination, his referential writing becomes more conscious –in terms of the accuracy in the lexical choices and ordered construction– and imagistic –since it presents imagery to communicate his experiences–, acquiring distinctive features of the lyrical composition. Thus, Byron presented an oxymoronic writing, in which the genres blend and produce a narrative referential poem, and poeticized letters.

While examining this results, the fundamental key element that provokes the merging writing will be the subjective impressions that the travelling experiences produced in Byron. These impressions of subjectivity will be his personal seal and distinctive feature of his writing, since they present a strong and volatile character –authentic aspects from Byron’s personality–, impeding the separation between Byron the artist and his private world. It is this impossibility of detachment what caused him to experiment immersion into the perception of his experiences and his feelings, therefore inking his writing with the flood of his creative energy, which derives into poeticize his words, and provide his poems with the spirit of his experiences, and his letters with the methodical and rigorous lofty tone of the lyrical art. The word ‘flood’<sup>2</sup> is used here as a key, because it implies spreading without boundaries, which is accurate for the situation that the writing of Byron experimented by being influenced by his subjectivity stream, which caused him to imprint his life experiences within both referential reflections of his life –letters–, along with the creative dimension of his talent and imagination –his poems–, therefore generating a new type of poetical writing which is coloured by a referential character, and referential letters enunciated in a poetical form. This new type of enunciation will be named from now on as *liquid writing*, a term of my own coinage.

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<sup>2</sup> Flood: An overflow of a large amount of water beyond its normal limits, especially over what is normally dry land (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

It is precisely this writing which will be the triumphant over the circumstances that the epoch imposed. Liquid writing, Lord Byron's writing, will be identified as an hybrid type of enunciation that emerges gradually from the process of combining his referential experiences and poetical talent into a subjective stream of creativity that is manifested within his writing of letters and poems. It seems to me, that his writing could overcome the segmentation between genres, since his style merges both of them under his subjectivity, unconsciously confronting both paradigms imposed during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Firstly Rationalism, by merging real experiences with poetic imagination, and secondly betraying the Romantic spirit –creating a poetical world that surpasses the limits of reality– because it merges real experience with the poetical dimension, therefore denying the separation of genres that the author tried to pursue when writing them.

The existence of this liquid writing denotes two contradictions to the conception that Lord Byron had upon his own writing. Although Lord Byron rejected the idea of writing any type of material which resembled an auto-referential writing –since he hated diaries and journals ("The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters And Journals, Vol. 1")–, he ended up building letters, in which he referred to his interiority, aesthetically. This is the point in which a first contradiction could be observed, because in order to write about his adventures, he needed to recall them by experimenting processes of both introspection and retrospection –constitutive processes of an emotional journey–, even when he tried to use letters just as means of communication. This contradiction illustrates well his egocentric needs. Then, subjectivity will be manifested and reflected into the narration of his experiences within his letters, which will work as a first moulding or preamble of the subjective transference to the poetical dimension that will be reflected in his –later– liquid writing of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*; but at the same time, the composition of the poem– conscious and aesthetically rigorous– will produce a response effect in the contrary direction, colouring the letters and transforming them into aesthetic compositions.

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is considered by many authors, both from the period and more current, as an autobiographical poem, a statement that was flatly rejected by Byron himself, who even wrote a preface to the poem in order to avoid this interpretation. This is the point of the second contradiction. When composing this narrative poem, he transferred his experiences gained while travelling to his literary writing. The contradiction



then corresponds to the unawareness of Byron while creating a poetical world, drawn and enunciated by the subjective ink that concretized his writing. The liquid writing spread out, humidifying his poetry with a referential character, which could be perceived as an impression of his boundless subjectivity. Besides, this hybrid writing will build the main character as a poeticized version of himself that uses his words, has his attitudes, his impressions, and even follows the same path through Europe that Byron did in his time. Then, Childe Harold would correspond to a poetic representation of the author.

This ironic construction of the poem shows that even when trying to avoid referential writing, Lord Byron merged his referential experiences with his poetical work. Thus, an emotional journey has to be carried out, which will lead to consider *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as the poetical reflection and outcome of a neglected emotional journey. This because it implies a hidden process of both introspection and retrospection that the poet did unaware of it, an unconscious journey –since he had no intention to experience it– while writing his letters, and later transferred it to this poetical enunciation, – which also producing the reactionary aesthetical effect upon his letters–. Then, this dissertation will explain the process that led the poet to create this narrative poem unaware of its autobiographical condition, which made him to reject and neglect that interpretation about it. The writing of this poem will then configure a self-discovering journey –composed by the processes of both introspection and retrospection, in an emotional frame– he did first while writing the letters which carried the experiences of his displacement around Europe and secondly when transferring those impressions to the lyrical dimension. On the other side, it will be seen how the attributes of his lyrical composition –lexical choice, and imagery, and inherent talent– influenced the way in which he wrote his letters, therefore transforming them into another expression of liquid writing.

Then, the objectives of this dissertation will be in first place, to demonstrate the existence of the hybrid type of writing in Byron's works, the liquid writing, which transfers subjectivity to referential letter writing and to poetic composition, merging the genres. In second place the objective will be to identify the features of this liquid writing and its rhetorical expression. Finally, the analysis will illustrate its manifestations in both type of writing, therefore showing how this subjective writing does not respect boundaries and transcends both types of enunciation.

## Theoretical Considerations

In order to properly analyse the manifestations of subjectivity in both types of writing –found in his poems and letters– and its product, the generation of a liquid writing – an hybrid type of enunciation–, it is important to come up with definition of all the elements implied. Then, this section will comprehend a bibliographical discussion of the relevant concepts that will be leading the analysis. In first place, the notion of travelling, – which will be addressed into two perspectives: physical journey; introspection and retrospection–, as the main element which unleashes the transfer of subjectivity into writing. In second place, the chronological and ideological period between the second half of eighteenth century and the first half of nineteenth century, period of Rationalism and its response, Romanticism will be described for a better understanding of the conditions that allowed the emergence and prominence of the individual. Individualism will lead us to the manifestation of the interiority of the writer, which takes us to the third notion of subjectivity, and finally the type of text in which it could be reflected on, referential discourse and poetic or lyrical enunciation.

The rise of Modernity originated “profound ideological and aesthetic changes that gave rise to a new interpretation of the arts” (Veloso 1), which gained force through time and derived into the origin of movements and tendencies in every field of art. It was in the second half of eighteenth century, an epoch that lived under the imposition of the illuminist Critical Reason, when Romantics awoke. As Octavio Paz states, romantic poetry is part of modern poetry, a reactionary art against Modernity, Enlightenment, Critical Reason Liberalism, Positivism and Marxism (10). Their reaction celebrated individualism, as a way to escape the rigidity of classical times via originality, and therefore, this awakening brought the emergence of new themes in literature. Within these themes, travelling was a remarkable one, especially under the frame of the burgeoning Romanticism.

Travelling has been a traditional theme in Western literature since the beginning of Modernity, period in which the change of ideologies intensified the need for individualism, and the development of a collective sense of disenchantment which derived into deliberated ostracism (Veloso 10). Romantics sheltered their passion into nature, or to their own interiority by means of travelling, turning their backs from reality (Veloso 10). Having in

mind those desires and the economic prosperity of the Eighteenth century, this epoch constituted the perfect scenario for the rise of Tourism (Thompson 56). It is because of this that Romantic writers inherit and participate in the tourist boom (Thompson 56), –which explains the abundance of travelogues from this century–. However, they created their own notion of it, a sort of anti-tourism (Thompson 46), because their motivations for travelling were dissimilar from the ones that tourists had. Byron was one of them; he was able to create his own style, imposing a type of writing that merged his travelling experiences and impressions into poetical language. He agreed with the notion that romantic travellers were interested in aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, assuring that their interaction and understanding of nature was superior, contrasting with the common people's, and led by the sense of superiority they sought for adventures that were dangerous and uncomfortable, voyages that the common people would avoid. (Thompson 142). As Byron, writers agreed on using the poetic language as their source of expression, degrading prose to the amateur writers (Thompson 44). However, it could be seen that poets used prose, but in different contexts and with other purposes, such as writing essays and letters.

It is understandable that writers that felt superior wanted to give a different connotation to activities that seemed rather common in the epoch, and developed personal styles, giving priority to the lyrical composition. It is because of this that this dissertation will comprehend travelling as a main resource to gain experiences that nourished and gave them material, inspiring their creative gift in a two-dimension journey. The first of them corresponding to the physical displacement that granted them experiences that inspire them to create poetry, and secondly, an inner trip to their own sensitivity, allowing them to connect with their feelings and being capable of imprinting them into writing, both at the same time of experiencing –introspection–, and recalling –retrospection–.

Travelling implies a sense of movement and displacement, and many writers of the period, started to experiment, as Juan Villegas states in *La Estructura Mítica Del Héroe En La Novela Del Siglo XX*, strong feelings of being different from society, therefore growing a desire for searching the meaning of existence and their place in the world. Although Villegas addresses the narratives genres in the context of the twentieth century, his notions could be applied to romantic writers since both romantics and modernists present common features, such as sharing the condition of modern innovators in themes and form; and as

travelling within Modernity conforms a process of interiorization (Villegas 79). Those feelings of incongruence with the epoch motivated them to shun their places of origin and society of the eighteenth century, and these personal decisions manifested into their literature. It was common for characters, as it was for writers, to leave their homes to start the mentioned quest, as Villegas stated, sometimes to return with a new knowledge to live life with a bigger meaning (39-40), sometimes to accept a different vision of it and never come back (15). But this was not the only purpose of poets. They felt the need of imposing their own personal seal, and show the way they perceived the world, manifesting a deeper knowledge and appreciation of it by feeling free to feel, in their own sense of reality. It was because of it that some writers –as it was the option of Lord Byron which will be addressed further– did not even considered the option of returning to their origins. They felt that the reality they had left behind was not worthy to be referred in their writings, nor felt by them anymore. Thus, some writers opted for a self-imposed exile.

Returning to the second type of travelling –the deeper emotional dimension–, it is impossible not to develop ideologies and feelings based on the experiences of the traveller, and Romanticism took care of exalting them. The romantic subject started experimenting the effects of modernity; it was common to feel the world as profane, and inconformity against the scientific justification behind every phenomena (Villegas, *La Estructura Mítica Del Héroe En La Novela Del Siglo XX* 16). However, although respectful of the classical artworks, opposed their ideologies because they felt that such paradigm did not explain their reality; they wanted to experience, to feel, to react, to live. Some writers tried to imitate them in terms of form and content, longing for the past –as it could be appreciated in poems such as Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn*–, other tried to innovate, and the particular and radical case of Lord Byron, rejected them in the majority of their aspects, valuing them just as quality standards in order to guide the development of his own writing.

Despite this, this does not mean that they did not value artworks from Antiquity. On the contrary, it is not rare to find allusions to classical art in Romantic poetry, but giving them another sense from the original that they had when created in the classical period. They appreciated them as great manifestations of art that seemed lost for them currently, since they felt out of place when following classical canons; for them art has to be passionate, and passion did not follow classical structures. They preferred rupturist means.

However, it could not be said that their art was whimsical or less rigorous than classical academic art was in its period of time. Romantics had a visceral, spontaneous and vivid way to perceive experiences, and presented a strong mindful activity when it came to the translation of their vision of reality, in which the elements that permeated in their subjectivity were transformed through well structured poetry, by the careful choice of enunciation and selection of words. It is because of this process of poetical translation that the literary romantic subject experimented an exploration within himself, a sort of internal travelling, a displacement within his thoughts and subjectivity, which ends up generating awareness of his mental state (Byrne 80). When gaining self-knowledge, the subject experiments a process of self-constitution (Moran qtd. in Byrne 83), in which the way to get the knowledge is through questions, theoretical or deliberative. The first means that a discovery is taking place, the admittance of a gap in the knowledge about one-self, so we find the subject trying to discover if he has a certain belief or opinion about something; the second, means questioning the state of mind, and implies “making up one’s mind”(Moran qtd. in Byrne 83) to come up with a resolution in order to answer the question; sometimes, it implies making a decision too.

On the other side, Retrospection, as its etymology indicates<sup>3</sup> means to look back, and make an inspection of the images that memory projects in our conscience. Whenever recalling is used to rethink and observe our perceptions of experiences, the perception is influenced under the light of the previous and current subjectivity, thus it corresponds to a process of introspection oriented to the past (Danziger 247). The evocation of memories, indubitably leads to a subjective process because it is triggered by similar experiences or emotions that bring the remembrance under the light of thought once again. Sometimes, this process is not directly motivated by the same feeling that was already experienced during the event, but the one that remained after the experience. This occurs because the subject confronts an unreliable frame, in which every memory will be influenced and coloured by his own essence, his subjectivity.

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<sup>3</sup> c. 1600, "a regard or reference" (to something), From Latin retrospectum, past participle of retrospectere "look back," from retro- "back" (see retro-) + specere "look at" (see scope (n.1)). Meaning "survey of past events" is from 1660s. ("Online Etymology Dictionary").

Hence, this dissertation will consider introspection and retrospection as complementary processes that help the subject –which in this case will allude to both writer and characters inside his literary works– to achieve personal growth and development of certain states as awareness of his situation, and how he feels about it, mental states and decisions such as how to react or the conceptions he has about his own subjectivity and reality. Therefore, both processes build an emotional path, since the subject seems to be walking within his memories, thoughts and sensations, developing and analysing feelings and conceptions he had not been able to figure out previously. It is because of this that this track is only reachable by looking to the past and current subjectivity as a mutable entity of one's own; and due to its similarity to the physical displacement that travelling implies, this path will be named under the terms 'emotional journey'. This is one of the reasons that seem to attribute the character of developer of subjectivity to the act of travelling, a subjectivity that could be observed in manifestations later imprinted in the writing of Lord Byron. The emotional journey then will be classified by its nature –introspective, retrospective or the mixture–according to the situations in the texts that will be being analysed further in this study.

As previously said, the travelling experiences encouraged the development of subjectivity, but it was not just that individual decisions set up the environment for its growing; ideologies and cultural paradigms had an enormous influence on it. It is vital for this dissertation to understand the ideological frame that functioned as the context of production of writers, and in this case, the particular circumstances of the epoch which inspired Lord Byron's lyrical compositions. It is key to remember that Lord Byron's works were settled during great events, such as Napoleonic wars and the Industrial Revolution, therefore they became influenced the way in which the world was perceived by him (Villablanca 1). In those Modern times, many revolutions took place, and one of these was the one that romantics made with their reactionary movement against Rationalism. Romanticism was a movement initiated by the French Jean Jacques Rousseau during XVIII century –then spread to England and all the surrounding nations–, first in the field of music, in which creativity was defended from rationalist thoughts, and opposed fervently to the classical structures; and then spread to others fields of art, such as literature (Cranston 23).

In the field of literature, many changes began to appear, such as the belief defended by the English philosopher Edmund Burke, who argued that poetry was superior than other fields of art, because it was a better representation of human obscurity and ambiguity (Cranston 59), which is supported by Octavio Paz's vision, who stated that by essence, the human is built upon contradictions and ironies (9, 50). It is in this epoch that poets felt the need of recovering the human essence –which they felt snatched by the critical reason of the Enlightenment–, and not only in poetics, but also in the human essence (Paz 9). Rationalism destroyed Religion, but spirits had come back into nature and human forms, into passion and sensibility, which represented the natural against the artificial, the real originality before the false novelty (Paz 60).

The loss of religion permitted individualism, which provided romantics a quiet space to think and feel. Dissatisfied after contemplating the world they were living in, Romantics abandoned themselves to imagination, a creative dimension that allowed them to live in irony (Paz 9; Cranston 63)–. Writers made nature their theme par excellence in two dimensions: the divine component of nature itself, and the conflictive and contradictory human nature (Cranston 65), since they felt repressed under the outrageous rational paradigm. Rationalism did not value imagination, which for romantic poets was inconceivable since they considered it as the language of nature, the only means to translate –through their talented vision (Paz 70) – the essence of humanity, and the world of eternity (Cranston 63). Therefore, this conflict unleashed the disruptive character of Romanticism, challenging the classical and canonical structures –such as the beauty conception– because they were conceptions based upon reason, and they wanted art to manifest emotions and their interiority in every field (Burke qtd. in Cranston 60).

Due to the previous arguments, Romanticism affected politics, art and morals (Paz 91), and artists took in their hands the mission of reconfiguring the epoch with the objective of recovering the essence of man by returning to the ancient roots, fusing life and art, life and poetry (Paz 91). Poetry acquired a vital character, because it represented the access to interiority (Paz 94; Villegas 79) , to passion, sensibility, inspiration, beliefs and obsessions, which fused constituted the art of living –notion that the same William Blake defended–, therefore making art to express the inexpressible (Cranston 63). Hence, feelings, and the awareness were the main motives of the time.

Poets then, were seen as visionary prophets since they had the power to meet the world and the truth, translating the romantic imagination to lyrical expressions (Blake qtd. in Cranston 64). In the possession of this gift, it does not seem rare that poets embraced the opportunity and founded a means to express their subjectivity, imprinting their own perception of themselves, feelings and imagination.

Having this in mind, it is vital for this dissertation to highlight the relevance of this epoch as the context of production, because the existence of logical and emotional restricting paradigms motivated poets to grow importance and confidence in their writing. Lyrical composition gained the same importance of living, because it was seen as the breakthrough strategy and means to portray his change of paradigm, their different vision of reality. Romantics were modern subjects against reality, and through poetry they were able to question and evidence the ideological tension of the epoch. Since they were able to see the incongruous nature of the encounter between modernity and their romantic vision, poets felt responsible of translating what nature and their spirits wanted to express by merging their experiences, feelings and visionary eyes in the creation of a reality that went beyond the common understanding, they were able to put into words conflicts that were happening in their surroundings. Therefore, originality was crucial since it represented personal and collective concerns about the epoch, transforming them in themes of their works, and as it was stated before, also central in their lives. Is this exaltation of the individual which will incentivise writers –such as Lord Byron– to express their vision through lyrical composition, being free to show –a rather contradictory– nature.

To see how subjectivity permeates the writing of the romantic poet Lord Byron, it is important to understand in first place, how the subject is configured and then, how his essence transfers from his mind to his writing. Under this frame, a subject will be an entity that acquires meaning in his own terms, an entity that is subordinated under his own perception of himself (Nancy 13-15). On the other side, Emmanuel Levinas proposes that the subject exists in the world only when encountered to another person (Levinas qtd. in Morgan 121), but being first faced to world itself, by his own. This means that the subject needs to connect with himself and confront the world in solitude, as Levinas says in *De*



*Otro Modo Que Ser O Más Allá De La Esencia*. “to coincide with himself”<sup>4</sup>(52). In this way, both coincide in the terms that the subject has to face the world and built relations with it, which derives into the development of an inner character that creates his desires and representations. Desires and sense of appropriation are the elements through which the subject constructs the meaning of his existence (Nancy 21). Nevertheless, this realization does not occur in a material sense, but rather in both intellectual and emotional, and even in a spiritual sense, because as Jean-Luc Nancy describes, the subject is built upon his soul, and the soul is what makes him have a presence and a dimension of intimacy (33). Subjects are in a constant process of self-constitution that never reaches a final state, because a subject is not more than an eternal identity, that is indefinitely replaced by another that fuses with the previous and creates a new one (Nancy 52).

As previously mentioned in terms of introspection, self-knowledge corresponds to the most essential part of subjectivity, because this knowledge configures the subject ethically, politically and religiously, building the meaning of his existence (Levinas qtd. in Morgan 116-122). Interaction with “*lo otro que ser*”(Levinas 51-52), and bonding constitute the construction of the fading identity that will be moulded constantly during life. Subjectivity is described as fading because it will never reach a final state.

Hence, for this dissertation, the subject will be understood as one that configures his subjectivity while interacting with the world and others, finding his place within them and developing bonds. A subject will be then the recipient of a soul –understood as the essence of an entity– that manifests himself in the context of the world, someone who is able to make his own decisions, and it is influenced under the light of his own experiences, besides the context in which is inserted; and subjectivity, will be defined in this study as the abilities of the subject to build his ways of acting and being, features that compose the soul that is enclosed within the subject. Therefore, what could be observed as an individual will correspond to the subject; and subjectivity, could be perceived only when reaching manifestations –as the subject interacts with his environment–because it is an inner state of transitory identity, that evolves whenever a condition is modified by external factors –as the

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<sup>4</sup> Translation from “coincide consigo mismo”, from the Spanish version of *De Otro Modo Que Ser O Más Allá De La Esencia*. 4th ed. Salamanca: Sígueme, 1987. Print.

context or people by whom the subject is surrounded– or internal factors –as an introspective or retrospective change–. Besides, subjectivity cannot disappear unless the subject dies (Zahavi 34).

Considering the object of study of the present dissertation, I will not refer to subjectivity itself, but to manifestations of it in the analysis –the ways in which they are imprinted and their effects upon writing– due to its nature. Subjectivity cannot be found in natural state (Zahavi 146) because it is constituted by the thoughts, actions, bonds, experiences and feelings that a person could have and every one of them is influenced by the others. Since this dimension cannot be separated from the subject, Zahavi explains:

“It is impossible to grasp this unique form of immediate and non-ekstatic manifestation through any categories [...] Since absolute subjectivity cannot appear in the visibility of worldly exteriority, since it evades every gaze, it is called obscure and invisible [...] the unique manifestation of absolute subjectivity must be characterized as an *invisible revelation*”(146).

Interaction implies “confrontation with radical otherness” (Zahavi 133), and reactions could be in favour or against thoughts, situations, or any other matter. In this sense, it could be said that we react with subjective impressions to experiences (Zahavi 143), and we know that these are subjective processes; as we form opinions, think, remember, tell and modify our acting upon them. We become conscious of them. Then, expressing anything about experiences will correspond to an expression of subjectivity.

As subjectivity is the essence of any subject, it is clear that in the frame of Romanticism, this dimension acquired a very high prominence, especially in literature. Writers found different ways to express their subjectivity. Some followed the old classical structures and tried to put their essence on it, others tried to make complete innovations. Some of them were rejected, others were tolerated. Themes changed; and subjectivity deserved a place among the popular themes. It is because of the need of expression, that referential discourse left its outcast condition and was brought to life again, carrying a subjective character.

Although Referential Discourse was considered rejected by many writers –including Byron–, because of its reference to the real world and apparent lack of talent from the writers when using it (Arfuch 12; Morales 11), in Romantic times the situation for the genre was different. Being referential discourse the type of writing in which the author and narrator of the text coincide being the same voice (Morales 11) –and therefore the translation of extra-textual situations and facts from the real world–, it was adequate to use it as means of communication and expression. Writers wrote using this type of discourse in intending to preserve the essence of life. This genre allowed then to represent their impressions in a faithful and loyal way, besides impeding the oblivion of experiences, which was vital for romantics, –to whom essence and moments were their reason to write–. Moreover, this genre was useful to retain their vision of society, and their own place within it, giving rise to “*self-recognition*”(Arfuch 66).

Being subjects of their own subjective judgment (Nancy 13-15; Morgan 52), writers converted the text into their own representation of the brightness of life, –showing reality under their own seal through writing– thus deriving into a continuous “*search of transcendence*” (Arfuch 17), they felt the need –as Morgan stated based on Levinas statements (Morgan 123)– to be remembered by being who they were, and writing was one of the most exactly imprint of their essence. The Romantic turn to individuality changed society, and writing themes changed. They wanted to show their own understanding of reality, to show the contradiction of the self, the love for the unknown and grotesque (Paz 9), their imagination, nostalgia and awe when facing nature, therefore morality and theology were forgotten themes, changing the perception that people had about their relationships, and consequently, the way in which they interacted.

Thus, a new means of communication was needed, and the old letter –considered just for economic matters (Morales 39)– was brought back from the past and transformed into a new one. People felt a need to write, and letters responded to it, as they worked as a “communicative device used between a sender (I) and a receiver (you), characterized by its intimate nature” (Morales 40), in which the writer could reflect his life experiences by narrating them to a known reader. Thus, the letter became popular by its intimate nature, and since then, it was the most common referential text of Romanticism (Morales 40).

The existence of this genre in the form of letters builds an important part of this dissertation, since it represents the first moulding of the experiences that Lord Byron lived while travelling. In them, Byron imprinted his subjectivity while experimenting introspection and retrospection when telling his adventures –thus gaining self-knowledge although he did not notice it– and making a sort of rehearsal of the final poetical result, his poetical work of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Moreover, this means has a vital importance since it permitted the author to express his subjectivity freely, without caring about the poetic measure or lyrical resources. By these reasons, the letter constituted the perfect portrait of the subjectivity of the author under the light of his own vision.

Lord Byron wrote about nature and freedom –influenced by his own spirit and French revolution's ideals–, but mostly dedicated his life to write about his own experiences, confined into his own vision and personal interests, which gave to his writing a romantic character. However, his works were considered peculiar for the period and the movement (Cranston 83), even when he could never dissociate himself from his –romantic– environment (Villablanca 1).

Lord Byron's turn to himself was his way to satisfy his narcissistic needs, and with the aim of becoming an outstanding poet, his works followed many canonical structures from the neoclassical period, but modified under his personal style and with a divergent purpose. Byron's vision of the English society was loaded by unconformity, and he wanted to express that perception, reason that led him to write in his particular style. Lord Byron “attacked the hypocrisy that lie[d] behind convention and the English attitude to manners and morals” (Villablanca 2), which caused his writing to be very critical. He was an avid reader that liked to contrast the enlighten knowledge from earlier periods with his own personal experiences, to show that the vision of the world given by the previous writers was dissimilar to the situations he explored empirically (Cranston 84).

Although Byron abandoned himself to imagination as many others did, he explored it divergently from the prototypical romantics, such as William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whom he considered delicate, childish and soft (Cranston 87), perceptions that I share as researcher, by having explored many of his compositions. However, I disagree with the notion of childish, as I considered Wordsworth and Coleridge's styles as more bumptious and less confrontational than Byron's, their words

were chosen to mitigate the impact of their words; and on the other side, Byron used to exploit his transgressive potential, in a type of writing that enjoyed shocking the reader.

This critical attitude, the firm belief that he was “above the general run of mankind” (Villablanca 30), and his scandalous lifestyle led him into his isolation from society – imposed by society at first and finally by his own–, generating in him a response attitude of pride and disdain. This accumulation of feelings exploded when he took the decision of a self-imposed exile to Europe. This journey led him to start a life of pleasantries, love and adventures that offered him a wealth of poetic material, as María Cristina Villablanca states, “during this period, the poet in his rapture was floating between fantasy and reality” (33). This was because he experimented, as many other romantics, “a strong social censure which his sensitive nature could not possibly have ignored; yet his soul felt free and exulted in the outlook before him” (Villablanca 33). But this was not the only reason which marked him as an odd poet. Due to his mental instability, aspects that Villablanca describes as “his fits of temper, the crazy search for sensual expansion, and his eternal quest for new experiences” (34), his poetical enunciation was loaded with his “lack of normalcy”, a notion that could be explained by his permanent feeling of not belonging to anywhere (Villablanca 34).

As said previously, and having in mind the notions that Maurice Bowra gives, imagination was a fundamental notion in Romanticism because it was the element that made poetical creation possible (Bowra 13). The belief in romantic imagination was a distinctive feature in every romantic writer, since they thought that without it every literary creation was impossible or sterile (14). With the pass of time, respecting common sense and acting in a careful way –the regime of control imposed during Enlightenment–, became meaningless, since they were capable of creating by cultivating their imagination, by making floating images and being capable of accessing to different worlds, made of thoughts (14). Imagination then, meant for writers a dimension that makes them conscious of the power of the mind, however, it could absorb the writer until the point of making him incapable of communicating his reality to others (16). It was because of this, that every romantic poet thought that his works had a relation with reality, and that encouraged them to keep on writing, since in their minds, they were illustrating another version of reality that was truthful, and they felt offended by those who called their poetry a mere hobby (18-19).

Complementing this notion imagination, based on Kant's understanding and explained by Dean Elguin, implies "going beyond reproduction to present to the mind what has not been and cannot be known" (8) , which creates another nature than the actual, in an intend of going beyond the limits of experience. Later he describes that imagination "brings the faculty of intellectual ideas into movement; a movement occasioned by a representation towards more thought than can be grasped in the representation or made clear [...] It is reproductive, productive, and aesthetic". Taking into account this notion, it is important to add that Lord Byron conceived his imagination as his great gift that he cultivated by observing others and translating reality. Byron considered himself to have a privileged mind capable to make this process, reason why he was always trying to exploit it. He considered that others could never see life as he did, and since he was extremely rebellious, and abnormally sensitive, he portrayed his vision in a passionate way, dedicating many hours to the refinement of his techniques, as could be seen in extended period of time he took to compose his works *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, six and five years respectively, the last one unfinished. Although very academic, Lord Byron was very proud, reason why he defended his writing from the critics in a very obstinate way, which caused him to be always struggling with the literary circle of both writers and critics of the epoch. This culminated with him adopting a rebellious writing that defied the critic in every publication he achieved.

Hence, considering the previous discussion and the aims of this dissertation, I will consider imagination as the visionary gift of writers to transform and translate experiences, feelings, perceptions and thoughts they had about the world to create a beyond reality in the context of Romanticism. This gift will grasp then the lyrical composition, loquacity and capacity of integrating the poet's vision on his works.

Byron's poetical enunciation offered literary imaginings which convey knowledge and a curious glamour (Thompson 14), in his particular vision of the world. He imprinted his vision of the world in a lofty language, the finest satires and had a great facility to change the tone in his poetry, which could be explained by his disruptive nature –similar to a paranoid state– (Villablanca 34-35). His objective was to confront and shock society by the rejection they imposed to him.

Considering all the elements described previously, the following section will comprehend an analysis of the First and Second Cantos one of the most famous lyrical works of Lord Byron, the narrative poem of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and a collection of his correspondence between the years in which his most remarkable journey took place, in order to appreciate how the subjectivity of the writer manifests in both types of his writing, and the subsequent hybrid writing that he developed, liquid writing. To pursue this objective, I will be using both New-Historicist and New-critic approaches in a complementary way. The first, to illustrate how the context and ideological tensions influence the compositions of Byron, and the second to see the effect that subjectivity had in his rhetoric.

Stephen Greenblatt's New historicism corresponds to "an extraordinary assortment of critical practices" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2), and it is supported by many other disciplines, always by trying to vinctuate the context of production, culture, history and literature (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2-3). New historicism sustains that "culture as text has a further major attraction: it expands the range of objects available to be read and interpreted". Ryan describes this as the compulsion of new-historicists, the need to relate literature to history, and treat texts as indivisible from their contexts (11), since this division of text from its culture seem to be "absurdly reductive and misguided" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 5), because "writers do not spring up from nowhere" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 14). Writers came from "a whole life-world" that counts with social forces that interact with each others, producing ideological tension –morals, causal relations, and even aesthetic judgements–. However the approach does not consider literature as the reflection of the epoch or as a means to impose paradigm, but as a snap-shot of cultural tensions. Then, this approach seeks to delve "into the creative matrices of historical cultures [...] and understand how certain products of them [...] present a certain independence (Gallagher and Greenblatt 17). It is because of this that this perspective defends that history "is always 'narrated'" (Selden 95), as Gallagher and Greenblatt postulate, it is "a history of possibilities: while deeply interested in the collective, it remains committed to the value of the single voice, the isolated scandal, the idiosyncratic vision, the transient sketch" (16), therefore, history will always corresponds to a text that is subjectively intervened, which derives into multiple –and even contradictory– visions about the same event, and all of

them valid under their own ideology. Ryan defines the aim of this approach as destroying the text's "immunity to infection by circumstance and other kinds of text, and to rob it of political innocence by exposing its discreet commitments, its subtle collusions in the cultural struggle for power" (Ryan 13). Thus, this perspective will provide me a wider vision to analyse both types of writing through a dialectic orientation, and see how subjectivity permeates into them, deriving into a hybrid liquid writing. I will be using the practice of thick description<sup>5</sup>, as to depict which social forces are confronting in the frame of Lord Byron contexts and how they influenced himself and his writing. Besides, as to contemplate the rhetorical devices present in Lord Byron's compositions, I will use the neo-critic technique of close reading, which allows me to examine element by element as constitutive of meaning and unity (Castle 24), therefore permitting me to observe ambiguity, paradox and ironies present into the outcome of the translation through romantic imagination, the lyrical composition and its rhetorical devices –imagery–. Thus, this approach allows the separation of the text from its context, in order to "free [it] from any burden of reflection on the social world in which it is produced or from any connection to the author who produces it". Then, the text is considered as organic and autonomous (Castle 24), therefore it is possible to analyse it just by its own components.

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<sup>5</sup> The thinnest description could explain a behaviour. "New historicists would decode the message with closer examination and contextual analysis to produce a thick description that incorporates a commentary and interpretation of the act and its power relations" ("New Historicism").



## Analysis and Interpretation

### A Past, Two Journeys and a Reflection

In order to observe clearly the nature of Lord Byron's subjectivity and posterior manifestations of it in his works, it is necessary to describe the conditions that allowed this travelling-influenced writing to be developed, and therefore configuring a new type of enunciation. Considering the fact that this analysis will carry a great amount of interpretive premises, it is important to point out that even though this analysis could follow a more reader-response oriented approach, this dissertation will be following the literary theory perspective of New-Historicism, to reach a wider range of interpretation of the texts and explore the different dimensions that Lord Byron could have experimented before or while writing –as this research proposes– the *Cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, as well as the letters he sent to his loved ones. This perspective allows me to explore different biographies, letters and criticisms –as complementary sources– therefore presents a richer approach to convey Lord Byron's subjectivity; besides, it broadens my spectrum as researcher and allows me to examine the period in which he was inserted, how his writing works as a bridge in the wall of romantic literature, and consider dissimilar points of view in order to understand the particular nature of the hybrid enunciation that I believe, Lord Byron portrayed.

Habermas defined eighteenth century in terms of referential discourse as “*a century of epistolary interchange*” (Habermas qtd. in. Arfuch 40), since the intimate character of correspondence caused a positive effect on the society of the epoch. People expressed themselves protected under the private character of the letter, permitting them to take off the mask they carried by fearing what people may say about them. Therefore, letters were a means to show subjectivity and their own “representation of reality” (Arfuch 40).

Under the light of New-Historicism, the letter will not be taken just as a means of access to subjectivity, but also works as Selden, Widdowson and Brooker agreed, as a historic snapshot of the epoch. This because the letter will be seen both as a product and constituent of the romantic period, since this was the frame that settled the necessary conditions and perceptions for the letter to reach splendour, and consequently, an important

part of the culture of these times. It represented the conflict between the expression of intimacy and feelings into a paradigm that tried to silence them.

On the other side, considering the lyrical works that are addressed in this dissertation –*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (Cantos I and II), and other poems, such as "To A Lady, On Being Asked My Reasons For Quitting England In The Spring"*– it is important to highlight that they will be analysed under the light of Grínor Rojo's perspective about literature. Rojo conceives literature as a language that creates its "own world", reaching the character of a "representational activity" (Rojo 97), that resembles the real world, otherwise it would be just unintelligible. Then, literature will be capable of delivering a vision of reality, an indirect interpretation of the real world (Rojo 98), which would constitute an expression of the subjectivity of the author.

It is important to highlight that even when the narrative poem of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is composed by four Cantos, I will not consider Cantos III and IV and the dedication "To Ianthe" in the present dissertation because they were composed during the second period of Byron's travelling –between 1816 and 1818–, which occurs after many significant events in the life of the poet, thus implying another state of subjectivity. Moreover, Cantos I and II were composed and edited during his Grand Tour, between 1809 and 1811, as well as the collection of letters, thus allowing to observe both productions through a parallel connection; besides both Cantos and the letters generate an organic corpus, since both comprehend the same period of time and finish by the same reason, simultaneously. This reason is the interruption of the journey in 1811, when after getting tired of travelling and having finished the Cantos, he receives the news about the critical health's state of his mother, which causes him to abandon the trip and flee to his native lands.

It seems convenient for the purpose of this dissertation to cover briefly the main life events of Lord Byron's youth to come up with an idea about his personality, in order to build up a previous stage of subjectivity that will be later modified by the period of travelling experiences – The Grand Tour from 1809 to 1811–, and how this affected his way of enunciation and therefore configured Liquid writing.

## A Glance to the Past

George Gordon Byron had a complicated childhood. He was raised only by his mother, as Tozer states “a Scotch lady [that had] a passionate and hysterical nature” (7), who tended to be violent and disdainful to him because of his resemblance to his dead and irresponsible father, and by being born with a deformity in his right foot – she constantly referred to him as ‘lame brat’ (Villablanca 9, Elze 34)–. Despite this, Lady Byron kept on exalting her son’s social origin –as descendant of William the Conqueror–, which permeated in his character, building in him the idea that he was above others. These extreme and contradictory traits caused him a mental complex and unhappiness which was reflected into his erratic character and insecurities about his lameness—he openly blamed his mother about them, and even composed *The Deformed Transformed*, a drama based on his troublesome relation with his mother–.

It does not seem rare that Lord Byron grew up with such a peculiar personality. He was barely eleven when he inherited his grand-uncle’s mansion –Newstead Abbey– and other properties –such as Rochdale– and title of baron, which gave him nobility, the best education and money. He attended Harrow school (Villablanca 19, Elze 36, Tozer 8) –one of the best schools in England–, place in which he discovered to be keen on poetry, besides gaining popularity because of his possessions and eccentric character. Since this epoch, he started to make his own decisions, which permitted him to take distance from his mother – he sent her dwelt in a nearby property–, and therefore, the poet grew up as a “haughty, selfish, excessively convinced of his importance and his superiority over the rest of the world” (Villablanca 15). According to Villablanca, popularity and richness gave free rein to his rebellious personality (29), thus turning him into a more secure and extravagant man—which could be seen in his attitude of overcoming his lameness and transforming it into a distinctive feature of himself, thus people recognized his silhouette by the way he walked–. However, he lacked any close adult or friend that could guide him through his youth, which unleashed him to live in continuous excesses.

In spite of excesses, Lord Byron was a brilliant although digressive student. He was considered an avid reader, (Tozer 8), which along with his “precociously amorous” nature (Villablanca 16), motivated his first dash into poetry. As he fell in love constantly, however

unrequited, his poetry always carried a melancholic mood –that would follow him lifelong (Villablanca 18; Tozer 8). He published his first volume of poems *Hours of Idleness* when he was studying at Cambridge, which was cruelly and mercilessly criticized by the ‘Edinburgh Review’ (Tozer 9; Villablanca 27). The article stated that he had just an average talent that did not present any merit, therefore condemning him to oblivion by calling him an intruder within poetry. Enraged, a year later he published another book –a revenge book–, a successful “ill-natured satire” (Tozer 9) that make him famous since he destroyed critics and other poets of the period. Since that event, Byron’s writing adopted “in a self-defence, an attitude of defiance against society” (14). After those events, Byron unleashed his arrogance and sophistication in splendour. He transformed his life into an even more licentious one, in which he squandered his profits without caring about future, leading him to be excluded from society by his scandalous life.

The reason that motivated him to leave England is still discussed. Villablanca states that after obtaining his degree, he decided to travel around Europe with his friend John Cam Hobhouse to celebrate his coming of age in a traditional Grand Tour (28). On the other side, Tozer assures that he was “devoured by spleen, embittered by disappointed love and by the reception accorded to his first attempt at poetry, and disgusted with a licentious life, which now had begun to pall upon him, left England for a prolonged journey in foreign countries” (9). Elze just mentions the preparations he took when leaving his native lands and describes his emotional state as disappointed and lonely, even avoiding farewell with his mother and sister (90).

Due to these inaccuracies, this dissertation considers biographies as complementary sources, nevertheless, the lack of agreement leads this piece of research into an apparent dead end. Although this situation could be thought as an impasse, this is not the case. New-Historicist approach reaffirms the particular usefulness of taking into account different types of resources to reconstruct history, moreover to comprehend that there is not an unique valid version of the events, but many. Thus, diverse valid histories will be configured, and many interpretations will be enounced, all of them valid as well. In this light, letters seems a rather efficient resource to envisage Lord Byron’s subjectivity from a closer perspective, which will resume the investigation to the main goal and perceive the

changes that his subjectivity experimented when travelling experiences appeared in front of his eyes; therefore leading him to express his impressions through Liquid writing.

However, before starting the analysis of letters and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, it is essential for the purpose of the study to point up the nature of the poet when addressing his predecessors, in order to understand the nature of his writing, what he thought of the past and himself as a writer.

## His attitude towards previous Art and History

Although T. S. Eliot wrote his essay of “Tradition and individual Talent” in a modernist frame and according to the modern sensibility, the sense of tradition will be explained according to the notion of the past he describes, and its reference to romantic times. At first, as T. S. Eliot explains in his essay, no artwork could be measured by its own merit, but as a creation that followed an entire history of creativity and previous works (39). Artists must bear that in mind when creating, and being able to innovate. Therefore art would not be understood as a mere imprinting of feelings and emotions gained through experience (Eliot 40), but as a deeper understanding that allows the artist to show his inner self without being disrespectful to previous artworks. Lord Byron did not have this attitude towards his predecessors. Through reading he developed a strong dislike to Classics, as could be later seen in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Nevertheless, he used to spend his leisure time at Harrow meditating under a tree while reading previous poets' works and composing his own (Tozer 8). He learned from others and studied literature with the aim of exceeding them while cultivating his writing.

As a modern subject, Lord Byron's attitude towards art coincides with the ideas that Eliot would publish many years later, “novelty is better than repetition” (Eliot 37). Although Eliot refers to the innovative techniques imposed by modernists in the twentieth century, it could be seen that Byron in his romantic but indubitably modern context, agreed with this idea. In this sense, Byron considered traditional writings as guidelines of quality, literary knowledge he ought to have in order to be a better poet, but he was very careful when it came to avoid the imitation of previous artists, since he wanted to show his own style. Lord Byron was very conscious and original when writing, and used historical facts as resources to enrich his writing and show his knowledge. However, whenever he referred to historical issues –as he was fond of doing–, he did it in his particular ironic style by including them in the form of satirical verses whose aim was to criticize others, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge. They represented for him a type of poet who was imprisoned in the old structures therefore incapable of reaching the essence of their current reality (Cranston 87).

Being a witty writer capable to respond to the critics at the Edinburgh Review, Byron realized that he could use his poetry as a means to express his rebellious and critical voice and expose his disenchantment towards conventions and society. Lord Byron managed to overcome the censure that was commonly imposed at those times, as could be seen in the First Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* when he alludes to an embarrassing incident from the history of Portugal -when they had to let go intruders in a Temple to avoid other political conflicts, therefore losing the opportunity to punish them when having them at hand distance–, an event that was laughable in his opinion (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 220-224). Byron's writing could be described as a revolutionary type of writing that wanted to denounce and attack the hypocrisy of the epoch (Villablanca 2), a curious fact since his entire image in society was a construct based on his own hypocrisy. He lived a frivolous life that seemed to be glorious but it was deeply and perpetual melancholic.

T. S. Eliot defended consistency as one of the main features that an artist should have “through all his career” (39), an issue that Lord Byron exploited in a successful way. He managed to preserve his underlying spirit of denounce in his creations, lifelong. As Eliot reflected “No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone [...] you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (Eliot 37). It was his haughty tone of denounce which became his personal seal when writing and therefore, one of the main reasons that transformed him into a particular exponent of Romanticism.

Now that the precedents are clarified, this dissertation will proceed to illustrate the changes that Lord Byron's subjectivity experienced while travelling.

## The Grand Tour

The Grand Tour corresponded to Byron's first extensive journey of two years length (1809-1811) around Europe, in which he visited Portugal, the Mediterranean, Spain, the Aegean Sea, and Levant, which gave him the inspiration to write the first and second Cantos of one of his most famous and lengthy poems, "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*"<sup>6</sup>.

In order to comprehend the previous state of Lord Byron's subjectivity when starting the voyage, this dissertation will consider the analysis of the letters he sent to his closer people, to have a more reliable picture of his subjectivity; therefore a more transparent communication of ideas and perceptions to people whom he could express himself without excessive worrying about his image in society –his mother, his sister, his friend and lawyer of the family John Hanson, and his closest friends such as Francis Hodgson and Henry Drury–, and just according to the different nature of the relationships he had with them. The period taken into account corresponds to the last months he spent in England before the departure, until the end of the journey in 1811; when he returned to his lands because of receiving the news that his mother was ill, and he decided to go back, to find that she had died a day ago, in his absence. Considering the approach that Thomas Moore –close friend of Lord Byron from his youth until his death– gave to the composition of his book, I decided to incorporate his work of *Letters And Journals Of Lord Byron: With Notices Of His Life*, in order to have more complete connections between events, because it includes some of his parliaments Byron's, and a very close perspective based on letters and events that the author trusted him; and even occasional journals that he only showed to him.

Lord Byron wrote the first two Cantos of the poem when he was exploring the lands of Levant, and had to be convinced by his friend and agent R. C. Dallas to publish them in 1812, because he did not see significant merit on them. Thomas Moore indicates, by recovering a testimony of R. C. Dallas, "I was so convinced of the merit of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, that [...] I should certainly publish it" (Byron and Moore 90).

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to remind that although the poem contains a long dedicatory, this will not be taken into account on this analysis because the content is related to experiences and composition of the second part of the poem –third and fourth Cantos–.



However, the first publication had to be made anonymously ("The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters And Journals, Vol. 1") because, after the incident with the Edinburgh Review, Byron wanted to protect his reputation –he always thought the poem as intense and revealing–. While examining both writings, it is not difficult to see clearly that there are lots of correspondences between the travelling experiences of Childe Harold and Byron himself, which includes their path, the same visited places, opinions about them, attitude towards the expression of their subjectivity and ways of approaching to conflicts. It seems convenient for this dissertation to take into account the similarities and differences between the author's features and this first experimental Byronic hero.

Lord Byron confesses in the preface of the poem that he wrote Cantos I and II were written in a way considered merely experimental, which is reflected mainly in two aspects. First, he followed the Spenserian pattern into the construction of the stanzas counting with 9 lines each, in which the last one counted with 12 syllables of iambic pentameter, a structure that he had never followed before; and the second, by the configuration of his main character. Although the poem implies the presence of a hero, Byron introduced new dimensions and features within the configuration of this protagonist, which led to the second aspect, the birth of the Byronic hero. The Byronic hero corresponds to a complex character made up from traits and flaws, which is characterized by being cursed or tormented by guilt. Within his main features the hero is, as Sólrún Helga Guðmundsdóttir states, "seductive, narcissist, perceptive, mysterious, handsome, adaptive, cunning, intelligent, socially dominant, moody and disrespectful of hierarchy and social institutions, even society" (10). Having into account the digressive and demoniacal personal nature of Byron (Villablanca 36) it does not seem rare to associate the Byronic hero as a reflection of the subjectivity of his author, since both present such romantic and distinctive features –the contradictory essence of the human being (Paz 9)–. In order to illustrate both natures, I will proceed to guide my analysis chronologically according to the poem with the objective of sailing along with the author and his poetical representation through his cosmopolitan trip, therefore being able to perceive both progressions and the evolution of the emotional journey and the configuration of Liquid writing.

Returning to the chronology we were following in the previous "A Glance to the Past" from the present dissertation, there were many motives that could explain Byron's

departure from England. It seems likely to believe that his personality was not tolerated and criticized in society because of the scandalous lifestyle he carried on –as it could be seen in the passage that Villablanca recalls “when he arrived at a party, all the chairs near him became empty and nobody dared to speak to him” (32)–, and the fact that he was tired of society as well –"his reaction towards society was [...] one of pride and scorn” (32), but this is not the complete story. Besides this, he maintained a secret emotional motif, which he confesses to his friend Francis Hodgson in letter 104 from the collection *The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters And Journals, volume 1*, dated in November 27, 1808. In this letter he played down the issue by mentioning just as another point in the list of events that he wanted Hodgson to know, “on the opposite page I send you some stanzas I wrote off on being questioned by a former flame as to my motives for quitting this country” (Byron), specifying that the stanzas had not been read before by anyone else. The stanzas corresponded to a complete poem titled “*To A Lady, On Being Asked My Reasons For Quitting England In The Spring*”, in which he tells the story of a man who recalls on vanished moments but find relief from his nostalgia when busy by “wandering on through distant climes” (5), in which he occasionally “gave sigh to other times” (7), and explains that being around the lady tortures him and he preferred “Escaping from temptation's snare” (14), because he “cannot view [his] paradise / Without the wish of dwelling there”(15-16), referring to the lady. The reasons displayed in the poem coincide with the ones that the lyrical speaker in the poem gives for the departure of Childe Harold from his lands.

Had sigh'd to many though he loved but one,  
 And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his.  
 . . . . .  
 And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,  
 . . . . .  
 And from his native land resolved to go,  
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 40-41, 45, 51-52)

As seen in the letter to Hodgson, Lord Byron –as well as Childe Harold in the poem–, was in love with a girl that did not correspond his affection. Thus, motivated by the impossibility of concretion of a loving relationship, Byron decided to set out on a auto-exile journey, which consisted in travelling voluntarily without losing the possibility of returning home (Ayala qtd. in Sánchez 439), as well as his character Childe Harold does in his lyrical context. Through a close reading, it seems interesting the oxymoronic image of “scorching” and “sea” in the same verse, since it creates a poetical atmosphere that carries the burning character of the unrequited love, and the contrasting image of peace of the sea. This translation through romantic imagination implies a transfer of subjectivity since the author, as he confesses to his best friend, was questioned by a former flame, and alludes to the same topic of not being corresponded, could this be a poetical image generated upon romantic imagination that resembles both types of writing?

Another connection could be established while looking to both the character and his author’s origins. Both of them came from aristocratic families that have lost their prestige, as stated by Villablanca and Tozer when referring to the ancestry of Lord Byron, which stems from William the Conqueror (Villablanca 9; Tozer 7). Childe Harold’s precedents are stated in the third stanza from the first Canto, in which it is said that his lineage “were of fame / And had been glorious in another day” (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 21-22), a situation that Lord Byron shares, because when obtaining his title, he realized that the inheritance of his nobility came along with a lot of debts and a dilapidated mansion, his beloved Newstead Abbey, property that is also mentioned as the place that Childe Harold left.

The Childe departed from his father's hall;  
It was a vast and venerable pile;  
So old, it seemed only not to fall,  
Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.  
Monastic dome! condemned to uses vile! (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 55-59)

The mansion could be represented in the poem as the “hall” from which Childe Harold departed, which was in a dilapidated state, but still glorious, as in the poem is reflected in “So old, it seemed only not to fall, /Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.”, and was used for questionable purposes, which in the poem could be seen in “condemned to uses vile!”, such as being the property in which Lord Byron’s great-uncle killed a man, and the official setting of many scandalous and sacrilegious parties hosted by Byron himself. It is exactly in this stanza where Byron makes allusion to his farewell’s party, which Villablanca described as “a celebration that resulted in a scandal, for all the guests dressed up as monks”, in which they toasted in the name of Byron by naming him Abbot of Newstead (Villablanca 29). This episode is mentioned in the poem in a single verse, “And monks might deem their time was come angen”, which coincides with one of the motifs to start the Grand Tour –Hobhouse’s idea, as a way to celebrate Byron’s coming of age–. While examining Byron’s letters under the light of New-Historicism, it is noticeable that the abbey represented Byron in many senses. It was this building the representation of his personality, devastated through years but still existing through the glorious composition of its structure. During the time in which Lord Byron lived, reputation and public image were key aspects to care about and he was aware of it, however disagreeing with the majority of the English customs and conventions. Because of this it is not rare to perceive his great attachment to the property, since besides representing him, it marked a change in his personality and life. Newstead Abbey was the first property that he inherited after obtaining his title, therefore it was a symbol for Byron. This Abbey represented his lineage –as a child he used to think that Newstead was, as Villablanca states, “peopled by ghosts of those Byrons who had fought so nobly; and he was a Byron also” (17)– besides of being the first materialization of his nobility and wealth –because even when dilapidated the property was extremely valuable–, which empowered him to make his own decisions. Moreover, I believe that he developed this especial bond – therefore imprinting his subjectivity (Levinas 52; Nacy 21)– with the mansion because of the similarities that it presented with his own personal condition. He felt corrupted by the world –he was inspired by the ideas of Rousseau and French Revolution, which incentivized his rebellious nature–, as it was the property, thus, the emergence of the

building in the poem does not lack of significance. It corresponds to a cultural symbol of social status, a projection of his subjectivity.

In relation to another point about their roots, their families look indubitably alike. In tenth stanza, it is mentioned that Childe Harold had a mother and a sister that he loved and did not forget, which were the only family that Lord Byron left in England when started his trip. Besides, it is possible to envisage Harold's lack of significant friends "If friends he had, he bade adieu to none" (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 86), a notion that is reflected as well in Byron's letters, in which he mentions that he is already away, and later, in 1810 when after a year travelling, he still feels lonely, as he confesses to Francis Hodgson in letter 148:

You are my only correspondent, agents excepted. I have really no friends in the world [...] So, I here shake hands and cut with all these busy people, none of whom write to me. Indeed I ask it not; — and here I am, a poor traveller and heathenish philosopher, who hath perambulated the greatest part of the Levant, and seen a great quantity of very improvable land and sea, and, after all, am no better than when I set out — Lord help me! (Byron)

When Byron writes "I here shake hands and cut with all these busy people, none of whom write to me", he alludes strongly to an image of solitude and distance, a construction that would not be stated naturally by any person but a romantic poet. It seems interesting how he refers to the people that do not write to him, since it represents the intimate frame that letters meant to him. He did not write to common people, but to his closer people. Besides, here he shows his resistance towards simple impressions by describing land and sea as "improvable", meaning that although being kind of unreal, they did not permeate in himself enough to care more about how he portrays the landscape in the letter. According to the previous theme that was treated, solitude, as explained by Elze, surrounded him because of his incongruence with the different social spheres in which he moved, his remaining friends from school, the nobles from the House of Lords and the literary circle of England, writers that disliked him, mainly because of his response to the Edinburgh Review. As it could be seen as a rather sad situation that could have caused negative effects upon his

works, this continuous state of solitude had a huge impact in the improvement of his writing, which inspired by the new experiences and transitory people that he met through his life, the author was able to canalize them through his romantic imagination. This could be seen in the eight stanza from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in which he transfers his state of solitude and reserved character to the protagonist. It is important to take into account that this implies the use of literary sources, in which the more used by Lord Byron is the metaphor.

Yet ofttimes in his maddest mirthful mood,  
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,  
As if the memory of some deadly feud  
Or disappointed passion lurked below:  
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;  
For his was not that open, artless soul  
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;  
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,  
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 64-72)

As seen, in order to transfer the previously described situation of solitude –a manifestation of emotional journey since he analyses his behaviour and preferences into an introspective form–, it was necessary for Byron to make use of techniques, such as metaphors and figurative language. Hence, I perceive the use of what Villegas define as *images* in his *Teoría De Historia Literaria Y Poesía Lírica* –which includes metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, and others (89). Under Villegas's proposal, the lyric speaker communicates the poetic space as part of his world (79) and the space is coloured by his interiority. The speaker brings the colour to the circumstances, and designs the way to portray reality. This is understood as Ruskin's *pathetic fallacy*, in which it is the poet's mental state what provides the affective features to nature (Villegas 80). He uses the word "pangs" as to simulate the sudden effect of flashbacks loaded with memoirs and feelings, that come to his "brow", thus representing his mind, and mentions that his soul could not

simply allow him to express his interiority to a friend or look for consolation, because it could lead him to lose control. Here it could be appreciated that his poetic imagination was a means to unleash his subjectivity, which was better understood within the frame of the complex use of rhetorical devices.

Taking up his tendency to solitude, and the relation of it with his departure from England, it is possible to state that Byron disguised his motives to leave the country. He pretended just to be tired of society, which was not false at all, but he hid his unrequited love, and the fact that he had always felt a preference of solitude. After reading his letters, notices of his life and biography, solitude was a condition that always surrounded him, so he was forced to tolerate it. I believe he created the fallacy to disguise his intolerance to rejection, and because it showed a convenient consistency with the image he tried to project towards society and his peers. Besides, –and here it is reflected Paz’s conception about the contradictory constitution of the romantic man (9)–, the poet felt a constant rejection towards the English society, since he thought of them as under the frame of hypocrisy –which he also was while moving within the crowds –. He hated the conventions and formalities of the time –though I personally believe this could be attributed to a generalization against the high class, to whom he always felt as a stranger, which became intensified after the Earl of Carlisle neglected his support when taking his seat at the House of Lords when he came of age–, which could be perceived in the way he finished his letters.

It was an ancient formality to use hedges when writing letters, however, Byron used them only when necessary, as to agents –as to John Murray or R.C. Dallas, to whom he wrote “believe me, yours very sincerely” (Byron)–, or when he was in good terms with his mother –in which case he used “yours affectionately”, or “your affectionate son”(Byron)–, but if the letter was addressed to a friend or an unimportant –for him– person, he alternated “yours, etc”, “Adieu – believe me etc, etc”, “yours etc etc”, or just the initial “B.” (Byron). Here I perceive this attitude as part of his innovative character towards writing, even imprinting it in aspects of formality, and transforming them into subjective impressions. Byron signed his letters colloquially, therefore modifying the discursive frame of letters, as Morales states, giving to them a more intimate character (40). Another situation in which this aversion to formality could be seen was when he was introduced to an English poet –unnamed– at Constantinople, in which he told him “I am an enemy of the

English etiquette, especially out of England; and I always make my own acquaintance without waiting for the formality of an introduction” (Byron and Moore 81). Therefore, for him, whenever a friend followed the conventions, he became a fake person, as it would be seen in the terms of “monstrous disguises” and “garb” in the following letter, number 136 from the collection.

all my old school companions are gone forth into that world, and walk about there in monstrous disguises, in the garb of guardsmen, lawyers, parsons, fine gentlemen, and such other masquerade dresses. (Byron)

This contributed strongly to enclose his real nature, therefore showing a fake image, a character quite reserved that avoided introspection. Furthermore, the absence of any faithful companion and the lack of a romantic partner, unleashed in him the insatiable need for adventures, looking for something that could permeate into his character. This is the quest of the romantic traveller, a quest to which Byron was devoted, since he constantly looked for risk-taking agendas, as practicing sports such as Foxhunting, Hawking, Boxing (Byron) and swimming in rushing places, as when he swam across the Hellespont from Abydos to Sestos, as told to Henry Drury on May 3rd, 1810, “This morning I swam from Sestos to Abydos. The immediate distance is not above a mile, but the current renders it hazardous” (Byron). Nevertheless, Byron did feel a strong detachment towards his native land and any other, as he confesses to Henry Drury in letter 136 from the collection, “All countries are much the same in my eyes” (Byron), which contributed to make him feel even lonelier. The translation of his state of solitude –previous and while travelling–could be perceived as an imprint of subjectivity to his poetical world; besides permitting him to take a break and distance from experiences through imagining, and compose the poem.

Before travelling, he sent his mother a letter –123 from the collection, dated in June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1809– in which he tells her about the trip and his eagerness for adventures since he feels bondless towards England, except for her and Newstead Abbey, “The world is all before me, and I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit any thing it contains, except yourself, and your present residence”<sup>7</sup> (Byron); dimension that he also

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<sup>7</sup> When Lord Byron planned to embark in the Grand Tour, he decided his mother to live at Newstead Abbey.



mentions to his friend Francis Hodgson in letter 125, “I leave England without regret — I shall return to it without pleasure” (Byron). This dimension is also transferred through a comparison in the poem, as the native lands of Childe Harold are described as “Which seem’d to him more lone than Eremite’s sad cell” (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 36). As this verse states, the character is surrounded by loneliness when at the lands of his origins, as Byron was in England. This could be seen in the letters he addressed to his sister –Letters 105 and 106 from the collection–, as it follows: “I am living here alone, which suits my inclinations better than society of any kind” (Byron), therefore expressing a preference of being alone, and boredom towards people, which are even more exalted in letter 106 –addressed to his sister as well–, dated on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1808:

I live here much in my own manner, that is, alone, for I could not bear the company of my best friend, above a month; there is such a sameness in mankind upon the whole, and they grow so much more disgusting every day, that, were it not for a portion of Ambition, and a conviction that in times like the present we ought to perform our respective duties, I should live here all my life, in unvaried Solitude.

Byron used expressions constitute poetical images, as in the phrase “sameness in mankind”, which represents his tedium towards society. It is clear that at this stage, Byron recognizes his process of introspection and reflects upon his personal features, however it is an exceptional case found in a particular letter from an entire collection dated from 1808, months before embarking. Therefore it would constitute part of the subjectivity that would possibly experiment changes during the trip, and since it is a unique case until this point, its significance will be analysed further in congruence with other cases that could appear in the letters that were written along with the residual Cantos of the poem. Ostracism was caused in part by his nature, and in part because of his lifestyle –full of vices and scandals– which was disapproved by many members of the English society, aspect that will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

When observing the way in which the lyric speaker describes Childe Harold’s lifestyle, it did not differed much from Byron’s lifestyle during his journeys by Levant. This could be appreciated in letter 141 of the collection, addressed to his mother, “I have

lived with the highest and the lowest. I have been for days in a Pacha's palace, and have passed many a night in a cowhouse [...] God knows, I have been guilty of many excesses” (Byron) In the poem, Childe Harold is presented under the following description:

He was a shameless wight,  
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;  
Few earthly things found favour in his sight  
Save concubines and carnal companie,  
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 14-18).

The term “wassailers” could be related to the excessive consumption of wine that Byron admitted in his letters. When recovered from vices, he confessed to his friend Hodgson , in letter 137 from the collection, “I am tolerably sick of vice, which I have tried in its agreeable varieties, and mean, on my return, to cut all my dissolute acquaintance, leave off wine and carnal company” (Byron). This attitude of trying to change could be related to the chance of pursuing personal growth that he could achieve by acquiring knowledge while travelling, a notion that is reflected as well in the poem, in the title of the main character. Harold is not a knight that deserves to be called as *Sir*, but a *Childe*, a medieval term which means “the eldest son of a nobleman who has not yet attained to knighthood” (The Nuttall Encyclopaedia Ebook). Thus, as the same Byron explains in his second preface of the poem, Harold *could* get the title of knighthood, in other words, he possesses an incomplete chivalry, thus, none of them have won their spurs (The Nuttall Encyclopaedia Ebook).

Byron addresses to personal growth in letter 103, to John Hanson, dated on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1808, in which he explains to the lawyer the trip he was planning, also mentioning that he could never return to England, “If I return, my judgment will be more mature, and I shall still be young enough for politics” (Byron). It could be seen that he thought about future, but in a particular way. Byron manifested a more responsible attitude towards his lawyer, since it was him who managed his goods and bills, as it could be seen in the same letter “I am young, tolerably vigorous, abstemious in my way of living; I have

no pleasure in fashionable dissipation” (Byron). However, Byron enjoyed many pleasures and spent lots of money during his trip since being “abstemious” was never part of his personality.

Another interesting connection lies in the way in which Byron and Childe Harold react upon risk-taking. Lord Byron narrates as voyage to his mother on November 12, 1809, in letter 131, which he almost got lost in a Turkish ship during a storm due to the ignorance of the captain and the crew, causing panic all over the people on the ship, including the figure of his page William Fletcher, which did not stop yelling after his wife, and whom he tried to calm down “but finding him incorrigible, [Byron] wrapped [him]self up in [his] Albanian capote<sup>8</sup>, and lay down on deck to wait the worst”. The experience seems very alike to the one described in the poem, when the hero is driven into a storm in the sea. “Come hither, hither, my little page! / Why dost thou weep and wail? (Byron 134-135). Then the page explains that he is worried about his wife and children because he has been absent for a long time, but Childe Harold interrupts him by saying “Enough, enough, my yeoman good” (170), and expresses the same indifference that Byron describes when he stop trying to calm his page, “Thy grief let none gainsay; / But I, who am of lighter mood, / Will laugh to flee away.” (171-173). Then, tired of the conversation, he welcomes the waves in the storm and also welcomes deserts and caves, calling them “My native Land”, and he goes to sleep. This idea of welcoming “deserts” and “caves” alludes to places that are commonly if inhabited, by hermits, an idea that Byron repeats frequently in his letters – thus generating a melancholic atmosphere in letters and the poem–, being the most representative the passage inside letter 146 from the collection, written to his mother in 1810, when he tells about how he feels with the departure of his journey’s partner Mr. Hobhouse to England. “I am very glad to be once more alone, for I was sick of my companion, — not that he was a bad one, but because my nature leads me to solitude” (Byron).

Returning to the chronology of the poem, subjectivity transfer could be also seen by comparing the path that the character and the author followed from land to land. They visited Portugal, the Mediterranean, Spain, the Aegean Sea, and Levant. As Childe Harold

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<sup>8</sup> An immense cloak. ("The Works Of Lord Byron, Letters And Journals, Vol. 1")

walks in the footprints of his creator through Europe in the poem, he manifests impressions as well as Lord Byron expressed in his letters. However, they differ in some aspects.

Childe Harold enjoys adventures, as Byron did while arriving to Portugal, as he narrates to his friend Francis Hodgson in letter 126 written in Lisbon, “I am infinitely amused with my pilgrimage as far as it has gone” (Byron). Both of them mention Cintra, which Byron describes as “the village of Cintra in Estremadura is the most beautiful, perhaps, in the world.” (Byron), coinciding also in the mention of the fruit and fragrance, “I am very happy here, because I loves oranges” (Byron). On the other side, the lyric speaker of the poem mentions “What Heaven hath done for this delicious land! / What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!” (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 209-210). However, the lyric speaker describes Cintra as a “glorious Eden” (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 236), and continues describing the place through a copious enumeration, to finish synthesizing it as “one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow” (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 251). This difference of treatment about the same place responds to the intervention of the romantic imagination and lyrical resources, which fulfil the function of exalting the impressions of the author, to transform it into useful material in the poetical world. Thus, imagery intensifies the perceptions of Byron as a means to express completely his reactions against experiences.

Nonetheless, as he ambles by the lands, the character criticizes the place and its people as the author did, and here, it also could be appreciated a new component of transfer of subjectivity, the lexical choice in both letters and the poem. The lyric speaker in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* describes Lisbon as, “For hut and palace show like **filthily**: / the dingy denizens are rear’d in dirt;” (230-231), very similar to the impressions that Byron wrote about Portugal to his mother (letter 128), being a place not worthy of description except for “the **filthy** streets, and more **filthy** inhabitants”. Then, at the end of the First Canto, it is possible to appreciate again similar perceptions between the candidate to knighthood and the poet, as Childe Harold leaves Cadiz, “Adieu, fair Cadiz! , a long adieu! / Who may forget how well thy walls have stood?”(873-874), as does Lord Byron in his letter 128 to his mother, with a great impression. “Cadiz, sweet Cadiz, is the most delightful town I ever beheld”. On the other side, there are contrasts between them.

Then, following the path of Childe Harold, it is possible to encounter a passage that resembles the solitary and romantic traveller attitudes, when the character goes alone to the mountains and thinks about fleeing, “restless”, and meditates –thus showing his modern condition– (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 315-320), as Byron used to do at Newstead, and when studying at Harrow under a tree in a church-yard (Byron and Moore 88). Then, Byron mentions in letter 131 to his mother “I have learnt to philosophise in my travels” (Byron), which is reflected upon Childe, when it is said that “he learn’d to moralize”, and then we are presented to verses that highlight the romantic spirit of the character, besides emphasizing his recovering from vices.

And conscious Reason whispered to despise  
His early youth misspent in maddest whim;  
But as he gazed on Truth, his aching eyes grew dim.  
To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits  
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:  
Again he rouses from his moping fits,  
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl. (Byron, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*  
321-327)

It could be seen that the character is tormented by Reason and conventions of the epoch that try to impose upon him, which motivates the aspirant to knighthood to flee. Besides it is possible to see the oxymoronic image that is produced by the opposition of “Reason” and “maddest whim”, and the riding and the “scene of peace. The desire to escape is a reaction against the threats against his conception about life, and thus, it impedes him to live in irony. It seems that this is one of the main reasons, by which the author avoided to experiment a conscious emotional journey in which he could reflect upon his feelings. The transferring of subjectivity to the poetical dimension implied such a great effort that if made twice –as could it be if he had written them in his letters– could have caused him to collapse, or more likely, to escape from his subjectivity by the denial of it, as it does the poetical protagonist, who constantly escapes from “fists”, “pangs” and “Thought” (Byron *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* 860).

As seen, the Grand Tour brought to Lord Byron uncountable experiences, which motivated him to register them in his letters, but he was very stingy when it came to write about himself while travelling. It is curious the fact that even when maintaining a constant touch with his mother and friends, he avoided talking about himself or keeping a regular journal, but rather kept into narrating his adventures. This could be seen in the digressive character of his discourse when by any chance, he mentioned something about his character and deeper feelings. One of the notions that grows importance as the poem progresses, reaching the end of Canto I, is the awareness of the current situation of the visited lands, particularly the case of Spain, in which the lyric speaker of the poem refers to the war situation and the bloodshed that Spaniards have suffered by their liberty. It is important to remember that when the poem was written, Byron was walking through lands that had been affected by the Napoleonic wars. However, the difference of treatment when addressing to these themes in both letters and the poem seems curious. In his poetical world, the lyric speaker highlights the customs of the Spaniards and their culture, and the fact that they had been under attack for a while and how this situation had unleashed the emergence of vengeful spirit, supporting and justifying it, as the intensity of the verses reveal.

Ye, who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,  
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest strife:  
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on foreign foe  
Can act, is acting there against man's life:  
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,  
War mouldeth there each weapon to his need—  
So may he guard the sister and the wife,  
So may he make each curst oppressor bleed,  
So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed! (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 891-899)

Following Byron's path, Canto II begins with an allusion to Athena –the Greek Goddess–, and by a note found within the letters and occasional journals that Thomas

Moore collected, it was started in October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1809 in Ioannina, Albania, and concluded in Smyrna, Greece, on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1810.

The lyric speaker begins by lamenting the dilapidated state of the majestic buildings and asking to the Gods where they had been, until returning to the figure of Childe Harold, who is not impressed –Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 141)– by the land and stills ambles, lonely. On the other side, there are no letters that describes the lands of Greece, as Byron focuses in his encounter with the nobility of Turkey. It does not seem odd that the poetical dimension of Byron addresses to the wonders of Greece while he did not in his correspondence, since this poetical space present better means to transmit aesthetical appreciations. However, he did mention an affair he had with a married lady –whose identity is camouflaged under the name of Florence– in the Calypso Islands, and explains the idyllic relation, as enchanted by his own Calypso. Notwithstanding, Childe Harold decides to keep his feelings, as he knows they are pointless, since the lady has already “every tie” (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 268)– she could have.

Sweet Florence! could another ever share  
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:  
But checked by every tie, I may not dare  
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,  
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 266-270)

As the author with Mrs. Spencer Smith, Childe Harold keeps distance from her, and avoids conflicts by keeping his love “aloof, albeit not far remote” (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 274). Then we follow their path to Albania, place that he visited because of being invited to see the Pacha, who governed “the whole of Albania (the ancient Illyricum), Epirus, and part of Macedonia” (Byron). In a letter to his mother dated on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1809, Lord Byron highlights the natural beauty of the landscapes of Zitza he found on the way to Yanina, the domains of the Pacha's son.

I then went over the mountains through Zitza, [...] in the most beautiful situation [...] I ever beheld [...] Our journey was much prolonged by the torrents that had fallen from the mountains, and intersected the roads. I shall never forget the singular scene on entering Tepaleen at five in the afternoon, as the sun was going down. (Byron)

From here and now, it is possible to see clearly how the Liquid writing took place in the verses within *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. As seen, Byron has been captivated by the beauty of Albania's nature, and in order to include them, he made use of his romantic lyrical talent, through transferring these impressions into the more lofty tone he could, and addressing nature one-to-one, in his particular style of superiority. Therefore he embraces the inspiration caused by trip –thus achieving the aim of the romantic traveller– and imprints his subjective impressions through imagery that will be showed further.

Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;  
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,  
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:  
The plain is far beneath—oh! let him seize  
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray  
.....  
And gaze, untired, the morn, the noon, the eve away.  
.....  
No city's towers pollute the lovely view;  
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,  
Veiled by the screen of hills (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 443-447, 450,  
460-464)

Byron creates a mixture through the use of synaesthesia, as it could be seen in the freshness that must be attributed to the wind, but it is to the greenness of the forest, and the use of the word “wing” creates the a metaphoric illusion in which the passer-by –as described in previous verses– seems to be floating from the breeze of Heaven. The second quote corresponds to illustrate a direct transfer of impression, as Byron described in the



letter to his mother, he contemplated the sunset the whole afternoon. As for the third quote, the verses reflect the romantic spirit of Byron, since the writers of the period tended to escape from cities with the illusion to return to their roots. Getting back to Nature provided them with the inspiration they needed to access to their visionary talent, and therefore being able to write. Poets saw cities as prisons in that period of time, reason by which Byron refers to them as a form of pollution, to the poet and his talent, as well to Nature.

Then, Byron proceeds to describe, in the letter, the way Albanians dress, and it is possible to distinguish another transfer of to the poem. In the letter, he mentions “the most magnificent in the world, consisting of a long white kilt, gold-worked cloak, crimson velvet gold-laced jacket and waistcoat, silver-mounted pistols and daggers” (Byron), which is reflected in stanza number fifty eight from the second Canto, when he describes the “ornamented gun”, gold-embroidered garments”, and “crimson-scarfed men of Macedon” (515-517).

Notwithstanding, as the poem progresses we are presented to an anomaly in the chronology in comparison to letters. Hitherto, the poem had advanced at the same rhythm that its author, however, while reading the letter 131 from the collection addressed to his mother, it could be seen that the voyage that almost ended as a shipwreck happens on the way to Morea, and not on the way to Lisbon, as described by the lyric speaker from the poem on the first Canto. This corresponds to an intelligent management of experiences from the author’s perspective, since he was able to move the passage to the beginning of the story, as to cause a major impact on the reader. This is consistent if is taken as an strategy that the dramatic and innovative personality of Byron designed as to catch readers, although after finishing these Cantos he decided that he *might* publish them. Byron’s reasons to keep it away from the publication had already been discussed, but I think that those motives did not influence the poem from the composition. Furthermore, it is important to remind that the poem was far more explicit, but it was submitted to corrections by Byron’s agent and friend R. C. Dallas.

The last stanzas from Canto II enclose a profound romantic tone since it present longing and pity by the lost of glory and the pass of time. The lyric speaker observes and moans over the ruins on the way to Athens, longing for the past in which Nature and

buildings were glorious, but also observes the current beauty of the remains, as reminders of which someday where objects of magnificence.

The original Cantos ended after the previously described events, however, as the version of the poem that I have been analysing comprehends six stanzas that were added when it was taken to the press (Tozer, *Notes* 254), I will consider them, since they are influenced by the last part of the Grand Tour, in 1811.

The last six stanzas from Canto II present a monologue in which Byron speaks as himself, into poetical language. I interpret this since it mentions three deaths, which correspond to his mother, a close friend –who drowned–, and a lover, who was John Edleston, to whom the stanzas are addressed. Stanza 93 corresponds to a transitory and reflective moment, in which he states that remnants should be revered and remembered (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 878), but as we keep reading we are presented to Liquid writing. Stanza 94 starts addressing to “thee” (882), and later we could see that he refers to the three beloved ones, “Since cold each kinder heart that might approve/ And none are left to please where none are left to love.” (889-890). When stanza 95 begins, it is seen that the lyric speaker is no longer present, and it is Lord Byron who moves the fountain pen against the paper.

Thou too art gone, thou loved and lovely one!  
Whom youth and youth's affections bound to me;  
Who did for me what none beside have done

. . . . .

What is my being? thou hast ceased to be! (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 891-893, 895)

This represents the total blending between genres and we are presented to liquid writing in splendour, since it is subjectivity what flows in the ink of these verses, fusing referential impressions and poetical enunciation. The experiences of Death had awaken definitely the subjectivity that Byron tried to measure while writing, unleashing a lyrical space for an emotional journey. This journey implies a

whirlpool of subjectivity that humidifies the lyrical devices, flooding them with retrospective and introspective passages, as it could be seen in the following verses.

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!  
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,  
And clings to thoughts now better far removed!  
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 900-904)

Then he reflects upon the ineffableness of Death, to which he addresses directly, manifesting his rage and desperation, expressing his feelings without boundaries.

All thou couldst have of mine, stern Death, thou hast:  
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend;  
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,  
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,  
Hath snatched the little joy that life had yet to lend. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 905-908)

Introspection passes from being a rejected dimension to be the ideal place to express himself, without following the conventions, ignoring paradigms; Lord Byron's subjectivity in manifestation. Then, it concludes with a final reflection, in which the imagery grows important, as in the metonymy of aging through the "stamp of wrinkles", and the metaphor of life as a book, that could be edited, by erasing characters from it, as it could be seen in the word "blotted".

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?  
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?  
To view each loved one blotted from life's page,  
And be alone on earth, as I am now. (Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 918-921)

As seen in the previous passages, Lord Byron tended to transmit far more from his life experiences than just inspiration within this poem, one of the most extensive and famous work. Although he maintained and repeated many times, including the mention of it in the preface of the poem, that his work must not be understood as autobiographical, he even included his own experiences as passages and scenarios in the story of Childe Harold. It is because of this that the complete chapter includes the mentions of two types of travelling. The first corresponds to the physical displacement that provides experiences that would be transferred to the poetical dimension through imagining and the resulting effect in which the poetical dimension colours the letters, and the emotional journey, that through the processes of introspection and retrospection, completes a new self- discovery of subjectivity.

## Final Reflections

It has been seen that Lord Byron was a complex poet, despite he possessed most of the features to be considered a romantic writer, with a rather peculiar style. While examining his life, it is not difficult to envisage that his mental condition was strongly influenced by his closer context, in which he had the role of a noble in English society, and being the son of Catherine Gordon— whose influence permeated in his character until the end of his days—; but also by the period of time in which he had lived. Romanticism provided him the ideal conditions to explore his talent, and allowed him to take impulsive decisions, such as making a trip he could not afford —he was a baron, however his nobility just gave him dilapidated properties and debts, furthermore he was never a saver— a decision that the Rationalist paradigm would have never permitted. Maybe it was dangerous for him to embark in a tour being a hard up, but romantics looked for the aim of gaining experience, which compared to the costs of it, it did not seem pricey. Furthermore, Byron transgressed the meaning of the Grand Tour —since this was a high class custom based on expanding horizons by seeing other lands, with the aim of using this new cultural grounding to produce, in an economic sense—, using it as a means to generate in him a romantic travelling experience. Byron made use of his social position and rebellious ideology to transform the touristic trip into a way to incentivize his romantic imagination, therefore transforming himself into an anti-tourist that fulfilled his aims, by using a rationalist custom of the epoch. He considered a pleasure trip that allowed him to explore both the world and his inner self, which was reflected upon his capacity to canalize his travelling impressions by composing his first extensive work, the narrative poem of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and a great amount of letter. Thus, it is important to highlight the relevance that travelling experiences had both in the life and writing of Lord Byron.

Through the exploration of Lord Byron's letters, it is noticeable that even in the safe and private frame that letters provided, he still did not manifest himself completely. As most of human beings, Lord Byron moulded his personality according to the relation he had to the addressee, but moreover, he developed an aesthetic composition of his referential writing. Although the point of analysing his letters sent to his closer circle, to have a wider and more accurate glance at his subjectivity, this perspective did not permit the total

contemplation of it, since it is an invisible dimension (Zahavi 146). This situation led me to observe in more detail the literary outcomes of the voyage, which allowed me to look for hints of Lord Byron's subjectivity in manifestation. While doing it, I was able to perceive these subjective impressions and the poetical composition of his letters revealed, along with the effect that impressions had upon the lyrical composition of the poem, and its protagonist, Childe Harold.

The peculiar composition of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* responds to the need of expression that Lord Byron's subjectivity had, to create a literary space in order to manifest itself. In this dimension, it is easy to notice that from the first lines, he had been influenced by previous author's such as Milton, whom he imitates while invoking a deity to inspire him, but rapidly abandons this classical notion in order to privilege his poetical alter ego, the Byronic hero of Childe Harold. Both the author and the character present the romantic spirit of the epoch and the need to escape conventions, with the aim to reach a deeper understanding of themselves, and experiences that could inspire them. Both of them begin their trips in order to take distance and overcome circumstances, as the unrequited love and being alienated in their own societies. Besides, both present a tendency to solitude and aversion to reflection, since it represents the admittance of weakness. However, they differ when it comes to show themselves in front of others, as seen in his letters, Byron tried to portray himself as unstoppable, irresistible and adventurer; on the other hand Childe Harold is introduced to us as a melancholic character that lives under a permanent state of nostalgia that leads him to travel and see other lands, by trying not to attach to somebody again, avoiding to suffer again –which could be seen when he distances from Florence while passing by the Calypso islands–.

Notwithstanding, as the trip progresses, an emotional journey begins to develop simultaneously in the subjectivity of the author, and we can see how the mask of Lord Byron begins to crack, losing pieces as he tries to overcome the unbearable solitude and melancholia that he carries inside. As this happens, nature loses its intermittent importance in the poem and the character of Childe Harold lights his melancholic mood. It is because of this that Childe Harold struggles while trying not to crumble, which Byron does not do until the end of the poem. Childe Harold presented many occasions to unravel, as he is the poetization of his creator, the poetical dimension intensifies what the character feels.

According to this, the present dissertation sustains that as the poem progresses, the barrier that delineates the dimensions of reality and romantic imagination starts to fade. Travelling experiences and impressions starts leaking in the inkpot of imagination, and the final outcome is the confluence of poetical and referential writing, a subjective type of writing that does not respect any boundaries; it flows directly from the subjectivity through the talent of the poet, and it reaches consolidation into a narrative referential poem.

Liquid writing is not just about finding inspiration in real experiences, but rather as a blending of genres which is manifested as a revolutionary type of writing that advances by flooding every dimension of life. In Lord Byron's case, it began just concentrated in the interiority of his letters, and as projections of subjectivity. One of those projections corresponds to the symbolism of Newstead Abbey, a building that represented his dilapidated emotional state, his apparent status, his old lineage, besides being his residence. Resuming on the nature of this liquid writing, it manifests by influencing and permeating into his poetical work, as we could appreciate in the transference of images, such as the previously quoted experiences of contemplating the sunset, his fascination with the towns of Cintra and Cadiz; falling in love; and sensations provoked by travelling experiences. As it progresses, the inclusion of places and people that had any type of influence into his character begins to appear in the poem, –even preserving their clothes, as in the case of Albanians– and impressions about them –like the way in which he perceived and understood Spaniards, and the ruins in Greece–. Liquid writing acquires and intensify the impressions of the writer through the romantic imagination, transforming the experiences and illuminating them therefore translating subjectivity into poetical language.

As liquid writing conquers the different dimensions of the writer's subjectivity, the subjective ink becomes more fluent and easier to access to it, thus comfortable for the writer, as he does not feel the need to measure his impressions, but let them flow. The progressive fluency of the liquid writing floods the writer's talent, as it happened to Lord Byron, culminating into a blending in which it is not possible to distinguish the lyrical speaker from the author himself; the merge generates a new voice with both echoes.

Letters would constitute then much more than a first mould of subjectivity that later transfers to the poetical dimension. As seen in the Analysis, the imprint of subjectivity, implied a connection with the romantic imagination of the author, and since the blending of

genres had been progressing through all the extension of the travel, letters became affected by the rigorous and imagistic language of poetry.

As liquid writing is the one that Byron developed through his travelling experiences it would be interesting to project the application of this notion to the remaining Cantos III and IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and into his most important and extensive work, *Don Juan*, both composed during the second trip of Lord Byron between 1816-1818 along with Percy Bysshe Shelley, his final self-imposed exile. Self imposed exile could also been a theme that needs further revision, and it could be seen if liquid writing could be applied to another author that shared this decision of fleeing his lands.

If we wanted to find the place that this dissertation has within the current literary studies it could be said that liquid writing is a notion that could be applied to Chilean and Latin-american literature, since ours present a great amount of referential writings that are always treated, in Morales words, as literary outcasts. This dissertation allows to see that letters could be used as primary sources and they present enough features to be considered into a dialectical analysis along with a literary work.



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