

LORD BYRON: *Manfred*

In European terms, *Manfred* was the most celebrated and influential of all Byron's works. It was translated into German, for instance, eighteen times during the nineteenth century – once by Wagner's uncle. Byron had little idea, at first, what he had written, until his anger at the way Murray and Gifford interfered with his text forced him to realise how proprietorial he felt about it.

Often ignored is the fact that *Manfred* is Byron's first dramatic piece, done when memories of Drury Lane and its capacity for spectacular scenery would have been fresh in his mind. I have no evidence for my theory that *Manfred* is a role written for Edmund Kean. The presence of the short, dark, but mesmeric Kean behind such verse figures as Conrad in *The Corsair* has often been noted: here at last, in *Manfred*, was a role he might play.

Some mystery surrounds the play's writing. Its draft manuscript is – unusually for Byron – undated, and Hobhouse, who may be supposed to have been with Byron for much of the time of its composition, appears never to register that it is in progress.¹ If I am right, and the notes to Thomas Taylor's translation of Pausanias are a major influence on the way Byron creates its demon-hierarchy,² then he is already thinking about it between May 1st (when he is at Brussels) and June 23rd 1816 (when he is at Evian) for he asks Hobhouse for Taylor's book on those dates;³ and as Hobhouse arrives at Diodati on August 26th (with Taylor's Pausanias, we must assume: he promises on July 9th to bring it)⁴ it's unlikely that anything beyond the very first scene was written before late August. The Alpine scenes in Act I and II bear a close relationship with Byron's Alpine Journal (September 17th-29th), as the notes below will show; but, as Jerome McGann writes,⁵ stanzas 5 and 6 of the Incantation in the first scene is on paper with a *fleur-de-lys* watermark of a kind Byron used in 1813 and 1814. The Incantation was fair-copied, in July 1816, by Claire Clairmont, in the notebook which also contains her version of *Childe Harold III*, and had already been published in late November or early December 1816, in *The Prisoner of Chillon, and Other Poems*. See my notes below for the suspicion of a link between the Incantation and Coleridge's *Christabel*.

The revised and received Third Act seems to have been drafted at Rome by May 5th 1817,⁶ Byron having arrived in that city on April 29th.

Manfred is a much deeper fellow than any of Byron's previous protagonists; *Childe Harold* makes no pretence to being a philosopher, or a theologian of dualism, still less a sun-worshipper, and *The Giaour*, *Conrad*, *Selim* and *Alp* appear not to bother with the questions which have obsessed *Manfred*; though his indifference and hostility to Christianity is shared by *The Giaour*, at least.

The play borrows from so many mythologies that even Byron was self-conscious about it: "... a mixed mythology of my own – which you may suppose is somewhat of the strangest" was the way he alerted Kinnaird, on March 25th 1817:⁷ an "Olla Podrida" was what his concoction was called in an early review, by William Roberts.⁸ Peacock, always on the alert for absurdities in Byron, gives a note to *Nightmare Abbey*:

According to Mr. Toobad, the present period would be the reign of Ahrimanes. Lord Byron seems to be of the same opinion, by the use he has made of Ahrimanes in "*Manfred*"; where the great Alastor, or ?a??? ?a?u??, of Persia, is hailed king of the world by the Nemesis of Greece, in concert with three of the Scandinavian Valkyræ, under the name of the Destinies; the astrological spirits of the alchemists of the middle ages; an elemental witch, transplanted from Denmark to the Alps; and a chorus of Dr. Faustus's

1: See Cochran, "*Nobody has seen it*" – *Byron's First Letter Announcing Manfred*, *Byron Journal*, 1996, pp. 68-76.

2: See Cochran, *Manfred and Thomas Taylor*, *Byron Journal* 2001, pp. 62-71.

3: BLJ V 74 and 80.

4: BB 228.

5: CPW III 464.

6: See Cochran, "A higher and more extended comprehension": *Byron's three weeks in Rome*, *Keats-Shelley Review* 2001, pp. 49-63.

7: BLJ V 195.

8: *The British Critic*, 2nd series, VIII, July 1817, RR BI 275.

devils, who come in the last act for a soul. It is difficult to conceive where this heterogeneous mythological company could have originally met, except at a table d'hôte, like the six kings in "Candide".⁹

Peacock omits the Neo-Platonist Thomas Taylor, from whom Byron derived the revolutionary idea that Man could damn himself without help from any Evil Principle. As George Sand wrote, Manfred is "... Faust délivré de l'odieuse compagnie de Méphistophélès". It is the superiority Manfred displays to all the transcendental powers he encounters which makes him worrying. He is equally indifferent to the persuasions of chamoix-hunters, witches, demons and abbots, and is self-destructive purely on his own terms – not at all like Faust, or Faustus, who need and receive help in their self-destruction (and redemption, in the case of Faust). Manfred has no-one to blame for his own doom but himself; he is *cunning in [his] overthrow, / The careful pilot of [his] proper woe*.

Lying behind Manfred's need for oblivion at all costs may be Byron's self-horror at the way, late in 1815 and early in 1816, he had wilfully destroyed the happiness of a wife who loved him, whom he despised because she loved him, and whom he had forced to leave their home, shortly after she had born him their child. His behaviour had been so extreme that many about him were convinced that he was either ill or insane. Astarte – all that *Manfred* offers by way of heroine – is often taken, by those intent on creating sensation at all costs, to be a version of his half-sister Augusta; but I'd argue that in her remoteness and verbal economy Astarte is closer to Annabella. Annabella could be a very effective rhetorician (on paper, in private), but in public she said as little as possible. Even her statements about Byron's cruelty – made to convince her family and legal advisers that she had a good case – are understated. He married the woman to whom, even in 1812, he was comparing to Emma in Edgeworth's *The Modern Griselda*,¹⁰ knowing her to be, in her infinite patience, his perfect victim. The manipulative hypocrisy whereby, knowing that the outcome would be cruel and disastrous, he made her his wife, and his affectation of not understanding what, when she left the house, all the fuss was about, seem gross even after two centuries, and deserve the implicit critique he made of them himself in *Manfred*:

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human thine own heart,
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compell
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!¹¹

In so far as he knows himself to have placed himself beyond the pale of human tolerance, Manfred is Byron.

This edition is based on the rough draft at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, and the fair copy and associated letter in the John Murray Archive, collated with the editions of E.H.Coleridge and J.J.McGann.

9: Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, note to Chapter IV.

10: BLJ II 199; Emma is the gentle, charitable heroine, contrasting with the eponymous one.

11: *Manfred*, I i, 252-51.

Manfred. A Dramatic Poem.

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

*The scene of the drama is amongst the higher Alps,
partly in the castle of Manfred,
and partly in the mountains.*

Act I scene i.

Manfred¹² alone. Scene, a Gothic Gallery. Time, midnight.

Manfred.

The Lamp must be replenished, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch;
My Slumbers – if I slumber – are no sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not; in my heart 5
There is a Vigil – and these eyes but close
To look within – and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of living men.
But Grief should be the Instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is knowledge:¹³ they who know the most 10
Must mourn the deepest o’er the fatal truth –
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science – and the springs
Of wonder – and the wisdom of the World –
I have essayed, and in my mind there is 15
A power to make these subject to itself,
But they avail not; I have done men good
And I have met with good even among men –
But this availed not; I have had my foes,
And none have baffled – many fallen before me – 20
But this availed not: Good – or evil – life –
Powers – passions – all I see in other beings
Have been to me as rain unto the sands;
Since that all nameless hour, I have no dread –

12: *Manfred*: the name comes in part from the *Purgatorio* (III 121-4) in part from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) but in part from *Bertram, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand*, by Charles Maturin (1782-1824) a play which had been mounted on Byron’s recommendation, and ran, from May 9th 1816, for twenty-two consecutive nights – a great success. Murray printed seven editions in the first year. Byron was impressed by the piece (see his letter to Maturin of 21st December 1815, offering to get George Lamb to re-write some unsatisfactory passages – BLJ IV 336) and certainly took note of the name of the protagonist’s hideaway:

... *Count Bertram,*
Whose vessel had from Manfredonia’s coast
Been traced towards this realm ... (IV i)
On Manfredonia’s wild and wooded shore
His desperate followers awed the regions round ... (IV i)

Bertram (the part was created by Kean) is a gloomy misanthrope, like Manfred, who pursues and destroys the woman he loves; the play is based on a triangular love situation such as Byron had exploited in *The Giaour*, *Lara*, and so on.

13: *Sorrow is knowledge*: see *Ecclesiastes* I, 18: *For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.*

And feel the curse to have no natural fear,¹⁴ 25
Nor fluttering throb that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the Earth.
Now to my task. —

Mysterious Agency!
Ye Spirits of the unbounded Universe!
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light, 30
Ye! who do compass earth about – and dwell
In subtler essence – Ye to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
And Earth's and Ocean's caves familiar things!
I call upon ye by the written charm 35
Which gives me power upon you¹⁵ – Rise! – Appear!

(a pause)

They come not yet. – Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you¹⁶ – by this sign
Which makes you tremble – by the claims of him
Who is undying¹⁷ – Rise – Appear – Appear — 40

(a pause)

If it be so. – Spirits of Earth and Air!
Ye shall not now elude me! By a power
Deeper than all yet urged – a tyrant–spell
Which had its birthplace in a Star condemned¹⁸ –
The burning wreck of a demolished World – 45
A wandering Hell in the eternal Space –
By the strong curse which is upon my Soul¹⁹ –
The thought which is within me and around me –
I do compel you to my will – Appear! –

*A Star is seen at the darker end of the Gallery.
It is stationary – and a voice is heard singing.*

First Spirit. –

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed, 50
From my mansion in the cloud,

14: *And feel the curse to have no natural fear:* compare Macbeth at V v 9: *I have almost forgot the taste of fear.*

15: *I call upon you – by the written charm / Which gives me power upon you:* what the charm is we are not told; but compare Faustus at I iii 8-9:

*Within this circle is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatised:
The abbreviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct to the heavens,
And characters of signs and evening stars,
By which the spirits are enforced to rise.*

16: ... *the voice of him / Who is the first among you:* that is, Manfred's voice.

17: ... *the claims of him / Who is undying:* the highest power, the creator, the Demiurgus, the over-ruling infinite to whom Manfred refers below at II iv 47.

18: ... *a tyrant's spell / Which had its birthplace in a Star condemned:* perhaps the tyrant is Manfred himself, born under a wandering star, as we learn below, this scene, 110-24. Compare *Hamlet*, V i 247-9: *What is he ... whose phrase of sorrow conjures the wandering stars?*

19: *By the strong curse which is upon my Soul:* compare *Childe Harold I*, 83, 8-9: ... *life–abhorring gloom / Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom.*

Which the breath of Twilight builds,
 And the Summer's Sunset gilds,
 With the azure and vermilion
 Which is mixed for my pavilion²⁰ – 55
 Though thy quest may be forbidden,
 On a starbeam I have ridden;
 To thine adjuration bowed,
 Mortal! be thy wish avowed!

Voice of the Second Spirit²¹

Mont Blanc is the Monarch of mountains;²² 60
 They crowned him long ago,
 On a throne of rocks – in a robe of clouds –
 With a Diadem of Snow.
 Around his waist are forests braced –
 The Avalanche in his hand – 65
 But ere it fall, that thundering ball
 Must pause for my command.²³
 The Glacier's cold and restless mass
 Moves onward day by day,
 But I am he who bids it pass, 70
 Or with its ice delay.
 I am the Spirit of the place
 Could make the mountain bow,
 And quiver to his caverned base –
 And what with me would'st *Thou?* 75

Voice of the Third Spirit

In the blue depth of the waters,
 Where the Wave hath no strife,
 Where the Wind is a stranger,
 And the Sea-Snake hath life,
 Where the Mermaid is decking 80
 Her green hair with shells,
 Like the Storm on the Surface
 Came the sound of thy spells;
 O'er my calm hall of Coral
 The deep Echo rolled – 85
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold!

Fourth Spirit. –

20: Byron re-uses the *vermilion / pavilion* rhyme at *Don Juan II* 731-3.

21: This may interestingly be compared with Shelley's more extended Platonic meditation *Mont Blanc*, written in July 1816, when Shelley was in Byron's company.

22: ALPINE JOURNAL: Byron wrote to Murray, from Venice, October 12th 1817, after the completion not only of *Manfred* but of *Childe Harold IV* and *Beppo*: ... *as to the germs of Manfred – they may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh (part of which you saw) when I went over first the Dent de Jamant & then the Wengeren or Wengeberg Alp & Sheideck and made the giro of the Jungfrau Schreckhorn &c. &c. shortly before I left Switzerland – I have the whole scene of Manfred before me as if it was but yesterday – & could point it out spot by spot, torrent and all* (BLJ V 268). The relevant parts of the Journal will be printed in the appropriate places.

23: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23rd: ... *heard the Avalanches falling every five minutes nearly – as if God was pelting the Devil down from Heaven with snowballs ... I made a snowball & pelted H[obhouse] with it ...* (BLJ V 101-2).

Where the slumbering Earthquake
 Lies pillowed on fire,
 And the lakes of bitumen 90
 Rise boilingly higher –
 Where the roots of the Andes
 Strike deep in the earth,
 As their Summits to heaven
 Shoot soaringly forth – 95
 I have quitted my birthplace
 Thy bidding to bide –
 Thy Spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my Guide! –

Fifth Spirit.

I am the Rider of the Wind,²⁴ 100
 The Stirrer of the storm,
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm,
 To speed to thee – o'er shore and sea
 I swept upon the blast; 105
 The fleet I met sailed well, and yet
 'Twill sink ere Night be past. –

Sixth Spirit.

My dwelling is the Shadow of the Night –
 Why doth thy Magic torture me with Light? –

Seventh Spirit.²⁵

The Star which rules thy destiny 110
 Was ruled, ere Earth begun, by me;
 It was a World as fresh and fair
 As e'er revolved round Sun in air;
 Its course was free and regular;
 Space bosomed not a lovelier star. – 115
 The Hour arrived – and it became
 A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
 A pathless Comet, and a Curse,
 The Menace of the Universe,
 Still rolling on with innate force, 120
 Without a sphere, without a course,
 A bright deformity on high,

24: *I am the Rider of the Wind:* compare *Job 30, 22-3: Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.*

25: Is adapted to an ottava rima idiom at *The Vision of Judgement, Stanza 2:*

*The Angels all were singing out of tune
 And hoarse with having little else to do,
 Excepting to wind up the Sun and Moon,
 Or curb a runaway young Star or two,
 Or wild Colt of a Comet, which too soon
 Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
 Splitting some planet with its playful tail –
 As boats are sometimes by a wanton Whale. –*

The monster of the upper Sky! –
And Thou – beneath its influence born –
Thou Worm! whom I obey and scorn – 125
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend
Where these weak Spirits round thee bend,
And parley with a thing like thee – 130
What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?

The Seven Spirits

Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy Star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their Spirits are –
What would'st thou with us, Son of mortals – Say? 135

Manfred

Forgetfulness. ———

First Spirit

Of what, of whom, and why?

Manfred

Of that which is within me – read it there –
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

Spirit

We can but give thee that which we possess;
Ask of us – subjects – sovereignty – the power 140
O'er earth – the whole – or portion – or a sign
Which shall controul the elements, whereof
We are the dominators each and all –
These shall be thine. –

Manfred

Oblivion – Self-Oblivion –
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms 145
Ye offer so profusely, what I ask?

Spirit

It is not in our essence – in our skill –
But – thou may'st die.

Manfred

Will death bestow it on me?

Spirit

We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal, and to us the past
Is as the future – present. Art thou answered? 150

Manfred

Ye mock me – but the power which brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves – scoff not at my will!
The Mind, the Spirit, the Promethean Spark,
The Lightning of my being is as bright
Pervading – and far-darting as your own, 155
And shall not yield to yours – though cooped in clay.
Answer – or I will teach ye what I am.

Spirit

We answer as we are answered; our reply
Is even in thine own words.

Manfred

Why say ye so? 160

Spirit

If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
We have replied – in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Manfred

I then have called ye from your realms in vain –
Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit

Say – 165
What we possess we offer – it is thine –
Bethink, ere thou dismiss us – ask again –
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days.²⁶ –

Manfred

Accursed! What have I to do with days?
They are too long already – hence – begone! 170

Spirit

Yet pause – being here, our will would do thee service;
Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make, not worthless in thine eyes?

Manfred

No – none; yet stay – one moment, ere we part –

26: ... *ask again, / Kingdom – and sway – and strength – and length of days*: one of the temptations which assail Christ in the wilderness (*Matthew* 4, 8-10) and are too powerful for both Faustus and Faust.

I would behold ye face to face – I hear 175
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds
As Music on the waters²⁷ – and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large Star,
But nothing more – approach me as ye are,
Or one, or all, in your accustomed forms. 180

Spirit

We have no forms, beyond the elements
Of which we are the Mind and Principle –
But chuse a form – in that we will appear.

Manfred

I have no choice – there is no form on earth
Hideous or beautiful to me – let him 185
Who is most powerful of ye take such aspect
As unto him may seem most fitting – Come!

Seventh Spirit

Appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure

Behold!

Manfred

Oh God! if it be thus – and thou
Art not a madness and a mockery –
I yet might be most happy – I will clasp thee, 190
And we again will be –

The figure vanishes

My heart is crushed!

*Manfred falls senseless*²⁸

Incantation.²⁹ –

1.

When the Moon is on the wave,
And the Glowworm in the grass,
And the Meteor on the grave,

27: *Your voices – sweet and melancholy sounds / As Music on the waters:* compare *Stanzas to Music*, 3-4: *And like music on the waters / Is thy sweet voice to me.*

28: Iamblichus, the neo-Platonist philosopher to whom Byron refers below, at II ii 92-4 and n, says this about human reaction to divine apparitions: *The gods when they appear, diffuse a light of so subtle a nature, that the corporeal eyes are not able to bear it; but are affected in the same manner as fishes when they are drawn out of turbid and thick water into attenuated and diaphanous air. For men who behold a divine fire, as soon as they perceive it are scarcely able to breathe, and their connate spirit becomes inclosed in the fire.* – *De Mysteriis*, p. 70, quoted Taylor's Pausanias, III 361-2. Two earlier encounters with spectral women in Byron's poems are at *The Giaour*, 1285-95; and *The Siege of Corinth*, Parts 20-1: and the situation is cunningly inverted in the last Stanzas of *Don Juan* Canto XVI.

29: Lines 192-261 were published in December 1816, in *The Prisoner of Chillon*, with the note "The following Poem was a Chorus in an unfinished Witch Drama, which was begun some years ago".

And the Wisp on the Morass; 195
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered Owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my Soul be upon thine, 200
With a power, and with a sign.

2.

Though thy Slumber may be deep,
Yet thy Spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish, 205
By a Power to thee unknown
Thou can'st never be Alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a Shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud,
And forever shalt thou dwell 210
In the spirit of this spell.

3.

Though thou see'st me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been; 215
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the Spot,
And the power which thou dost feel 220
Shall be what thou must conceal.

4.

And a magic Voice and Verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse,
And a Spirit of the Air
Hath begirt thee with a snare; 225
In the Wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice,
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her Sky,
And the day shall have a Sun, 230
Which shall make thee wish it done.

5.³⁰

From thy false tears I did distill
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest Spring, 235

30: See notes on next page for the relationship between Stanzas 5 and 6 of the Incantation and Coleridge's *Christabel*. However, in terms of rhymes, octosyllabic rhythm and mood the passage owes much also to such sequences as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* II ii 27-4, and *Macbeth* IV i 1-36.

From thy own smile I snatched the Snake,
 For there it coiled as in a brake;
 From thy own lip I drew the charm
 Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
 In proving every poison known, 240
 I found the strongest was thine own.

6.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
 By thy unfathomed gulphs of Guile,
 By that most seeming virtuous eye,³¹ 245
 By thy shut soul's Hypocrisy,
 By the perfection of thine art
 Which passed for human thine own heart,
 By thy delight in others' pain,
 And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
 I call upon thee! and compell 250
 Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

7.

And on thy head I pour the vial
 Which doth devote thee to this trial:
 Nor to slumber – nor to die
 Shall be in thy destiny, 255
 Though thy death shall still seem near
 To thy wish, but as a fear,³²
 Lo! the spell now works around thee,
 And the clankless chain hath bound thee,³³
 O'er thy heart and brain together 260
 Hath the word been passed – now Wither!³⁴

31: Echoes the Ghost's words about Gertrude at *Hamlet*, I v 46: ... *my most seeming-virtuous queen*; however, all of Stanzas 5 and 6 of the Incantation bear a more than usually close relationship, in their preoccupation with serpentine hypocrisy, to the figure of Geraldine in Coleridge's unfinished *Christabel* – some stanzas of which Byron had heard Scott recite in the spring of 1815 (BLJ IV 318) and which had been published by Murray, at Byron's insistence – in April 1816 (BLJ IV 321, 331). Byron had already drawn public attention to his borrowing from the poem in a note to line 476 of *The Siege of Corinth*, published on February 13th 1816 (CPW III 486). He quotes (covertly) from *Christabel* in a letter to Moore of January 5th 1816 (BLJ V 15); recites its opening and others parts to Shelley and his other Geneva friends on June 18th 1816 (LJ IV 296n, Polidori's Diary p. 128); defends it to Murray on September 30th 1816 (BLJ V 108); and by March 25th 1817 – after the completion of the first version of *Manfred* – is joking about it (BLJ V 187 and 193).

32: Echoes Southey's *The Curse of Kehama*:

*And thou shalt seek Death
 To release thee, in vain;
 Thou shalt live in thy pain
 While Kehama shall reign,
 With a fire in thy heart,
 And a fire in thy brain;
 And Sleep shall obey me,
 And visit thee never,
 And the Curse shall be on thee
 For ever and ever.*

See also below, II ii 136 *et. seq.*

33: Complements *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 98: *His spirit withered with their clank.*

Act I, scene ii.

*The Mountain of the Jungfrau. Time, Morning. –
Manfred alone on the cliffs*

Manfred

The Spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I recked of tortured me.
I lean no more on Superhuman aid –
It hath no power upon the past, and for 5
The future, till the past be gulphed in darkness,
It is not of my search. – My Mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day! And you ye Mountains!
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou the bright Eye of the Universe 10
That openest over all – and unto all
Art a delight – thou shin'st not on my heart.³⁵
And you ye Craggs! upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrents' brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs 15
In dizziness of distance,³⁶ when a leap –
A stir – a motion – even a breath – would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest forever – wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse – yet I do not plunge – 20
I see the peril – yet do not recede –
And my brain reels – and yet my foot is firm.
There is a power upon me which witholds,
And makes it my fatality to live,³⁷
If it be life to wear within myself 25

34: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23rd: *Passed whole woods of withered pines – all withered – trunks stripped & barkless – branches lifeless – done by a single winter – their appearance reminded me of me & my family.* (BLJ V 102) See also Antony at *Antony and Cleopatra* IV xii 23-4: ... *and this pine is barked / That overtopped them all*; also Cleopatra at IV xv 64: *O, withered is the garland of the war ...*

35: *And thou – the bright Eye of the Universe! / That openest over all – and unto all / Art a delight; – thou shinest not on my heart:* yet see below, III ii 1-29. Evidently something occurs between now and then to render Manfred more open to the benign influence of the Sun. Charles Robinson (*Shelley and Byron The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight*, p.) draws attention to the parallel with Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1818-19) I i 26-30:

*I ask yon Heaven – the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below –
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me, alas, pain, pain ever, forever!*

36: Echoes the speech of Edgar at *King Lear* IV vi 11-24:

*How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles ...
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock ...*

37: Echoes Othello's words to Iago at V ii 92-3:

*I'd have thee live;
For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die.*

This barrenness of Spirit, and to be
My own Soul's Sepulchre;³⁸ for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself,
The last infirmity of evil.³⁹ –

An Eagle passes.

Thou winged and cloud-cleaving Minister! 30
Whose happy flight is highest into heaven!
Well mayst thou swoop so near me – I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine Eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee, but thine
Yet pierces downward – onward – or above – 35
With a pervading vision: beautiful –
How beautiful is all this visible World!⁴⁰
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns – we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit 40
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our Mortality predominates, 45
And men are what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note

The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.

The natural music of the mountain reed –
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable – pipes in the liberal air, 50
Mixed with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;⁴¹

38: *My own Soul's Sepulchre*: echoes Thomas Taylor's *On the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (1816) p. 37: *Plato, too, it is well known, considered the body as the sepulchre of the soul ...*

39: Echoes Milton, *Lycidas*, 70-2:

*Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of Noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days ...*

40: Compare the Poet's address to the swan in Shelley's *Alastor*, 280-91:

*"Thou hast a home,
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of her own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.*

By contrast, Manfred feels himself altogether inferior to the eagle. In *Prometheus Bound* the protagonist is warned that he will become the prey of eagles: Manfred would welcome the idea.

41: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 19th: *The whole of the Mountain superb – the shepherd upon a very steep & high cliff playing upon his pipe – very different from Arcadia – (where I saw the pastors with with a long Musquet instead of a Crook – and pistols in their Girdles) – our Swiss Shepherd's pipe was sweet – & his time agreeable – saw a cow strayed – told that the often break their necks on & over the crags ... the music of the Cows' bells (for their wealth like the Patriarchs is cattle) in the pastures (which reach to a*

My Soul would drink those echoes. Oh, that I were
The viewless Spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment, born and dying 55
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a Chamois Hunter.

Chamois Hunter

Even so –
This way the Chamois leapt – her nimble feet
Have baffled me – my gains today will scarce
Repay my breakneck travail. What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reached 60
A height which none even of our Mountaineers
Save our best hunters may attain – his garb
Is goodly – his mien manly – and his air
Proud as a freeborn peasant's, at this distance;
I will approach him nearer.

Manfred, not perceiving the other.

To be thus, 65
Grey-haired with anguish, like these blasted pines,
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root
Which but supplies a feeling to Decay;
And to be thus, eternally but thus, 70
Having been otherwise, now furrowed o'er
With wrinkles ploughed by moments, not by years
And hours – all tortured into ages – hours
Which I outlive! Ye toppling crags of Ice!⁴²
Ye Avalanches, whom a breath draws down 75
In mountainous o'erwhelming – Come and crush me!⁴³
I hear ye momentarily above – beneath –
Crash with a frequent conflict – but ye pass,
And only fall on things which still would live
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut 80
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

height far above any mountains in Britain –) and the Shepherds' shouting to us from crag to crag & playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery – realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence – much more so than Greece or Asia Minor – for there we are a little too much of the sabre & musquet order – and if there is a Crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other – but this was pure and unmixed – solitary – savage and patriarchal ... (BLJ V 99)

42: ALPINE JOURNAL: Echoes the entry for September 23rd: *Passed whole woods of withered pines – all withered – trunks stripped & barkless – branches lifeless – done by a single winter – their appearance reminded me of me & my family. (BLJ V 102). See also Shelley's Alastor, 530-2:*

*... nought but knarled roots of antient pines
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly.*

... also Antony at Antony and Cleopatra IV xii 23-4: ... and this pine is barked / That overtopped them all; and Cleopatra at IV xv 64: O, withered is the garland of the war ...

43: Recalls *Doctor Faustus* V ii 163-4:

*Mountains and hills come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God.*

Chamois Hunter

The Mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose his way and life together.

Manfred

The Mists boil up around the Glaciers, Clouds⁴⁴ 85
Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused Ocean of deep Hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore
Heaped with the damned like pebbles. – I am giddy.

Chamois Hunter

I must approach him cautiously – if near, 90
A sudden step will startle him, and he
Seems tottering already.⁴⁵

Manfred

Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Rocking their Alpine brethren, filling up
The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters, 95
Damming the rivers with a sudden dash
That crushed the waters into mist, and made
Their fountains find another channel; thus,
Thus in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg⁴⁶ –

44: Echoes the entry for September 23rd: *on the other [side] the clouds rose from the opposite valley curling up perpendicular precipices – like the foam of the the Ocean of Hell during a Springtide – it was white & sulphery – and immeasurably deep in appearance ...* (BLJ V 102). See also a letter to Murray of September 29th: *we have ... looked on the clouds foaming up from the valleys below us – like the spray from the ocean of hell ...* (BLJ V 106). See also Shakespeare, Sonnet 60, lines 1-2:

*Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end ...*

45: For Manfred's encounter with the Chamois Hunter, compare Shelley's *Alastor*, 257–62:

*The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
In its career ...*

Byron's mountaineer is guilty of no such misapprehension.

46: Mount Rosenberg: in fact, Rossberg. On September 2nd 1806 a huge fragment of the mountain, which is near Goldau, slid into the valley below, overwhelming four villages and killing four hundred and fifty people. Hobhouse's diary for August 21st 1816, made while he and Scrope Davies were travelling through Switzerland to join Byron at Diodati, reads *Up at seven. Better – breakfasted at the Stag, which is a very good inn, and where we heard the landlady relate the story of the falling of the Rossberg mountain at Goldau, when she had a party that left her thirteen in the morning and came back six, the rest being killed, and naively related the saying of a gentleman who escaped – a Mr. Schmidt: "Je ne serai pas tranquille avant de quitter la Suisse – dont les montagnes décroulent comme ça!" or some such words, which he kept good by leaving the country instantly. A woman who escaped, though she was for a short time buried, thought the day of judgement was come. Nearly two villages were overwhelmed. General Pfyffer, the [] topographer of this part of the country, who died in 1800 at his house in Zurich, foretold from a view of the strata that such a catastrophe was probable. – B.L.Add. Mss. 56536, 81r.–v.*

Why stood I not beneath it?

Chamois Hunter

Friend, have a care! 100
Your next step may be fatal – for the love
Of him who made you,⁴⁷ stand not on that brink!

Manfred, *not hearing him.*

Such would have been for me a fitting tomb –
My bones had then been quiet in their depth –
They had not been strewn upon the rocks 105
For the wind's pastime, as thus, thus, they shall be
In this one plunge. Farewell, ye opening Heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully,
Ye were not meant for me.⁴⁸ Earth! Take these atoms!

*As Manfred is in act to spring from the cliff,
the Chamois Hunter seizes
and retains him with a sudden grasp.*

Chamois Hunter

Hold, Madman! though weary of thy life, 110
Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood –
Away with me! I will not quit my hold!

Manfred

I am most sick at heart⁴⁹ – nay – grasp me not –
I am all feebleness – the Mountains whirl
Spinning around me – I grow blind – what art thou? 115

Chamois Hunter

I'll answer that anon – away with me –
The clouds grow thicker – there – now lean on me –
Place your foot here – here – take this staff, and cling
A moment to that Shrub – now – give me your hand,
And hold fast by my Girdle – softly – well – 120
The Chalet will be gained within an hour.
Come on – we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath washed since winter. Come – 'tis bravely done –

47: ... *for the love / Of him who made you*: the voice of orthodox Christianity heard for the first time in the play.

48: *Farewell, ye opening heavens – / Look not upon me thus reproachfully – ye were not meant for me ...* find themselves inverted in the death of the eldest son of the old Tartar Khan, at *Don Juan VIII*, Stanza 115:

*So fully flashed the phantom on his eyes,
That when the very lance was in his heart
He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
With all its veil of mystery drawn apart –
And bright Eternity without disguise
On his soul, like a ceaseless Sunrise, dart –
With Prophets – Houris – Angels – Saints – descried
In one voluptuous blaze – and then he died ...*

49: Echoes Macbeth's *I am sick at heart* at V iii 20.

You should have been a Hunter – follow me.

125

*As they descend the rocks with difficulty,
the Scene closes. –
End of Act the first.*

Act II scene i.

*A cottage amongst the Bernese Alps –
Manfred and the Chamois Hunter.*

Chamois Hunter

No, no, yet pause – thou must not yet go forth;
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other for some hours at least;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide –
But whither? 5

Manfred

It imports not – I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.⁵⁰ –

Chamois Hunter

Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high race –
One of the many chiefs whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys⁵¹ – which of these
May call thee Lord? I only know their portals – 10
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals – but the paths
Which step from out our mountains to their doors
I know from childhood – which of these is thine? – 15

Manfred

No matter. — — —

Chamois Hunter

Well Sir! pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer – come – taste my wine –
'Tis of an ancient vintage – many a day
T'has thawed my veins among our Glaciers – now –
Let it do thus for thine. Come – pledge me fairly! – 20

Manfred

Away! Away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never – never – sink in the earth?⁵²

Chamois Hunter

What dost thou mean? Thy senses wander from thee!

50: Echoes the words of Gloucester at *King Lear* IV i 78-9: *From that place / I shall no leading need.*

51: *One of the many chiefs – whose castled crags / Look o'er the lower valleys:* recalls *Childe Harold III*, Stanzas 46-9, and the lyric *The castled crag of Drachenfels* between Stanzas 55 and 56. The poem was written earlier in 1816.

52: *Away – Away – there's blood upon the brim – / Will it then never – never – sink in the earth:* echoes Lady Macbeth in V i.

Manfred

I say 'tis blood – my blood – the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours, 25
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love;
And this was shed – but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven,⁵³
Where thou art not – and I shall never be.⁵⁴ – 30

Chamois Hunter

Man of strange words – and some half-maddening sin
That makes thee people vacancy⁵⁵ – whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet –
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience –

Manfred

Patience, and Patience! Hence! that word was made 35
For brutes of burthen – not for birds of prey;⁵⁶
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine –
I am not of thine order.⁵⁷

Chamois Hunter

Thanks to heaven!
I would not be of thine, for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill, 40
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.⁵⁸

Manfred

Do I not bear it? – look on me – I live. –

53: ... *still it rises up / Colouring the clouds that shut me out from heaven*: compare Faustus at V ii 156-7: *See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament! One drop of it would save my soul – half a drop!*

54: ... *heaven, / Where thou art not – and I shall never be*: the addressee is clearly not the Chamois Hunter; Manfred may be addressing the absent Astarte, who would thus seem not, in her brother's opinion, to be among the blessed. However, Samuel Chew (*Lord Byron's Dramas*, p. 70) wonders if this and other lines form a riddle indicating that Astarte is not dead; in which case we must perhaps read an understood "yet" between not and and. Either that, or Astarte's soul, thanks to her union with Manfred, has been extinguished in the "death more durable and profound" which Thomas Taylor asserts will be the lot of "souls in a state of impurity". See also II ii 198-9, II iv 83, and nn.

55: *some half-maddening sin / That makes thee people vacancy*: echoes Gertrude's words to *Hamlet* at III iv 116-18:

*Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th'incorporeal air do hold discourse?*

56: *Patience – and Patience – hence – that word was made / For brutes of burthen not for birds of prey*: compare *Faust*, Scene IV, 1605-6: *Fluch sei der Hoffnung! Fluch dem Glauben, / Und Fluch vor allen der Geduld!* See also *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV xv, 79-80: *Patience is sottish, and impatience does / Become a dog that's mad.*

57: Recalls (perhaps inadvertently) the words of Malvolio to Maria, Sir Toby and Fabian at *Twelfth Night* III iv 118-19: *You are idle shallow things: I am not of your element.*

58: Echoes the words of Lady Macbeth to Macbeth at III iv: *O, these flaws and starts – / Impostors to true fear* ...

Chamois Hunter

This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Manfred

I tell thee, Man! – I have lived many years –
Many long years – but they are nothing now 45
To those which I must number – ages – ages –
Space and eternity – and consciousness –
With the fierce thirst of death – and still unslaked. – –

Chamois Hunter

Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set – I am thy elder far. – 50

Manfred

Thinks't thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth – but actions are our epochs – mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable⁵⁹ –
Endless, and all alike – as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms, and one desert, 55
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests save carcasses and wrecks –
Rocks – and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.⁶⁰ –

Chamois Hunter

Alas! he's mad – but yet I must not leave him.⁶¹ –

Manfred

I would I were – for then the things I see 60
Would be but a distempered dream.

Chamois Hunter

What is it

That thou dost see – or think thou looks't upon?

59: *Thinks't thou existence doth depend on time? – / It doth – but actions are our epochs:* echoes *Childe Harold* III, 5, 1-2:

*He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of night ...*

60: Anticipates the description of Sathan at Stanza 24 of *The Vision of Judgement*:

*But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved –
His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost –
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face –
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.*

See also *Don Juan II* Stanza 177.

61: *Alas, he's mad:* the words of Gertrude at *Hamlet*, III iv 105.

Manfred

Myself and thee – a Peasant of the Alps –
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And Spirit patient, pious, proud, and free – 65
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts,
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep – thy toils
By danger dignified, yet guiltless – hopes
Of cheerful old age – and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf, 70
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph⁶² –
This do I see – and then I look within –
It matters not – my Soul was scorched already.

Chamois Hunter

And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

Manfred

No, Friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange 75
My lot with living being; I can bear,
However wretchedly – 'tis still to bear –
In life what others could not brook to dream –
But perish in their slumber.

Chamois Hunter

And with this –
This cautious feeling for another's pain – 80
Can'st thou be black with evil? Say not so!
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked revenge
Upon his enemies?

Manfred

Oh, no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me –
On those whom I best loved – I never quelled 85
An enemy but in my just defence;
My wrongs were all on those I should have cherished,
But my embrace was fatal. – –

Chamois Hunter

Heaven give thee rest,
And Penitence restore thee to thyself!
My prayers shall be for thee –

Manfred

I need them not, 90
But can endure thy pity. I depart –
'Tis time. Farewell – here's Gold, and thanks for thee –
No words – it is thy due. Follow me not –

62: Echoes Gray, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, stanzas 6-9.

I know my path – the mountain peril’s past,
And once again I charge thee, follow not. –

95

Exit Manfred.

End of scene first. –

Act II scene ii.

A lower valley in the Alps – a cataract. –

Enter Manfred

It is not noon – the Sunbow’s rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven, *
And rolls the sheeted silver’s waving column
O’er the crag’s headlong perpendicular,
And flings its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser’s tail,
The Giant steed to be bestrode by Death
As told in the Apocalypse.⁶³ No eyes

5

* Note) This Iris is formed by the rays of the Sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents. It is exactly like a rainbow come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it. This effect lasts till Noon. –

But mine now drink this sight of loveliness –
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.⁶⁴ – I will call her. –

10

*Manfred takes some of the water in the palm of
his hand and flings it in to the air, muttering the
adjuration.⁶⁵ – After a pause the Witch of the Alps*

63: *like the pale courser’s tail / The giant steed to be bestrode by Death / As told in the Apocalypse: see Revelation 6, 8: And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.*

64: ALPINE JOURNAL: the lines, and the scene which follow, echo the entries for September 22nd and 23rd, when Byron and Hobhouse lodged opposite the Staubbach waterfall, near Lauterbrunnen: ... *Arrived at the foot of the Mountain (the Yung-frau – i.e. the Maiden) Glaciers – torrents – one of these torrents nine hundred feet in height of visible descent – lodge at the Curate’s ... very good indeed – much better than most English Vicarages – it is immediately opposite the torrent I spoke of – the torrent is in shape curving over the rock – like the tail of a white horse streaming in the wind – such as it might be conceived might be that of the “pale horse” on which Death is mounted in the Apocalypse. It is neither mist nor water but a something between both – it’s immense height (nine hundred feet) gives it a wave – a curve – a spreading here – a condensation there – wonderful – & indescribable. – / Septr. 23d. / Before ascending the mountain – went to the torrent (7 in the morning) again – the Sun upon it forming a rainbow of the lower part of all colours – but principally purple and gold – the bow moving as you move – I never saw anything like this – it is only in the Sunshine. – (BLJ V 101)*

65: Manfred’s ritual action may have been suggested by the following note to Thomas Taylor’s Pausanias: ... *the oracle in Colophon gives its answers through the medium of water: for there is a fountain in a subterranean dwelling, from which the prophetess drinks; and on certain established nights, after many sacred rites have been previously performed, and she has drunk of the fountain, she delivers oracles, but is not visible to those that are present ... the water itself ... prepares us, and purifies our luciform spirit, so that we may be able to*

rises beneath the arch of the Sunbow of the torrent.

Manfred

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of Glory, in whose form
The charms of Earth's least-mortal daughters grow 15
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements, while the hues of Youth,
Carnationed like a sleeping infant's cheek
Rocked by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose-tints which Summer's twilight leaves 20
Upon the lofty Glacier's virgin snow –
The blush of Earth when mingling with her heaven –
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the Sunbow which bends o'er thee
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow, 25
Wherein is glassed Serenity of Soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth – whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them, if that he 30
Avail him of his spells, to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment. –

Witch of the Alps

Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill – extreme in both – 35
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this. What would'st thou with me?

Manfred

To look upon thy beauty, nothing further;
The face of the Earth hath maddened me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries – and pierce 40
To the abodes of those who govern her:
But they can nothing aid me – I have sought
From them what they could not bestow – and now
I search no further. – – – –

Witch of the Alps

What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful, 45
The Rulers of the Invisible?⁶⁶

Manfred

A boon –

receive the divinity; while in the mean time there is a presence of divinity prior to this, and illuminating from on high – (Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, p. 72ff, quoted Taylor's Pausanias III 353).

66: *the most powerful / The Rulers of the invisible:* evidently the Seven Spirits in I i answer this description.

But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

Witch of the Alps

I know not that – let thy lips utter it. –

Manfred⁶⁷

Well – though it torture me – 'tis but the same –
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards, 50
My Spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes.
The thirst of their Ambition was not mine –
The aim of their existence was not mine –
My joys – my griefs – my passions and my powers 55
Made me a stranger, though I wore the form
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor mid' st the Creatures of Clay that girded me
Was there but One who – but of her anon.
I said with men and with the thoughts of men 60
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the Wilderness – to breathe
The difficult air of the iced Mountain's top
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless Granite;⁶⁸ or to plunge 65
Into the torrent – or to roll along
In the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of River–Stream or Ocean in their flow –
In these my early Strength exulted;⁶⁹ or
To follow through the Night the moving Moon⁷⁰ 70
The Stars and their development – or catch
The dazzling Lightnings till my eyes grew dim,
Or to look, listening, on the scattered leaves,
While Autumn Winds were at their Evening–Song;
These were my pastimes – and to be alone. – – 75
For if the beings of whom I was one
Hating to be so, crossed me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived
In my lone wanderings to the caves of death, 80
Searching its cause in its effect,⁷¹ and drew
From withered bones, and skulls, and heaped–up dust,
Conclusions most forbidden.⁷² Then I passed

67: The long speech of Manfred from 49-97 is perhaps the most obvious point at which Byron is writing a riposte to *Alastor*: see especially lines 18-49 of Shelley's poem. But see also above, I ii 29-36n, 65-74n, 90n, this speech, 81-3n, and below, II iv, 144-5n.

68: Echoes *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 238: *Or shrubless crags within the mist ...*

69: Byron was himself an accomplished swimmer from youth.

70: Echoes *The Ancient Mariner*, 263: *The moving moon went up the sky / And nowhere did abide ...*

71: Byron may intend a reference here to Aeneas' descent into Hades in *Aeneid* Book VI, which is according to Thomas Taylor a metaphor for or parable about the Soul's entombment in the Body.

72: E.H.Coleridge refers to the meditation on death at *Childe Harold II* Stanzas 5-6:

*Look on its broken arch, its ruined wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul:
Behold, through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,*

The nights of years in sciences untaught, Save in the old-time; and with time and toil, And weary vigils, and unbroken fasts, ⁷³ And terrible Ordeal, and such penance As in itself has power upon the Air, And Spirits that do compass Air and Earth, Space and the peopled Infinite, I made	85
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity – Such as before me did the Magi, and He who from out their fountain-dwellings raised Eros and Anteros at Gadara,* ⁷⁴ As I do thee – and with my knowledge grew	90 95

* The philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros and Anteros may be found in his life by Eunapius.⁷⁵ It is well told. –

The thirst of knowledge – and the power and joy

*The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion's host, that never brooked control:
Can all saint, sage, or sophist ever writ
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?*

Compare also the Narrator (not the protagonist Poet) in Shelley's *Alastor*, 23-9:

*I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are.*

73: This line appears in the rough draft, not in the fair copy, and has been ignored by everyone until now. See Cochran, *A Note on the Text of Manfred Act II, Byron Journal*, 1994, p. 79.

74: Refers to the following dualistic myth, as reported by Thomas Taylor in a note to his translation of Pausanias: The demon Anteros.] *Of this power, who avenges the injuries of lovers, the following remarkable story is told by Eunapius in his Life of Jamblichus: "This philosopher went with his disciples to Gadara in Syria, a place so famous for baths, that after Baiae in Campania it is the second in the Roman empire. Here a dispute about baths arising while they were bathing, Jamblichus smiling said to them: 'Though what I am to disclose is not pious, yet for your sakes it shall be undertaken;' and at the same time he ordered his disciples to enquire of the natives, what appellations had been formerly given to two of the hot fountains, which were indeed less than the others, but more elegant. Upon enquiry, they found themselves unable to discover the cause of their nomination; but were informed that the one was called Eros or Love, and the other Anteros, or the god who avenges the injuries of lovers. Jamblichus immediately touching the water with his hand (for he sat, perhaps, on the margin of the fountain), and murmuring a few words, raised from the bottom of the fountain a fair boy, of a moderate stature, whose hair seemd to be tinged with gold, and the upper part of whose breast was of a luminous appearance. His companions being astonished at the novelty of the affair, Let us pass on, says he, to the next fountain; and at the same time he arose, fixed in thought, and, performing the same ceremonies as before, called forth the other Love, who was in all respects similar to the former, except that his hair scattered in his neck was blacker, and was like the sun in refulgence. At the same time, both boys eagerly embraced Jamblichus, as if he had been their natural parent: but he immediately restored them to their proper seats, and, when he had washed, departed from the place."* – *The Description of Greece by Pausanias* (1794) III 251-2. Iamblichus (who died c. 330 A.D.) was a Syrian neo-Platonist philosopher, said to have been much admired by Julian the Apostate. Byron wishes us to see Manfred as an investigator of Neo-Platonic spiritual mysteries – although the text as a whole does not finally bear a Neo-Platonic interpretation.

75: In the rough draft this note reads + *the Philosopher Iamblichus – the story of the raising of Eros & Anteros may be found in his Life by Eunapius – <or quoted in the notes to Taylor's Pausanias>*; rough draft, bottom of Sheet 11 sides 2 and 3. See *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics, Byron I* (Garland 1986) pp. 66-7.

Of this most bright Intelligence – until –

Witch of the Alps

Proceed. –

Manfred

Oh! I but thus prolonged my words,
Boasting these idle attributes – because, 100
As I approach the core of my heart's grief –
But – to my task – I have not named to thee
Father, or mother, mistress, friend, or being
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seemed not such to me – 105
Yet there was One – –

Witch of the Alps

Spare not thyself – Proceed –

Manfred

She was like me in lineaments – her eyes
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said, were like to mine,
But softened all and tempered into beauty⁷⁶ – 110
She had the same lone thoughts, and wanderings –
The Quest of hidden knowledge, and a Mind
To comprehend the Universe – nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine –
Pity, and smiles, and tears, which I had not – 115
And tenderness – but that I had for her –
Humility – and that I never had –
Her faults were mine – her virtues were her own –
I loved her and destroyed her –

Witch of the Alps

With thy hand?

Manfred

Not with my hand but Heart, which broke her Heart; 120
It gazed on mine and withered. I have shed
Blood, but not hers – and yet her blood was shed –
I saw, and could not staunch it. –

Witch of the Alps

And for this,
A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above, 125
Mingling with us and ours – thou dost forego

76: Echoes the words of Sebastian to Antonio at *Twelfth Night*, II i 21-3: *A lady sir, though it was said she much resembled me, was yet of many accounted beautiful.*

The Gifts of our great knowledge – and shrink'st back
To recreant Mortality – Away! – –

Manfred

Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour –
But words are breath.⁷⁷ Look on me in my sleep, 130
Or watch my watchings – come and sit by me!
My Solitude is Solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies – I have gnashed
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till Sunset. I have prayed 135
For madness as a blessing – 'tis denied me. –
I have affronted Death – but in the war
Of Elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless⁷⁸ – the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless Demon held me back, 140
Back by a single hair which would not break. –
In phantasy, Imagination, all
The Affluence of my Soul, which one day was
A Croesus in Creation,⁷⁹ I plunged deep –
But like an ebbing wave it dashed me back 145
Into the Gulph of my unfathomed Thought;
I plunged amidst Mankind – Forgetfulness –
I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found,
And that I have to learn – my Sciences,
My long pursued and superhuman art, 150
Is mortal here – I dwell in my despair,
And live, and live forever.

Witch of the Alps

It may be

That I can aid thee.

Manfred

To do this thy power
Must wake the dead – or lay me low with them;
Do so, in any shape, in any hour – 155
With any torture – so it be the last. –

Witch of the Alps

77: Echoes the words of Falstaff at *Henry IV i V i* 132: *What is that honour? Air.*

78: *in the war / Of elements the waters shrunk from me / And fatal things passed harmless:* compare *The Curse of Kehama*:

*And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee ...*

See also above, I i 254-7.

79: *The affluence of my Soul which one day was / A Croesus in creation:* Croesus was the legendarily wealthy King of Lydia in the sixth century B.C.

That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

Manfred

I will not swear – obey! and whom? the Spirits 160
Whose presence I command? and be the slave
Of those who served me? Never.

Witch of the Alps

Is this all?
Hast thou no gentler answer?⁸⁰ Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.

Manfred

I have said it. –

Witch of the Alps

Enough – I may retire then – Say!

Manfred

Retire! 165

The Witch disappears.

Manfred alone.

We are the fools of time and terror; days
Steal on us and steal from us, yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die
In all the days of this detested yoke –
This heaving burthen, this accursed breath – 170
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony, or faintness –
In all the days of past and future – for
In life there is no present – we can number 175
How few, how less than few! wherein the Soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter,⁸¹ though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science – I can call the dead, 180
And ask them what it is we dread to be;
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing – if they answer not –
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor;⁸² and the Spartan Monarch drew 185

80: *Hast thou no gentler answer – yet bethink thee:* compare the words of the Duke of Venice to Shylock at *The Merchant of Venice* IV i 33: *We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.*

81: *... not an hour – wherein the Soul / Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back / As from a stream in winter:* echoes Psalm 42, 1: *As the hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

From the Byzantine Maid's unsleeping Spirit
 An answer, and his destiny – he slew
 That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
 And died unpardoned, though he called in aid
 The Phyxian Jove, and in Phygalia roused 190
 The Arcadian Evocators, to compel
 The indignant Shadow to depose her wrath,
 Or fix her term of vengeance – she replied
 In words of dubious import, but fulfilled.⁸³ –
 If I had never lived, that which I love 195
 Had still been living; had I never loved,
 That which I love would still be beautiful,
 Happy and giving happiness – what is She?⁸⁴

The Story of Pausanias King of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platea, and was afterwards punished for attempting to betray the Lacedemonians) and Cleonice is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon, and in the Laconics of Pausanias the Sophist in his Description of Greece.

What is she now? A sufferer for my sins,
 A thing I dare not think upon, or nothing. 200
 Within few hours I shall not call in vain,
 Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare;
 Until this hour I never shrank to gaze
 On Spirit good or evil – now I tremble,
 And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart; 205
 But I can act even what I most abhor,
 And champion human Fears – the Night approaches.

Exit Manfred.

82: For Saul and the Witch of Endor, see *II Samuel* 28 7 -5.

83: *The Spartan Monarch* is Pausanias, the general who, having beaten the Persians at Plataea, then negotiated with them with a view to becoming ruler of all Greece: a mixture of renegade, Macbeth, and Tarquinius Superbus, as the relevant part of his story, told thus in North's Plutarch, shows: ... *King Pausanias being on a time in the city of Byzance, sent for Cleonicé, a young maiden of noble house, to take his pleasure of her. Her parents durst not keep her from him, by reason of his cruelty, but suffered him to carry her away. The young gentlewoman prayed the groom of Pausanias' chamber to take away the lights, and thinking in the dark to come to Pausanias' bed that was asleep, groping for the bed as softly as she could to make no noise, she unfortunately hit against the lamp, and overthrew it. The falling of the lamp made such a noise that it wakened him on the sudden, and thought straight therewithal that some of his enemies had been come traitorously to kill him, whereupon he took his dagger lying under his bed's head, and so stabbed it in the young virgin, that she died immediately upon it. Howbeit she never let Pausanias take rest after that, because her spirit came every night and appeared unto him, as he would fain have slept, and spake this angrily to him in verse, as followeth: "Keep thou thyself upright, and justice see thou fear, / For woe and shame be unto him that justice down doth bear".* Taylor's Pausanias takes up the story: *This was the deed, from the guilt of which Pausanias could never fly, though he employed all-various purifications, received the deprecations of Jupiter Phyxius, and went to Phigalea to the Arcadian evocators (line 190) of souls. He therefore suffered a just punishment for his behaviour towards Cleonice, and divinity itself. – The Description of Greece by Pausanias (1794) I 304-5.* The full reference is *Pausanias III (Lakonia) XVII, 8.* Jupiter Phyxius was a god who assisted fugitives. Pausanias (the tyrant) was finally captured by his enemies, bricked up in a temple, and starved to death.

84: *What is she now? A sufferer for my sins, / A thing I dare not think upon, or nothing:* enlarges the hint at II i 30, that Manfred does not know whether Astarte is suffering in a Christian afterlife, or whether she has suffered a Neo-Platonic death of the soul for sharing in his blasphemous abominations. See also II ii 83 and n.

*Act II scene iii.*⁸⁵

*The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.
Enter First Destiny.*⁸⁶

First Destiny

The Moon is rising broad and round and bright,
And here, on snows where never human foot
Of common mortal trod,⁸⁷ we nightly tread
And leave no traces; o'er the savage Sea,
The glassy Ocean of the mountain ice, 5
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam
Frozen in a moment – a dead Whirlpool's image.⁸⁸
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fret-work of some Earthquake, where the Clouds 10
Pause to repose themselves in passing by,
Is sacred to our revels – or our vigils.
Here do I wait my sisters – on our way
To the Hall of Arimanes – for tonight
Is our great festival – tis strange they come not. 15

A Voice without singing.

The Captive Usurper⁸⁹
Hurl'd down from the throne
Lay buried in torpor –
Forgotten and lone –
I broke through his slumbers 20
I shiver'd his chain –
I leagu'd him with Numbers –
He's Tyrant again!
With the blood of a million he'll answer my care
With a Nation's destruction – his flight and despair. 25

Second Voice without

The Ship sailed on – Ship sailed fast –
But I left not a sail – and I left not a mast –
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck –

85: Act II scenes iii and iv should be compared with *Macbeth* IV i *passim*: Manfred commands the scene where Macbeth only thinks he does. This gives Shakespeare opportunities for irony which Byron eschews. II iii also echoes Coleridge's *Famine, Fire and Slaughter*, which Polidori (*Diary*, p. 115) reports Mary Shelley to have recited on June 1st 1816. More remote influences may be the *Auerbachs Keller*, *Hexenküche*, and *Walpurgisnacht* scenes from *Faust*; although Faust takes only an observer's role in the first two of these, and Goethe's scenes are squalid and farcical where Byron's is solemn.

86: The *Destinies* are the three Fates, Lachesis, who determines man's lot at birth, Clotho, who spins the thread of life, and Atropos, who cuts it at death. According to Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, even Zeus has to bow to them (though what they will ultimately decree for him is left ambiguous).

87: ... *here on snows where never human foot / Of common mortal trod*: Byron ignores the fact that the Jungfrau had been climbed, in 1811. Compare *Childe Harold* IV, 73, 6-7: *But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear / Her never-trodden snow ...*

88: ALPINE JOURNAL: echoes the entry for September 23rd: ... *mounted again & rode to the higher Glacier – twilight – but distinct – very fine Glacier – like a frozen hurricane ...* (BLJ V 102).

89: The Captive Usurper is Napoleon. CPW (IV 473) comments, "The Spirit prophecies that Napoleon will return from St. Helena as he had from Elba."

And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck,
 Save one, whom I held as he swum by the hair, * 30
 And he was a subject well worthy my care –
 A traitor on land, and a Pirate at sea,⁹⁰
 But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me.⁹¹

First Destiny, *answering*

The City lies sleeping;
 The Morn, to deplore it, 35
 May dawn on it weeping.
 Sullenly, slowly,
 The black Plague flew o'er it –
 Thousands lie lowly;
 Tens of thousands shall perish – 40
 The living shall fly from
 The Sick they should cherish;
 But nothing can vanquish
 The touch that they die from;
 Sorrow and Anguish, 45
 And Evil and Dread,
 Envelope a Nation;
 The blest are the dead,
 Who see not the sight
 Of their own desolation. – 50
 This work of a Night,
 This wreck of a realm, this deed of my doing,
 For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing.

Enter the Second and Third Destinies

The Three

Our hands contain the hearts of men –
 Our footsteps are their graves –
 We only give to take again 55
 The Spirits of our Slaves. –

First Destiny

Welcome – Where's Nemesis?

Second Destiny

90: ... *one, whom I held as he swum by the hair, / And he was a subject well worthy my care - / A traitor on land, and a Pirate at sea, / But I saved to wreak further havoc for me:* E.H.Coleridge detects a reference to Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald (1775-1860) highly successful admiral – a *Pirate at sea*. Implicated unfairly in a financial scandal he had been imprisoned by the establishment enemies he had made in his exposure of Admiralty corruption (Byron's *A traitor on land* seems ironic). On March 11th 1815, Hobhouse had received a letter from his father announcing the simultaneous escapes of Napoleon from Elba and Cochrane from Newgate. Both were recaptured. Cochrane later became famous as the friend and naval assistant of Simon Bolivar; although Byron could not have known in 1816 that that was to be the case, the Second Voice's *I saved him to wreak further havoc for me* is in a way prophetic, if we take the demons to be proponents of political upheaval and freedomfighting.

91: The Second Voice's speech at 26-33 derives from *Macbeth* I iii 7-25: *Her husband's from Aleppo gone, / Master o'th'Tiger; / But in a sieve I'll thither sail, / And like a rat without a tail, / I'll do, and I'll do, and I'll do ... Though his bark cannot be lost, / Yet it shall be tempest-tossed ... Here I have a pilot's thumb, / Wracked as homeward he did come ...*

At some great work,
But what I know not – for my hands were full.

Third Destiny.

Behold, she cometh!

*Enter Nemesis.*⁹²

First Destiny

Say, where hast thou been? 60
My Sisters and thyself are slow tonight.⁹³ –

Nemesis

I was detained repairing shattered thrones,⁹⁴
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies
And making them repent their own revenge; 65
Goadng the wise to madness, from the dull
Shaping out Oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date;
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
And weigh kings in the balance, and to speak 70
Of Freedom, the forbidden fruit.⁹⁵ Away!
We have outstaid the hour – mount we our Clouds! –

Exeunt.

92: *Nemesis*: Originally a minor female deity, she became synonymous with Retribution. Using her alternative name, Adrasteia, Aeschylus in *Prometheus Bound*, warns men to fear her. When proof-reading the fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* (written the year after *Manfred*) William Gifford came across a repetition he was starting to find onerous, and chid Byron in the margin: *Recollect you have Nemesis again*. Byron was unrepentant: *I know it – and if I had her ten times would not alter once – she is my particular belief and acquaintance – and I wont blaspheme against her for any body* (CPW II 330). Taylor's Pausanias has this to say about her: *Proclus on Hesiod informs us that Nemesis was celebrated in hymns as the angel of justice; and that she is represented by Hesiod clothed in a white garment, because she is an intellectual power, far removed from the atheistic and dark essence of the passions* (III 201).

93: Compare *Macbeth*, I iii 1-3: *Where hast thou been, sister? – Killing swine. – Sister, where thou?* and so on.

94: *I was detained repairing shattered thrones* ... Nemesis is seen operating in recent history through the restorations which were effected at the Congress of Vienna.

95: Byron's concept of Nemesis as the protector of tyrants may be contrasted with the role assumed by Sathan in *The Vision of Judgement*, where he pretends, at least, to be the spokesman for freedom. There are feeling references to Nemesis in letters of January 28th and February 3rd 1817 (BLJ V 165 and 168) which perhaps indicate when Byron was writing this scene. In another letter, to Lady Byron, of November 18th 1818, he writes, *It was not in vain that I invoked Nemesis in the Midnight of Rome from the awfulest of her Ruins* (BLJ VI 81). It was while in Rome that he wrote his new version of the Third Act – see below, III iv, first speech. The letter relates to the death of Sir Samuel Romilly, which Byron seems to see as a result of his invocation.

Act II scene iv.

The Hall of Arimanes. --

*Arimanes on his throne, a globe of fire;⁹⁶
surrounded by the Spirits. ----*

Hymn of the Spirits.⁹⁷

Hail to our Master, Prince of Earth and Air!⁹⁸
Who walks the Clouds and Waters; in his hand
The sceptre of the Elements, which tear
Themselves to Chaos at his high command!
He breatheth, and a tempest shakes the sea – 5
He speaketh, and the Clouds reply in thunder –
He gazeth – from his Glance the Sunbeams flee;
He moveth – Earthquakes rend the World asunder –
Beneath his Footsteps the Volcanoes rise –
His Shadow is the Pestilence; his path 10
The Comets herald through the burning skies,
And Planets turn to ashes at his wrath. –
To him War offers daily sacrifice –
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,
With all its Infinite of agonies, 15
And his the Spirit of whatever is.⁹⁹

Enter the Destinies and Nemesis.

First Destiny

Glory to Arimanes! On the earth
His power increaseth; both my sisters did

96: *Arimanes on his throne – a Globe of fire – surrounded by the Spirits:* echoes *Vathek*: An infinity of elders with streaming beards, and afrits in complete armour, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence; on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair: his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre, that causes the monster Ouranbad, the afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble. (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, pp. 110-11.) For Arimanes (who is a separate being in *Vathek*) see D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, entry for *Aherman* ou *Ahermen*: C'est ainsi que les anciens Persans appelloient le principe du mal, opposé à *Armozd* ou *Ormuzd*, principe du bien. Les Grecs & les Latins les ont appellés *Arimanius* & *Oramazdes*, lorsqu'ils ont expliqué la doctrine de *Zoroastre* touchant les deux principes. ... Un ... Poète Persien, nommé *Assedi*, dit que le propre d'*Ahermen* est de semer par tout la discorde. Les anciens Romains de Perse nous racontent des merveilles de la montagne d'*Ahermen*: car ils disent que c'est en ce lieu-là que les démons s'assemblent pour y recevoir les ordres de leur Prince, & qu'ils partent pour aller exercer leur malice dans toutes les parties du monde – *Bibliothèque Orientale* (1781-3) I 184. *Ahriman*, god of darkness, was the twin brother of *Ormuzd*, god of light, in Zoroastrian belief. Byron seems anxious to keep both Christian myth and, now, Neo-Platonism, at arms' length: but see next note.

97: Noticeable here is the absence of Alpine imagery: Byron has now put the *Alpine Journal* behind him as a source.

98: *Hail to our Master, Prince of Earth and Air!*: see *Ephesians* 2,2: ... in past time ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the Prince of the power of the air ... At *The Vision of Judgement* 305, *Sathan* is referred to as *The Prince of Air*. See also Pope, *Epistle to Bathurst*, 353.

99: May be compared with the following part of a letter from Shelley to Peacock, written on July 22nd 1816 after viewing Mont Blanc and the Vale of Chamounix, before parting company with Byron: *Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death & frost, sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the unsparing hand of necessity, & that he casts round him as the first assays of his final usurpation avalanches, torrents, rocks & thunders – and above all, these deadly glaciers at once the proofs & symbols of his reign* (LPBS I 499).

Fourth Spirit

'Twill be taught thee.

Manfred

'Tis taught already. Many a night on the earth
On the bare ground have I bowed down my face,
And strewed my head with ashes. I have known
The fullness of humiliation, for 40
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation. –

Fifth Spirit

Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on his throne
What the whole Earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his Glory? Crouch, I say! – 45

Manfred

Bid *him* bow down to that which is above him –
The over-ruling Infinite – the Maker,
Who made him not for worship; let *him* kneel,
And we will kneel together. – –

The Spirits

Crush the worm! –
Tear him in pieces! –

First Destiny

Hence! Avaunt! He's mine. 50
Prince of the Powers Invisible! – this man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an Immortal Nature – like
Our own – his knowledge and his powers and will, 55
As far as is compatible with Clay,
Which Clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As Clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know – 60
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.¹⁰¹ –

101: ... knowledge is not happiness – and science – / But an exchange of ignorance for that / Which is another kind of ignorance: compare *Faust*, 360-5:

*Heisse Magister, heisse Doktor gar
Und ziehe schon an die zehen Jahr
Herauf, herab, und quer und krumm
Meine Schüler an der Nase herum –
Und sehe, dass wir nichts wissen können!*

This is not all; the passions, attributes
Of Earth and Heaven, from which no power, nor being, 65
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart, and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be; be it so, or not, 70
No other Spirit in this region hath
A Soul like his, or power upon his Soul. –

Nemesis

What doth he here then?

First Destiny

Let *him* answer that.

Manfred

Ye know what I have known, and without power
I could not be amongst ye; but there are 75
Powers deeper still beyond. I come in quest
Of such to answer unto what I seek¹⁰² –

Nemesis

What wouldst thou?

Manfred

Thou can'st not reply to me;
Call up the dead – my question is for them.

Nemesis

Great Arimanes – doth thy Will avouch 80
The wishes of this mortal?

Arimanes

Yea!

Nemesis

Whom would'st thou –
Uncharnel? – – –

Manfred

One without a tomb¹⁰³ – Call up

Das will mir schier das Herz verbrennen.

102: Should be contrasted with the more vulnerable lines of Macbeth at IV i 50-61: *I conjure you, by that which you profess, / Howe'er you come to know it, answer me ...*

Nemesis

Shadow! or Spirit!
 Whatever thou art, 85
 Which still doth inherit
 The whole or a part
 Of the form of thy birth,
 Of the mould of thy clay,
 Which returned to the earth, 90
 Reappear to the day!
 Bear what thou borest,
 The heart and the form;
 And the aspect thou worst
 Redeem from the worm; 95
 Appear – Appear – Appear!
 Who sent thee there requires thee here! –

*The Phantom of Astarte rises
 and stands in the midst. —*

Manfred

Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;¹⁰⁵

103: *One without a tomb:* adds to previous hints (II i 29-30, II ii 198-9) that Manfred, though he may know Astarte to be dead, has no knowledge of her spiritual fate. That she had literally had no interment and no memorial would add to his desperation, whatever the case with her soul.

104: Though she says only seven words, Astarte is first among the *ewig-weibliche* characters of Byron's poetry. The name is legendary. See *Paradise Lost*, I 437-46:

*With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd
 Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns;
 To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon
 Sidonian Virgins paid thir Vows and Songs,
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood
 Her Temple on th' offensive Mountain, built
 By that uxorious King, whose heart though large,
 Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul.*

In near-eastern myth Astarte was confused with, or perhaps identical to, both Ashtaroth (see rejected Act III below, *Judges II* 13, *Paradise Lost* I 421, or Milton's *Nativity Ode*, 200: *Moonèd Ashtaroth, / Heav'ns Queen and Mother both*) and Astoreth (*II Kings* 23, 13, or *Paradise Lost* I 438) the wife to Adonis. Cicero (*De Natura Deorum* III) links her with Venus, and says she comes from Syria and Cyprus. With Pasiphae and Semiramis (*Don Juan* II 1239 and V 480) she was worshipped as a fertility goddess. Another important source may not be myth but the sixty-seventh of Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*, where the name is given to the female partner in a tale of sibling incest – both principals being Zoroastrians. Voltaire also uses the name in his eastern comic romance *Zadig*. However, the most immediate inspiration may for Byron have been the dual figures of the Arab maiden and the Veilèd Maiden in Shelley's *Alastor*; see 129-39 and 149 et. seq. Astarte, as she appears in this scene, unites the reality of the first with the inaccessibility of the second; in general she is (was) a real "other", as opposed to a figment of the protagonist's imagination – one of the advantages Byron derives from taking Shelley's narrative and recasting part of it in dramatic form.

105: (*Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek*) should be contrasted with the words of Romeo to the seemingly-dead Juliet at *Romeo and Juliet* V iii 92-6: *... beauty's ensign yet / Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks, / And death's pale flag is not advanced there.* Byron echoes this idea at *The Prisoner of Chillon*, 190-1: *With all the while a cheek whose bloom / Was as a mockery of the tomb ...* However, compare also *Childe Harold IV* 102 3 ... 9: *.. a cloud / ... yet shed / A sunset charm around her, and illumine / With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead, / Of her consuming cheek, the autumnal leaf-like red.*

But now I see it is no living hue,
 But a strange hectic, like the unnatural red 100
 Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
 It is the same! Oh God! That I should dread
 To look upon the same! – Astarte! no,
 I cannot speak to her, but bid her speak.
 Forgive me, or condemn me. – 105

Nemesis

By the power which hath broken
 The grave which enthralled thee,
 Speak to him who hath spoken,
 Or those who have called thee!

Manfred

She is silent – 110
 And in that silence I am more than answered.

Nemesis

My power extends no further; Prince of air!
 It rests with thee alone – command her voice.

Arimanes

Spirit! obey this Sceptre!

Nemesis

Silent still! –
 She is not of our order, but belongs 115
 To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
 And we are baffled also. –

Manfred

Hear me – Hear me¹⁰⁶ –

106: Manfred's lines at 117-150 may be compared to Othello's words to the dead Desdemona at V ii 275-8:

*When we shall meet at compt,
 This look of thine will hurl my soul from Heaven,
 And fiends will snatch at it.*

However, a more important source – though the circumstances of the lovers differ, in that Manfred never deserted Astarte – lies in the words of Aeneas to Dido at *Aeneid* VI, 456-66:

*“infelix Dido, verus mihi nuntius ergo
 venerat extinctam, ferroque extrema secutam?
 funeris heu! tibi causa fui? per sidera iuro,
 per superos, et si qua fides tellure sub ima est,
 invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi 460
 sed me iussa deum, quae nunc has ire per umbras,
 per loca senta situ cogunt noctemque profundam,
 imperiis egere suis; nec credere quivi
 hunc tantum tibi me discessu ferre dolorem.
 siste gradum teque aspectu ne subtrahe nostro. 465
 quem fugis? extremum fato, quod te adloquor, hoc est.”*

Astarte! my beloved – speak to me –
 I have so much endured – so much endure –
 Look on me – the Grave hath not changed thee more 120
 Than I am changed for thee – thou loved'st me
 Too much, as I loved thee – we were not made
 To torture thus each other, though it were
 The deadliest sin to love as we have loved;
 Say that thou loath'st me not – that I do bear 125
 This punishment for both¹⁰⁷ – that thou wilt be
 One of the blessed – and that I shall die;
 For hitherto all hateful things conspire
 To bind me in existence, in a life
 Which makes me shrink from Immortality – 130
 A future like the past; I cannot rest –
 I know not what I ask, nor what I seek –
 I feel but what thou art – and what I am –
 And I would hear yet once before I perish
 The voice which was my Music. Speak to me! 135
 For I have called on thee in the still night,
 Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
 And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
 Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,¹⁰⁸
 Which answered me – many things answered me – 140
 Spirits and men – but thou wert silent all;
 Yet speak to me – I have outwatched the Stars,
 And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee;
 Speak to me – I have wandered o'er the earth
 And never found thy likeness.¹⁰⁹ Speak to me! 145
 Look on the fiends around – they feel for me –
 I fear them not – and feel for thee alone –
 Speak to me, though it be in wrath – but say –
 I reckon not what – but let me hear thee once –
 This once – once more –

The Phantom of Astarte

Manfred!

Manfred

Say on – Say on¹¹⁰ – 150

Perhaps disgusted by his hypocrisy at 463-4, Dido says nothing to Aeneas in return.

107: *Say ... that I do bear / This punishment for both:* one of the few sympathetic references to vicarious suffering and atonement in all Byron's work. He ordinarily displayed little interest, or belief, in the idea. The fact that Manfred's offer to suffer in Astarte's place is unanswered is doubtless significant.

108: Should be compared with Viola's words to Olivia at *Twelfth Night* I v 252-60:

*Write loyal cantons of contemned love
 And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
 Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
 And make the babbling gossip of the air
 Cry out "Olivia!"*

109: *I have wandered o'er the earth – / And never found thy likeness:* recalls the wanderings of the Poet in Alastor.

110: Compare the underdeveloped final episode in *Vathek*: *Kalilah and his sister made reciprocal gestures of imprecation; all testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions, and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, pp. 119-20.) Beckford debated whether or not to extend the story, but

I live but in the sound – it is thy voice!

Phantom

Manfred – tomorrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

Manfred

Yet one word more – am I forgiven?

Phantom

Farewell!

Manfred

Say – shall we meet again?

Phantom

Farewell!

Manfred

One word for Mercy – Say – thou lov'st me. – 155

Phantom

Manfred! –

The Spirit of Astarte disappears.

Nemesis

She's gone, and will not be recalled.¹¹¹
Her words will be fulfilled – return to the earth. –

A Spirit

He is convulsed – this is to be a mortal
And seek the things above Mortality. –

Another Spirit

Yet see – he mastereth himself – and makes 160
His nature tributary to his will –
Had he been one of us he would have made
An awful Spirit. –

Nemesis

Hast thou further question –

never printed it. For Byron's curiosity, see letter to Rogers, March 3rd 1818 (BLJ VI 17-18): Rogers had been to Fonthill and heard more about the extra part of *Vathek*.

111: *She's gone, and will not be recalled:* compare *Hamlet*, I i 52: *'Tis gone, and will not answer.*

Of our great Sovereign or his worshippers?

Manfred

None.

Nemesis

Then for a time farewell.

Manfred

Where? on the earth? – We meet then – 165

Nemesis

That will be seen hereafter.

Manfred

Even as thou wilt – and for the grace accorded,
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well! –

*Scene closes – end of Act Second.*¹¹²

112: II iv is the last scene of the play containing Alpine imagery, and thus any recollections of Byron's mountain excursion with Hobhouse. The last Alpine Journal entry may usefully be quoted here, at the lowest point of Manfred's suffering: *In the weather for this tour (of 13 days) I have been very fortunate – fortunate in a companion (Mr. H[obhouse]) fortunate in our prospects – and exempt from even the little petty accidents & delays which often render journeys in a less wild country – disappointing. – I was disposed to be pleased – I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue – & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness – & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above – & beneath me. – I am past reproaches – and there is a time for all things – I am past the wish of vengeance – and I know of none like for what I have suffered – but the hour will come – when what I feel must be felt – & the — — but enough. — — – To you – dearest Augusta – I send – and for you – I have kept this record of what I have seen & felt. – Love me as you are beloved by me. — — (BLJ V 104-5).*

Act Three, First version:

Act III Scene i.

Enter the Abbot of St. Maurice.

Abbot.

Peace be with Count Manfred!

Manfred

Thanks, holy Father! Welcome to these walls.
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them. –

Abbot

Would it were so, Count –
But I would fain confer with thee alone. –

Manfred

Herman, retire.

Exit Herman.

What would my reverend Guest? 5

Abbot

Thus without prelude – Age and Zeal, my office,
And good intent must plead my privilege.
Our near though not acquainted Neighbourhood
May also be my herald. Rumours strange
And of unholy nature are abroad, 10
And busy with thy name – a noble name
For centuries – may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired. – – –

Manfred

Proceed. – I listen.¹¹³ –

Abbot

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man, 15
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly Spirits
Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
Thou communest. – I know that with mankind –

113: Compare Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter II: *My lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Hearken to him who speaks through my organs. Manfred trembled with rage and shame.*

Thy fellows in creation – thou dost rarely 20
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy Solitude
Is as an Anchorite's – were it but holy.

Manfred

And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot

My pious brethren – the scared peasantry –
Even thy own vassals, who do look on thee 25
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril –

Manfred

Take it.

Abbot

I come to save and not destroy –
I would not pry into thy secret Soul –
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity; reconcile thee 30
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

Manfred

I hear thee. – This is my reply. – Whate'er
I may have been or am doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinned 35
Against your ordinances? Prove and punish.¹¹⁴ –

114: Italicised lines from now on are those rejected when Byron revised the third act. His decision to make the alteration was in part because of the objections which William Gifford had voiced, in a memo to John Murray on receipt of the first manuscript of the Third Act: *My dear Sir, / I found your parcel here at 4 – so that it is hardly possible to do any thing by Post time – nor indeed can I say much more. I have marked a passage or two which might be omitted with advantage: but the Act requires strengthening. There is nothing to bear it out but one speech. The Friar is despicable, & the servants uninteresting. The scene with the Friar ought to be imposing, & for that purpose the Friar should be a real[,] good man – not an idiot. More dignity should be lent to the catastrophe. See how beautifully our old poet Marlow has wrought up the death of Faustus – several of our old plays have scenes of this kind – but they strove to make them impressive. Manfred should not end in this feeble way – after beginning with such magnificence & promise – & the demons should have something to do with the scene.*

Do not send my words to Lord B. but you may take a hint from them – Say that the last Act bears no proportion in length to the two previous ... / Sincerely / W.G. (John Murray Archive). On March 10th 1817, Murray wrote to Byron, enclosing Gifford's letter, and writing: *... As I told you in my last letter that Mr G was very much pleased with Act 2 – & as you know he takes a paternal interest in your literary well being – he does not by any means like the Conclusion – Now I am venturing upon the confidence with which your Lordship has ever honoured me in sending the enclosed – I fear I am not doing right – I am not satisfied – but I venture – & I entreat that you will make a point of returning them. I have told him that I have made a letter from them – but there is so much friendly good sense in them that I can not refrain – I am sure you can – & I am almost sure that you will improve what begins & continues so beautifully [–] in a drama of any kind – the last Act is the difficulty & this you must surmount. (John Murray Archive.)*

However, we know Murray did have the first version of the Third Act set up in proof, for some of Byron's revisions are found on proof sheets bound up with the fair copy. Perhaps he lacked confidence in Byron's openness to criticism. On April 14th 1817, Byron answered Murray: *... The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this act I thought good myself – the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be – & I wonder what the*

Abbot

*Then hear and tremble! – for the headstrong wretch,
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Would shield himself, and battle for his sins,
There is the stake on earth, and beyond earth,
Eternal —* [40]

Manfred

*Charity, most reverend Father!
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace,
That I would call thee back to it; but say,
What wouldst thou with me? – – –*

Abbot

*It may be there are
Things that would shake thee, but I keep them back,
And give thee till tomorrow to repent.
Then, if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance, and with gift of all thy lands
To the Monastery¹¹⁵ –* [45]

Manfred

I understand thee. Well.

Abbot

*Expect no mercy; I have warned thee. –
Manfred, opening the casket.*

Stop – [50]

There is a gift for thee within this casket –

devil possessed me – I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr Gifford's opinion without deduction – do you suppose me such a Sotheby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that in fact I was not, & am not, convinced & convicted in my conscience of the absurdity of this same act of nonsense? – I shall try at it again – in the mean time lay it upon the Shelf (the whole drama, I mean) but pray correct your copies of the 1st & 2d acts by the original M.S. (BLJ 211-12). A mere fortnight later, on May 5th, he wrote again: ... I send you ... the new third act of "Manfred." – I have rewritten the greater part – & returned what is not altered in the proof you sent me. – The Abbot is become a good man – & the Spirits are brought in at the death – you will find I think some good poetry in this new act here & there – & if so print it – without sending me further proofs – under Mr.G[ifford]'s correction – if he will have the goodness to overlook it (BLJ V 219).

115: *if thou dost not all devote thyself / To penance – and with gift of all thy lands / To the monastery:* in the original Third Act Christianity was to have had no more spiritual and moral dignity than this, to contrast with the powerful Neo-Platonic, Zoroastrian, Hellenistic-Roman and other mythologies which Byron elsewhere employs. The immediate inspiration may be the imagined words of the priest who, in *Faust*, appropriates the jewels intended for Margarete:

*Hat ganze Länder aufgeessen,
Und doch noch nie sich übergessen;
Die Kirch allein, meine lieben Frauen,
Kann ungerechtes Gut verdauen.
Die Kirche hat einen guten Magen,*

Manfred opens the casket, strikes a light, and
burns some Incense.

Manfred

*Ho – Ashtaroath!*¹¹⁶ –

The Demon Ashtaroath appears, saying as follows – –

Ashtaroath's Song

*The Raven sits
On the Raven-stone,
And his black wing flits [55]
O'er the milk-white bone,
To and fro, as the night-winds blow;
The carcass of the assassin swings,
And there alone, on the Raven-stone, +
The Raven flaps his dusky wings; [60]
The fetters creak, and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound;
And this is the tune, by the light of the Moon,
To which the Witches dance their round. –
Merrily, merrily!¹¹⁷ Cheerily, cheerily! [65]
Merrily, merrily speeds the ball;
The dead in their shrouds, and the demons in clouds,
Flock to the Witches' Carnival. –*

Note + Raven-stone (Rabenstein) a translation of the German word for the Gibbet, which in Germany and Switzerland is permanent and made of stone.

Abbot

*I fear thee not – hence – hence –
Avaunt thee, Evil One! Help! Ho! Without there!* [70]

Manfred

*Carry this man to the Shreckhorn*¹¹⁸ – to its peak –

116: *Ashtaroath*: also known as Astarte; but the goddess became a devil, and changed sex, in the middle ages. He was associated with Asmodeus (see the Apocryphal *Book of Tobit*, and *The Vision of Judgement*, 675 *et. seq.*) who would in the popular superstition lift people up and fly about with them. Ashtaroath's first song seems the one detail of *Manfred* lifted directly from *Faust* Part I, and it is perhaps significant that Byron deleted it. Here is the penultimate scene of Goethe's play in its entirety:

FAUST: *Was weben sie dort um dem Rabenstein?*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Weiss nicht, was sie kochen und schaffen.*

FAUST: *Schweben auf, schweben ab, neigen nich, beugen sich.*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Eine Hexenzunft!*

FAUST: *Sie streuen und weihen.*

MEPHISTOPHELES: *Vorbei! vorbei!* (lines 4399-404)

The dramatic contexts are different. In *Manfred* the gibbet is (or would have been) merely a joke to scare the Abbot: in *Faust* it is a presentiment of Margarete's death, past which Mephistopheles and Faust hurry nervously.

117: *Merrily – Merrily*: recalls Ariel's song at *The Tempest*, V i 87-94.

*To its extremest peak – watch with him there
From now till Sunrise – let him gaze, and know
He ne'er again will be so near to Heaven;
But harm him not – and when the Morrow breaks, [75]
Set him down safe in his cell – Away with him! –*

Ashtaroath

*Had I not better bring his brethren too,
Convent and all, to bear him company?*

Manfred

No, this will serve for the present. Take him up. –

Ashtaroath

*Come, Friar! Now an Exorcism or two, [80]
And we shall fly the lighter. –*

Ashtaroath disappears with the Abbot,
singing as follows

*A prodigal son, and a maid undone
And a widow re-wedded within the year,¹¹⁹
And a worldly Monk, and a pregnant Nun,
Are things which every day appear. [85]*

Manfred, alone.

*Why would this fool break in on me, and force
My art to pranks fantastical? No matter –
It was not of my seeking. My heart sickens,
And weighs a fixed foreboding on my Soul;
But it is calm – calm as a sullen sea [90]
After the hurricane; the winds are still,
But the cold waves swell high and heavily,
And there is danger in them. Such a rest
Is no repose. My life hath been a combat,
And every thought a wound, till I am scarred [95]
In the immortal part of Me. – What now?*

Re-enter Herman.

*My lord, you bade me wait on you at Sunset –
He sinks behind the Mountain. –*

Manfred

Doth he so?

118: *The Schreckhorn:* seen by Byron and Hobhouse on September 24th 1816. Hobhouse recorded, *Went first by the upper glacier – the Schreckhorn rose upon us above the Mettenbergh between that mountain & the Wetterhorn – the hills before us partially covered but the white razor ridge of the great giant [the Eiger] was blazing in the sun ...*

119: *A widow re-wedded within the year:* recalls Gertrude in *Hamlet*.

Manfred advances to the window of the Hall — —

Glorious Orb!¹²⁰ – the Idol 100
Of early Nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased Mankind, the Giant Sons
Of the embrace of Angels with a sex
More beautiful than they,¹²¹ which did draw down
The erring Spirits who can ne'er return. – 105
Most glorious Orb! that wert a worship e'er
The Mystery of thy making was revealed –
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladdened on their mountain-tops the hearts
Of the Chaldean Shepherds,¹²² till they poured 110
Themselves in Orisons – thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown –
Who chose thee for his Shadow, – thou chief Star
Centre of many Stars, which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues 115
And hearts of all who walk beneath thy rays –
Sire of the Seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! For, near or far,
Our inborn Spirits have a tint of thee,
Even as our outward Aspects. Thou dost rise, 120
And shine, and set, in Glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first Glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look – thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the Gifts of life and warmth have been 125
Of a more fatal Nature. – He is gone –
I follow.¹²³

Exit Manfred.

120: *Glorious Orb!*: this speech may owe something to the *Oration to the Sun* of Julian the Apostate, which had been translated by Thomas Taylor the Platonist. It may also be compared with the speech of Beleses about the setting sun, at *Sardanapalus* II i 1-36, and that of Myrrha about the rising sun at *Sardanapalus* V i 9-38.

121: See *Genesis* 6, 2 ... 4: ... *the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose ... There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.* This passage is in part the theme of Byron's 1821 drama *Heaven and Earth*.

122: *the Chaldean Shepherds*: compare *Childe Harold III*, 14, 1-3:

*Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams ...*

or 91, 1-6:

*Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth–o'er–gazing mountains, and thus make
A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands.*

E.H.Coleridge, and CPW, both refer to Herodotus' description of the Persian religion at *Histories*, Book I 131, and to Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, IV 671-6. Neither point out that the phrase *Chaldean Shepherds* (no-one believes the Chaldean astronomers to have been shepherds) is from *The Excursion*, IV 694.

123: Byron to Murray, July 9th 1817: *P.S. – Pray was Manfred's speech to the Sun still retained in Act 3d? – I hope so – it was one of the best in the thing – & better than the Colosseum. – I have done 56 stanzas of Canto 4th. of Childe Harold – so down with your ducats.* (BLJ V 249)

Note + “That the Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair”, &c.: “There were Giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old. – Genesis, Chapter 6th, verses 2d. & 4th. –

Act III scene ii.

The Mountains – the Castle of Manfred at some distance.
a terrace before a tower¹²⁴ – time twilight. –
Herman, Manuel, and other dependants of Manfred. – –

Herman

'Tis strange enough; night after night for years
He hath pursued long vigil in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it –
So have we all been, oft-times – but from it
Or its contents it were impossible 5
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter – I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years
To pore upon its mysteries. –

Manuel

'Twere dangerous. 10
Content thyself with what thou know'st already. –

Herman

Ah, Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle –
How many years is't? –

Manuel

Ere Count Manfred's birth
I served his father – whom he nought resembles – 15

Herman

There be more sons in like predicament. –

124: *a terrace before a tower:* Manfred's presence in a tower – not subsequently referred to in the act as finally received – implies that Byron's model may at this stage have been the protagonist of William Beckford's *Vathek*: ... *having ascended, for the first time, the fifteen hundred steps of his tower, he cast his eyes below, and beheld men not larger than pismires; mountains, than shells; and cities, than beehives.* [Compare above, I ii 14-16.] *The idea, which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur, completely bewildered him: he was almost ready to adore himself; till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this intruding and unwelcome perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others; and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and extort from the stars the decrees of his destiny* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p. 4). See also below, rejected section, lines 1-2n.

But wherein do they differ?

Manuel

I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits.
Count Sigismund¹²⁵ was proud, but gay and free –
A Warrior and a reveller – he dwelt not 20
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Herman

Beshrew the hour! 25
But those were jocund times. I would that such
Would visit the old walls again – they look
As if they had forgotten them. –

Herman

These walls
Must change their chieftain first; Oh, I have seen
Some strange things in these four years. –

Manuel

Come – be friendly – 30
Relate me some to wile away our watch.¹²⁶
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts by this same tower.

Manuel

That was a night indeed. I do remember
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such 35
Another evening; yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing Moon. – 40
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower¹²⁷ –

125: *Count Sigismund*: Byron perhaps chooses the name because of King Sigismund of Burgundy (see above, III i 19n).

126: *Relate me some to wile away our watch*: Byron may subconsciously intend an echo of *Hamlet* I i; but why Manuel and Herman should be on watch at all, since Manfred is not at war with any earthly foe, is unclear.

127: *Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower – / How occupied we knew not*: Byron may consciously or unconsciously be recollecting the following passage from Rousseau's *Confessions*, about the time when he was observing the stars through a telescope: *Un soir, des paysans passant assez tard me virent dans un grotesque Équipage occupé à mon opération. La leur qui donnait sur mon planisphère, et dont ils ne voyaient pas la cause parce que la lumière était cachée à leurs yeux par les bords du seau, ces quatre picquets, ce grand papier barbouillée de figures, ce cadre, et le jeu de ma lunette, qu'ils voyaient aller et venir, donnaient à cet objet un air de grimoire qui les effraya. Ma parure n'était pas propre à les rassurer; un chapeau clabaud par-dessus mon bonnet. et un pet-en-l'air ouaté de Maman qu'elle m'avait obligé de mettre, offrait à leurs yeux l'image*

How occupied we knew not – but with him,
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings – her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love – 45
As he indeed by blood was bound to do –
The Lady Astarte, his –

Herman

*Look! Look! The tower!
The tower's afire!¹²⁸ Oh heavens and earth, what sound,
What dreadful sound is that?*

Crash like Thunder.

Manuel

*Help! Help, there! To the rescue of the Count!
The Count's in danger! What ho, there! Approach! –* [5]

*The servants, vassals, and peasantry,
approach, stupefied with terror. –*

Manuel

*If there be any of you who have heart,
And love of human kind, and will to aid
Those in distress, pause not, but follow me –
The portal's open – follow!*

Manuel goes in.

Herman

*Come – who follows?
What, none of ye? – ye recreants! shiver then
Without. I will not see old Manuel risk
His few remaining years unaided. –* [10]

Herman goes in.

A Vassal

Hark! –

d'un vrai sorcier, et comme il était près de minuit, ils ne doutèrent point que ce ne fût le commencement du sabbat. Peu curieux d'en voir davantage, ils se sauvèrent très alarmé, éveillèrent leurs voisins pour leur conter leur vision, et l'histoire courut si bien, que dès le lendemain chacun sut dans le voisinage que le sabbat se tenait chez M. Noïray (Confessions, Livre VI). A polite visit from two local Jesuits dispels the rumour.

128: Rejected lines 1-2: *Look – look – the tower! / The tower's on fire!*: Manfred's mysterious presence in a tower, and the conflagration which now ensues in the rejected scene, confirms that Byron's model was at this stage Beckford's *Vathek* (see also above, this scene, opening stage direction and n.): *In the mean time, the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste; ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried, half naked, to the square. Their love for their sovereign immediately awoke; and, apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety (Vathek, ed. Lonsdale, p. 33.)* There is no explanation in the original act for the accident – or fatal act – which occasions Manfred's death.

*No – all is silent – not a breath; the flame
Which shot forth such a blaze is also gone –
What may this mean? let's enter! –* [15]

Peasant

*Faith, not I. –
Not but if one or two or more will join
I then will stay behind, but for my part –
I do not see precisely to what end.*

Vassal

Cease your vain prating – come –

Manuel (speaking within)

*'Tis all in vain –
He's dead – quite stark –*

Herman (within)

Not so – even now methought he moved – [20]
*But it is dark – so – bear him gently out –
Softly – how cold he is! – take care of his temples
In winding down the staircase –*

Re-enter Manuel and Herman,
bearing Manfred in their arms.

Manuel

*Hie to the Castle some of you, and bring
What aid you can – saddle the barb – and speed* [25]
For the Leech to the city. Quick! – some water there! –

Herman

*His cheek is black, but there is a faint beat
Still lingering about the heart – some water!*

*They sprinkle Manfred with water –
after a pause he gives some signs of life. – –*

Manuel

He seems to strive to speak. Come, cheerly, Count!
He moves his lips – can't hear him? – I am old, [30]
And cannot catch faint sounds –

Herman (inclining his head and listening)

*I hear a word
Or two; but indistinctly – what is next?
What's to be done? Let's bear him to the castle. –*

Manfred motions with his hand not to remove him.

Manuel

*He disapproves – and 'twere of no avail –
He changes rapidly. –*

Herman

'Twill soon be over. – [35]

Manuel

*Oh! what a death is this! that I should live
To shake my grey hairs over the last chief
Of the house of Sigismund – and such a death! –*

*Alone – we know not how – unshrived – untended,
With strange accompaniments and fearful signs¹²⁹ –* [40]
I shudder at the sight, but must not leave him –

Manfred
(speaking faintly and slowly)

Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die. –

Manfred having said this expires. – –

Herman

His eyes are fixed and lifeless. He is gone. –

Manuel

*Close them. My old hand quivers. He departs –
Whither? I dread to think – but he is gone!* [45]

End of Act third – and of the poem. – – – –

129: *Alone – we know not how – unshrived – untended – / With strange accompaniments – and fearful signs:* compare the words of the Ghost at *Hamlet*, I v 77 – 79: *Unhouseled, disappointed, unanealed, / No reckoning made, but sent to my account / With all my imperfections on my head.*

Act Three, Revised version:

Act III scene i.

*Scene – a Hall in the Castle of Manfred. –
Manfred and Herman.*

Manfred

What is the hour?

Herman

It wants but one till Sunset –
And promises a lovely twilight. –

Manfred

Say –
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed? –

Herman

All, my Lord, are ready.
Here is the key and casket. – – –

Manfred

It is well. 5
Thou may'st retire. –

Exit Herman.

Manfred alone.

There is a calm upon me,
Inexplicable stillness, which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life. –
If that I did not know Philosophy
To be of all our Vanities the Motliest – 10
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the Schoolmen's jargon – I should deem
The golden secret, the sought "Kalon",¹³⁰ found,
And seated in my Soul. It will not last;
But it is well to have known it, though but once; 15
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,
And I within my tablets would note down¹³¹
That there is such a feeling. – – Who is there?

Re-enter Herman.

130: *the sought "Kalon":* Greek **Kalón**, the supremely good, the morally and aesthetically perfect: Manfred thinks he may have arrived at the moment equivalent to the one at which Faust agrees that Mephistopheles can claim his soul – when he may exclaim *Verweile doch, du bist so schön!* (*Faust*, Pt I, line 1700).

131: compare *Hamlet* I v 107-8: *My tables! – meet it is I set it down / That one may smile ...*

Herman

My Lord, the Abbot of St. Maurice¹³² craves
To greet your presence. ——— ——— ———

Enter the Abbot of St. Maurice.

Abbot.

Peace be with Count Manfred! 20

Manfred

Thanks, holy Father! Welcome to these walls.
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them. —

Abbot

Would it were so, Count —
But I would fain confer with thee alone. —

Manfred

Herman, retire.

Exit Herman.

What would my reverend Guest? 25

Abbot

Thus without prelude — Age and Zeal, my office,
And good intent must plead my privilege.
Our near though not acquainted Neighbourhood
May also be my herald. Rumours strange
And of unholy nature are abroad, 30
And busy with thy name — a noble name
For centuries — may he who bears it now
Transmit it unimpaired. — — —

Manfred

Proceed. — I listen.¹³³ —

132: *the Abbot of St. Maurice:* St. Maurice is in the Rhone valley, south-east of Chillon, half-way between Villeneuve and Martigny. The Augustinian priory there is the earliest Christian site in Switzerland, and was endowed in 515 A.D. by a Duke of Burgundy called Sigismund — the name Byron gives below (III iii 19) to Manfred's father. Byron and Hobhouse passed it on October 6th 1816. Hobhouse recorded in his diary, *there is scarcely room for the little town of St Maurice which we thought must be let into the perpendicular rocks here running down to the bank of the river — Springhetti or Springenetti took us to a very decent inn where they gave me a very good dinner and Byron some tea — after I had gone to my room Byron called me out to the gallery to look at the rocks and the church and the snowy top of the dent du midi sleeping in the moonlight & apparently close to us like a scene in the theatre — the little church is in a rocky nook above the town — slept well.* (BL Add. Mss. 56537 28r.)

133: Compare Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter II: *My lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the*

Abbot

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man, 35
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly Spirits
Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
Thou communest. – I know that with mankind –
Thy fellows in creation – thou dost rarely 40
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy Solitude
Is as an Anchorite's – were it but holy.

Manfred

And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot

My pious brethren – the scared peasantry –
Even thy own vassals, who do look on thee 45
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril –

Manfred

Take it.

Abbot

I come to save and not destroy –
I would not pry into thy secret Soul –
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity; reconcile thee 50
With the true church, and through the church to heaven.

Manfred

I hear thee. – This is my reply. – Whate'er
I may have been or am doth rest between
Heaven and myself. I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinned 55
Against your ordinances? Prove and punish.¹³⁴ –

minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Harken to him who speaks through my organs. Manfred trembled with rage and shame.

134: *Italicised lines from now on are those rejected when Byron revised the third act. His decision to make the alteration was in part because of the objections which William Gifford had voiced, in a memo to John Murray on receipt of the first manuscript of the Third Act: My dear Sir, / I found your parcel here at 4 – so that it is hardly possible to do any thing by Post time – nor indeed can I say much more. I have marked a passage or two which might be omitted with advantage: but the Act requires strengthening. There is nothing to bear it out but one speech. The Friar is despicable, & the servants uninteresting. The scene with the Friar ought to be imposing, & for that purpose the Friar should be a real[,] good man – not an idiot. More dignity should be lent to the catastrophe. See how beautifully our old poet Marlow has wrought up the death of Faustus – several of our old plays have scenes of this kind – but they strove to make them impressive. Manfred should not end in this feeble way – after beginning with such magnificence & promise – & the demons should have something to do with the scene.*

Do not send my words to Lord B. but you may take a hint from them – Say that the last Act bears no proportion in length to the two previous ... / Sincerely / W.G. (John Murray Archive). On March 10th 1817, Murray wrote to Byron, enclosing Gifford's letter, and writing: ... As I told you in my last letter that Mr G was

Abbot

My Son! I did not speak of punishment,
But patience and pardon; with thyself
The choice of such remains – and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief 60
Have given me power to smooth the path from Sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to heaven – “Vengeance is mine alone”¹³⁵
So saith the Lord – and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word. – 65

Manfred

Old Man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form,
Nor penitence – nor outward look – nor fast –
Nor agony – nor, greater than all these,
The inward tortures of that deep Despair 70
Which is Remorse, without the fear of hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself¹³⁶ –
Would make a hell of heaven, can exorcise
From out the unbounded Spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge 75
Upon itself; there is no future pains
Can deal that justice on the self–condemned
He deals on his own Soul. – –

Abbot

All this is well –

very much pleased with Act 2 – & as you know he takes a paternal interest in your literary well being – he does not by any means like the Conclusion – Now I am venturing upon the confidence with which your Lordship has ever honoured me in sending the enclosed – I fear I am not doing right – I am not satisfied – but I venture – & I entreat that you will make a point of returning them. I have told him that I have made a letter from them – but there is so much friendly good sense in them that I can not refrain – I am sure you can – & I am almost sure that you will improve what begins & continues so beautifully [–] in a drama of any kind – the last Act is the difficulty & this you must surmount. (John Murray Archive.)

However, we know Murray did have the first version of the Third Act set up in proof, for some of Byron's revisions are found on proof sheets bound up with the fair copy. Perhaps he lacked confidence in Byron's openness to criticism. On April 14th 1817, Byron answered Murray: ... *The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this act I thought good myself – the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be – & I wonder what the devil possessed me – I am very glad indeed that you sent me Mr Gifford's opinion without deduction – do you suppose me such a Sotheby as not to be very much obliged to him? or that in fact I was not, & am not, convinced & convicted in my conscience of the absurdity of this same act of nonsense? – I shall try at it again – in the mean time lay it upon the Shelf (the whole drama, I mean) but pray correct your copies of the 1st & 2d acts by the original M.S. (BLJ 211-12).* A mere fortnight later, on May 5th, he wrote again: ... *I send you ... the new third act of “Manfred.” – I have rewritten the greater part – & returned what is not altered in the proof you sent me. – The Abbot is become a good man – & the Spirits are brought in at the death – you will find I think some good poetry in this new act here & there – & if so print it – without sending me further proofs – under Mr.G[ifford]'s correction – if he will have the goodness to overlook it (BLJ V 219).*

135: “vengeance is mine alone” / *So saith the Lord: Deuteronomy 32, 35: To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand. Also Romans, 12, 19: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

136: Echoes Lodovico's words at *Othello* 261-2: *Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate / Call all in all sufficient?*

For this will pass away – and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up 80
With calm assurance to that blessed place
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned;
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity. Say on – 85
And all our Church can teach thee shall be taught,
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardoned.

Manfred

When Rome's sixth Emperor¹³⁷ was near his last,
The Victim of a self-inflicted wound
To shun the torments of a public death 90
From Senates once his slaves, a certain Soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have staunch'd
The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back and said –
Some empire still in his expiring glance – 95
“It is too late – is this fidelity?”

Abbot

And what of this?

Manfred

I answer with the Roman
“It is too late!”

Abbot

It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul within heaven. Hast thou no hope? 100
'Tis strange — even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling like drowning men. –

Manfred

137: Rome's sixth Emperor: this was Galba. Manfred (and/or Byron) confuses his death with that of Nero, the fifth Emperor. A modern version of the classical account gives different emphases: ... *with the help of his scribe, Epaphroditus, he [Nero] stabbed himself in the throat and was already half dead when a cavalry officer entered, pretending to have rushed to his rescue, and staunch'd the wound with his cloak. Nero muttered, "Too late! But, ah, what fidelity!"* (Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, tr. Graves, p. 238). The error may lie in the fact that Suetonius' *Life* is the sixth chapter of his book, which starts with a life of Julius Caesar, who was not an emperor. See also *Don Juan* III st. 109. Nero could be seen as an alter ego for Manfred: Pausanias (in Thomas Taylor's translation – see above, II ii 93, commentary on Byron's note) writes thus of him: ... *Nero acted very impiously towards his mother, and behaved with a like cruelty towards his wives, which shewed that he was entirely destitute of Love* (III 60). He also portrays Nero as a sacrilegious investigator of mysteries: *I have seen ... the Alcyonian lake, through which ... Bacchus descended to Hades, in order to lead back Semele ... The depth of this lake is immense; nor do I know any man who has been able by any artifice whatever to reach its bottom: for even Nero, who joined ropes together of many stadia in length, and fastened lead at the end, with whatever else might be useful for this purpose, could never find the bottom ... It is however by no means lawful for me to divulge to all men the nocturnal ceremonies, which are performed every year by the side of this lake, to Bacchus* (ibid, I 246).

Aye, Father! I have had those earthly visions,
 And noble aspirations in my youth¹³⁸ – 105
 To make my own the Mind of other men –
 The Enlightener of nations – and to rise,
 I knew not whither, it might be to fall,
 But fall even as the Mountain–cataract,
 Which having leapt from its more dazzling height, 110
 Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
 (Which casts up misty columns that become
 Clouds raining from the re–ascended skies)
 Lies low but mighty still. But this is past;
 My thoughts mistook themselves. – 115

Abbot

– And wherefore so? –

Manfred¹³⁹

I could not tame my Nature down; for he
 Must serve who fain would sway, and soothe, and sue,
 And watch all time – and pry into all place –
 And be a living Lie – who would become
 A mighty thing amongst the mean – and such 120
 The Mass are; I disdained to mingle with
 A herd, though to be leader, and of Wolves. –
 The Lion is alone, and so am I. –

Abbot

And why not live and act with other men? –

Manfred

138: The dialogue about Manfred’s youthful aspirations to leadership has obvious parallels with Byron’s own half-hearted gestures towards political involvement in the Lords earlier in his career. One model for the Abbot may be Father Aucher, Byron’s Armenian teacher on the Isola San Lazzaro, the avowed aim of whose brotherhood impressed both Byron and Hobhouse when they visited the island on November 29th 1816: *We all were highly delighted with the society, and shall not forget the answer given to us when we asked our monk what was the purpose of the establishment – “The illumination of our people”* (BL. Add. Mss. 56538 23 r.-v.). Byron, who stayed longer with the monks than did Hobhouse, probably realised that his version of *illumination* was not the same as theirs.

139: Compare *Coriolanus* III ii 110-23:

Well, I must do it.
Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot’s spirit! My throat of war be turn’d,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe,
Small as an eunuch, or the virgin voice
That babies lulls asleep! The smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and schoolboys’ tears take up
The glasses of my sight! A beggar’s tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my armed knees,
Who bow’d but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath received an alms! I will not do’t:
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And by my body’s action teach my mind
A most inherent baseness.

Because my Nature was averse from life – 125
 And yet not cruel – for I would not make,
 But find a desolation! – like the Wind,
 The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom,¹⁴⁰
 Which dwells but in the desert – and sweeps o'er
 The barren sands, which bear no shrubs to blast, 130
 And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,
 And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,
 But being met is deadly; such hath been
 The course of my existence – but there came
 Things in my path – which are no more. – 135

Abbot

Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
 From me and from my calling – yet so young –
 I still would –

Manfred

Look on me! – there is an order
 Of mortals on the earth – who do become
 Old in their youth – and die e'er middle age, 140
 Without the violence of warlike death –
 Some perishing of pleasure, some of study
 Some worn with toil, and some with mere weariness –
 Some of disease, and some Insanity,
 And some of withered, or of broken hearts – 145
 For this last is a Malady which slays
 More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
 Taking all shapes – and bearing many names –

Look upon me! For even of all these things
 I have partaken, and of all these things 150
 One were enough; then wonder not that I
 Am what I am, but that I ever was,
 Or, having been, that I am still on earth. –

Abbot

Yet hear me still –

140: ... *the most lone Simoom*: compare *The Giaour*, 282:

*He came, he went, like the Simoom,
 That harbinger of fate and gloom,
 Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
 The very cypress droops to death ...*

or *Don Juan*, IV 456:

*The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
 Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.*

Byron's knowledge of the Simoom may have started with the huge note on it which Southey appended to Book Two of *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801).

Manfred

Old Man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem 155
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain;
Think me not churlish – I would spare thyself
Far more than me in shunning at this time
All further colloquy – and so – farewell.

Exit Manfred. –

Abbot Solus

This should have been a noble creature. He 160
Hath all the energy which would have made
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful Chaos – Light and Darkness –
And Mind and Dust – and passions and pure thoughts 165
Mixed and contending without end or order –
All dormant or destructive;¹⁴¹ he will perish –
And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption – and my Duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end. – 170
I'll follow him but – cautiously – though surely. –

Exit Abbot.

Scene closes. – –

Act III scene ii.

Manfred. Enter Herman.

My lord, you bade me wait on you at Sunset –
He sinks behind the Mountain. –

Manfred

Doth he so?

I will look on him. –

Manfred advances to the window of the Hall — —

Glorious Orb!¹⁴² – the Idol
Of early Nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased Mankind, the Giant Sons 5

141: Echoes several Byronic meditations on mankind, most remarkably his reflections on Burns, in the Journal entry for December 13th 1813 (BLJ III 239): *Allen ... has lent me a quantity of Burns's unpublished, and never-to-be-published, Letters. They are full of oaths and obscene songs. What an antithetical mind! – tenderness, roughness – delicacy, coarseness – sentiment, sensuality – soaring and grovelling – dirt and deity – all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay!*

142: *Glorious Orb!*: this speech may owe something to the *Oration to the Sun* of Julian the Apostate, which had been translated by Thomas Taylor the Platonist. It may also be compared with the speech of Beleses about the setting sun, at *Sardanapalus* II i 1-36, and that of Myrrha about the rising sun at *Sardanapalus* V i 9-38.

Of the embrace of Angels with a sex
 More beautiful than they,¹⁴³ which did draw down
 The erring Spirits who can ne'er return. –
 Most glorious Orb! that wert a worship e'er
 The Mystery of thy making was revealed – 10
 Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
 Which gladdened on their mountain-tops the hearts
 Of the Chaldean Shepherds,¹⁴⁴ till they poured
 Themselves in Orisons – thou material God!
 And representative of the Unknown – 15
 Who chose thee for his Shadow, – thou chief Star

Centre of many Stars, which mak'st our earth
 Endurable, and temperest the hues
 And hearts of all who walk beneath thy rays –
 Sire of the Seasons! Monarch of the climes, 20
 And those who dwell in them! For, near or far,
 Our inborn Spirits have a tint of thee,
 Even as our outward Aspects. Thou dost rise,
 And shine, and set, in Glory. Fare thee well!
 I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first Glance 25
 Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
 My latest look – thou wilt not beam on one
 To whom the Gifts of life and warmth have been
 Of a more fatal Nature. – He is gone –
 I follow.¹⁴⁵ 30

Note + “That the Sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair”, &c.: “There were Giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the Sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old. – Genesis, Chapter 6th, verses 2d. & 4th. –

143: See *Genesis* 6, 2 ... 4: ... *the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose ... There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.* This passage is in part the theme of Byron's 1821 drama *Heaven and Earth*.

144: *the Chaldean Shepherds:* compare *Childe Harold III*, 14, 1-3:

*Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright
 As their own beams ...*

or 91, 1-6:

*Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places and the peak
 Of earth-o'er-gazing mountains, and thus make
 A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
 Upreared of human hands.*

E.H.Coleridge, and CPW, both refer to Herodotus' description of the Persian religion at *Histories*, Book I 131, and to Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, IV 671-6. Neither point out that the phrase *Chaldean Shepherds* (no-one believes the Chaldean astronomers to have been shepherds) is from *The Excursion*, IV 694.

145: Byron to Murray, July 9th 1817: *P.S. – Pray was Manfred's speech to the Sun still retained in Act 3d? – I hope so – it was one of the best in the thing – & better than the Colosseum. – I have done 56 stanzas of Canto 4th. of Childe Harold – so down with your ducats.* (BLJ V 249)

Act III scene iii.

Herman

'Tis strange enough; night after night for years
He hath pursued long vigil in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it –
So have we all been, oft-times – but from it
Or its contents it were impossible 5
To draw conclusions absolute of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter – I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years
To pore upon its mysteries. –

Manuel

'Twere dangerous. 10
Content thyself with what thou know'st already. –

Herman

Ah, Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle –
How many years is't? –

Manuel

Ere Count Manfred's birth
I served his father – whom he nought resembles – 15

Herman

There be more sons in like predicament. –
But wherein do they differ?

Manuel

I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits.
Count Sigismund¹⁴⁶ was proud, but gay and free –
A Warrior and a reveller – he dwelt not 20
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

Herman

Beshrew the hour! 25
But those were jocund times. I would that such
Would visit the old walls again – they look

146: *Count Sigismund*: Byron perhaps chooses the name because of King Sigismund of Burgundy (see above, III i 19n).

As if they had forgotten them. –

Herman

These walls

Must change their chieftain first; Oh, I have seen
Some strange things in these four years. –

Manuel

Come – be friendly – 30
Relate me some to wile away our watch.¹⁴⁷
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts by this same tower.

Manuel

That was a night indeed. I do remember 35
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such
Another evening; yon red cloud, which rests
On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then,
So like that it might be the same; the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing Moon. – 40
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower¹⁴⁸ –
How occupied we knew not – but with him,
The sole companion of his wanderings
And watchings – her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love – 45
As he indeed by blood was bound to do –
The Lady Astarte, his –

*Enter the Abbot.*¹⁴⁹

Abbot

Where is your Master? –

Herman

147: *Relate me some to wile away our watch:* Byron may subconsciously intend an echo of *Hamlet* I i; but why Manuel and Herman should be on watch at all, since Manfred is not at war with any earthly foe, is unclear.

148: *Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower – / How occupied we knew not:* Byron may consciously or unconsciously be recollecting the following passage from Rousseau's *Confessions*, about the time when he was observing the stars through a telescope: *Un soir, des paysans passant assez tard me virent dans un grotesque Équipage occupé à mon opération. La lueur qui donnait sur mon planisphère, et dont ils ne voyaient pas la cause parce que la lumière était cachée à leurs yeux par les bords du seau, ces quatre picquets, ce grand papier barbouillée de figures, ce cadre, et le jeu de ma lunette, qu'ils voyaient aller et venir, donnaient à cet objet un air de grimoire qui les effraya. Ma parure n'était pas propre à les rassurer; un chapeau clabaud par-dessus mon bonnet. et un pet-en-l'air ouaté de Maman qu'elle m'avait obligé de mettre, offrait à leurs yeux l'image d'un vrai sorcier, et comme il était près de minuit, ils ne doutèrent point que ce ne fût le commencement du sabbat. Peu curieux d'en voir davantage, ils se sauvèrent très alarmé, éveillèrent leurs voisins pour leur conter leur vision, et l'histoire courut si bien, que dès le lendemain chacun sut dans le voisinage que le sabbat se tenait chez M. Noïray (Confessions, Livre VI).* A polite visit from two local Jesuits dispels the rumour.

149: The need to restart the dialogue between Manfred and the Abbot, with a view to meeting Gifford's objections to the Abbot's having been portrayed in the original version as *an idiot*, is not handled by Byron with any dramatic subtlety.

Yonder, in the tower. –

Abbot

I must speak with him –

Manuel

'Tis impossible –

He is most private – and must not be thus

50

Intruded on –

Abbot

Upon myself I take

The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be;

But I must see him –

Herman

Thou hast seen him once

This eve already. –

Abbot

Sirrah! I command thee –

Knock, and apprise the Count of my approach –

55

Herman

We dare not. –

Abbot

Then it seems I must be herald

Of my own purpose –

Manuel

Reverend Father – stop –

I pray you pause –

Abbot

Why so? –

Manuel

But step this way –

One moment – I will tell you further. ———

Exeunt – Scene closes. –

Themselves in pensive order. — — —

Enter the Abbot.

My good Lord! ¹⁵² 45
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But do not let my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
Recoils on me — its good in the effect
May be upon your head — could I say — *heart* — 50
Could I touch *that* with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered;
But is not yet all lost. — — — —

Manfred

Thou know'st me not —
My days are numbered — and my deeds recorded —
Retire — or it will be dangerous — Away. — 55

Abbot

Thou dost not mean to menace me? —

Manfred

Not I —
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee. —

Abbot

What dost mean? —

Manfred

Look there!
What dost thou see?

Abbot

Nothing. —

Manfred

Look there I say —
And steadfastly — now tell me what thou seest? — 60

Abbot

That which should shake me — but I fear it not —
I see a dusk and awful figure rise
Like an infernal god from out the Earth —

152: For the Abbot's tone on his second entrance, compare Murray's letter to Byron of March 10th requesting a rewritten third act (quoted above, page): *Now I am venturing upon the confidence with which your Lordship has ever honoured me in sending the enclosed — I fear I am not doing right — I am not satisfied — but I venture — & I entreat that you will make a point of returning them.*

His face wrapt in a mantle – and his form
Robed as with angry clouds – he stands between 65
Thyself and me – but I do fear him not. –

Manfred

Thou hast no cause – he shall not harm thee – but
His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy –
I say to thee – retire –

Abbot

And I reply –
Never – till I have battled with this fiend – 70

What doth he here?

Manfred

Why – aye – what doth he here?
I did not send for him¹⁵³ – he is unbidden. –

Abbot

Alas! lost Mortal! – what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake –
Why doth he gaze on thee and thou on him? 75
Ah! he unveils his aspect – on his brow
The Thunder-scars are graven¹⁵⁴ – from his eye
Glares forth the Immortality of hell –
Avaunt! –

Manfred

Pronounce – what is thy mission?

Spirit¹⁵⁵

153: Manfred's sudden change from delight at the Abbot's terror to the realisation that the Spirit was for once not one summoned by him constitutes one of the play's few comic moments.

154: *on his brow / The Thunder-scars are graven:* compare *The Vision of Judgement*, Stanza 24:

*But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved –
His brow was like the Deep when tempest-tost –
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face –
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded Space.*

Or see *Paradise Lost*, I 599-606:

*Darkend so, yet shon
Above them all th'Arch-Angel: but his face
Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerat Pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signes of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime ...*

Come!

Abbot

What art thou, unknown Being? Answer! Speak! – 80

Spirit

The Genius of this mortal. Come! – 'tis time. –

Manfred

I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me; who sent thee here?

Spirit

Thou'lt know anon – Come – Come –

Manfred

I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine, 85
And striven with thy Masters. Get thee hence! –

Spirit

Mortal! thine hour has come. Away, I say. –

Manfred

I knew and know my hour is come,¹⁵⁶ but not
To render up my Soul to such as thee –
Away! I'll die as I have lived – Alone. – 90

Spirit

Then I must summons up my brethren. Rise! –

Other Spirits rise up.

Abbot

Avaunt! Ye evil Ones! Avaunt! I say –
Ye have no power where piety hath power –
And I do charge ye in the name –

Spirit

Old Man –

155: The identity of the Spirit is never made clear. Despite the echoes recorded in the notes, he is not unambiguously Satan, but a form, as he says at line 81, of Genius, similar perhaps to the one given Pope Julius II in Erasmus' dialogue *Iulius Exclusus*.

156: *I knew and know my hour is come*: contrast Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, Chapter IV: *Manfred ... starting in an agony of terror and amazement, ... cried, Ha! what art thou, thou dreadful spectre! Is my hour come?*

We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order – 95
Waste not thy pious words on idle uses –
It were in vain – this Man is forfeited. –
Once more, I summons him! Away! Away! –

Manfred

I do defy ye – though I feel my Soul
Is ebbing from me – yet I do defy ye – 100
Nor will I hence while I have earthly breath

To breathe my scorn upon ye – earthly strength
To wrestle, though with Spirits – what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb. – – –

Spirit

Reluctant Mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade 105
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our Equal? Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? The very life
Which made thee wretched? – –

Manfred

Thou false fiend! thou liest!
My life is in its last hour – *that* I know, 110
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour –
I do not combat against Death, but thee,
And thy surrounding Angels – my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science – penance – daring, 115
And length of watching – strength of mind – and skill
In knowledge of our Fathers – when the Earth
Saw Men and Spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no Supremacy: I stand
Upon my Strength – I do defy – deny – 120
Spurn back – and scorn ye!¹⁵⁷ –

Spirit

But thy many Crimes
Have made thee — –

Manfred

What are they to such as thee?
Must Crimes be punished but by other Crimes,
And greater Criminals? Back to thy hell! –

157: Manfred's tone when faced by his Genius derives from that of Beckford's *Vathek*, similarly placed: *Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions: thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal, as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace. I have traversed a sea of blood, to acquire a power, which will make thy equals tremble: deem not that I shall retire, when in view of the port; or, that I will relinquish her, who is dearer to me than either my life, or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! Let him illumine my career! it matters not where it may end.* (*Vathek*, ed. Lonsdale, p. 105.)

Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel – 125
 Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know. – –
 What I have done is done¹⁵⁸ – I bear within
 A torture which could nothing gain from thine –
 The Mind which is immortal makes itself
 Requit for its good or evil thoughts – 130
 Is its own origin of Ill and End –
 And its own place and time¹⁵⁹ – its innate Sense,
 When stripped of this Mortality, derives
 No colour from the fleeting things without,
 But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy, 135
 Born from the knowledge of its own desert. –
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
 I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey,
 But was my own destroyer, and will be
 My own Hereafter.¹⁶⁰ – – Back, ye baffled fiends! 140
 The hand of Death is on me¹⁶¹ – but not Yours! –

The Demons disappear. –

Abbot

Alas! how pale thou art – thy lips are white,
 And thy breast heaves – and in thy gasping throat
 The accents rattle – give thy prayers to heaven –
 Pray – though 'twere but in thought – but die not thus.

Manfred

'Tis over. – – My dull eyes can fix thee not, 145
 But all things swim around me, and the Earth
 Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well –
 Give me thy hand. – – –

Abbot

Cold – Cold – even to the heart¹⁶² –
 But yet one prayer – Alas! how fares it with thee? 150

Manfred

Old Man!¹⁶³ 'tis not so difficult to die.¹⁶⁴ –

158: *What I have done is done*: compare *Macbeth*, V i 66: *What's done cannot be undone ...*

159: Compare *Paradise Lost* I 254-5: *The mind is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.*

160: *I ... was my own destroyer and will be / My own hereafter*: compare *Epistle to Augusta*, 23-4: *I have been cunning in mine overthrow / The careful pilot of my proper woe.*

161: *The hand of death is on me*: compare the soldier's line at the death of Enobarbus, *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV ix 28: *The hand of death hath raught him.*

162: *Cold – Cold – even to the heart*: compare the words of Othello to the dead Desdemona at V iii 278: *Cold, cold, my girl! / Even like thy chastity.*

163: The Abbot's final line *Whither? I dread to think – but he is gone* was said in the act's first version by the senior servant Manuel. Manfred's own final line *Old Man! 'Tis not so difficult to die* gains greatly in strength by being said, not to Manuel, but to the Abbot. See next note.

164: When Byron received the first edition he was furious, because Manfred's final line had been cut. On August 12th 1817 he wrote to Murray: ... *You have destroyed the whole effect & moral of the poem by omitting the last line of Manfred's speaking – & why this was done I know not* (BLJ V 257). On September 9th Murray

Manfred expires. –

Abbot

He's gone – his Soul hath ta'en its earthless flight –
Whither?¹⁶⁵ – I dread to think – but he is gone.

End of Act third, and of this poem. – – –

wrote back: ... *Mr Gifford after consulting me omitted your close of the drama from no other motive than because he thought the words you allude too [sic] – lessened the effect – & I was convinced of this myself – and the omission to send a copy to you earlier was merely that having no direct opportunity it did not occur to me to send it by post & upon my honour the alteration was so trivial in my mind that I forgot the importance which it might have in the eye of an author – I have written up this day to have the page cancelled and your reading restored – In future I propose to send you every proof by post – with any suggestions of Mr G[ifford] upon them for your approbation* (John Murray Archive).

165: An answer to the Abbot's worry may lie in the introduction to a monograph by Thomas Taylor, *A Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, published early in 1816 (it had first appeared as a book in 1790) in a number of *The Pamphleteer* which also contained an essay called *On the Punishment of Death* by John William Polidori, Byron's doctor and travelling companion: ... *I now proceed to prove that the shews of the lesser mysteries were designed by the ancient theologians, their founders, to signify occultly the condition of the impure soul invested with a terrene body, and merged in a material nature: or, in other words, to signify that such a soul in the present life might be said to die, as far as it is possible for soul to die; and that on the dissolution of the present body, while in a state of impurity, it would experience a death still more durable and profound.* (*The Pamphleteer*, Vol. VIII p. 36) Manfred's soul, being radically impure, may perhaps anticipate a similar fate.