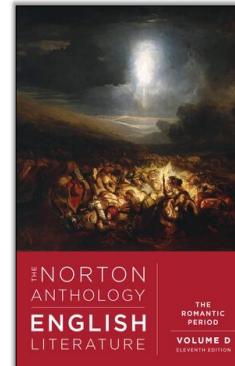


George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824)



- descended from two aristocratic clans with colourful backgrounds
- became a Lord at age 10; attended Harrow and Cambridge
- suffered from a malformed foot, a source of much embarrassment
- became a fashionable celebrity, involved in various sex scandals
- model for the “Byronic hero,” a prevailing Romantic archetype
- assisted in the Greek war for independence (NAEL D630-34)

Byronic hero



- a mysterious and gloomy figure, superior in his passions to the common run of humanity, whom he regards with disdain
- tortured by an enormous, unnamed guilt that drives him towards an inevitable doom
- exerts a powerful, erotic attraction upon other characters
- depicted in Byron's *Childe Harold* (1816) and *Manfred* (1817)
- model for Heathcliff in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) (NAEL D631, Baldick 47)

(audio: stanzas 1, 8, 9, 10, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 54, 55, 56, 60, 62)



Byron, *Don Juan* (1819-1824)

Don Juan in Music and Literature

- 1630: Gabriel Téllez (Tirso da Molina), *El Burlador de Sevilla*
- 1665: Molière, *Le Festin de pierre*
- 1676: Thomas Shadwell, *The Libertine*
- 1736: Carlo Goldoni, *Don Giovanni Tenorio o sia il Dissoluto*
- 1786: W. A. Mozart, *Don Giovanni*
- 1824: Lord Byron, *Don Juan*
- 1830: Alexander Pushkin, *The Stone Guest*
- 1872: Robert Browning, *Fifine at the Fair*
- 1903: George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*
- 1958: Henri de Montherlant, *Don Juan*

- pronounced *Don Joo'-un*
- published in instalments from 1819 until Byron's death in 1824
- meant to be read rapidly, to reflect its improvisational method of composition
- longest satirical poem in English, consisting of some 2,000 stanzas
- satirizes the archetypal Spanish libertine, traditionally a man of enormous sexual energy but in Byron's poem depicted as a naïf (NAEL D690-91)

Byron, *Don Juan* (1819-1824)

cantos

1. seduced by Julia; sent abroad	9. in the Russian court
2. captured by pirates into slavery	10. sent from Russia to England
3. taken to Turkish harem	11. in the English court
4. further exploits in harem	12. safeguards daughter Leila
5. affair with Turkish Sultan	13. party with Amundevilles
6. escape from harem to Europe	14. English country life, fox hunt
7. romantic intrigues in Europe	15. Lady Adeline advises marriage
8. goes to war in Europe	16. interacts with a ghost
	17. unfinished diversion

canto**stanza**

- a group of verse lines forming a section or subdivision of a poem
- shares the same structure of all or some of the other sections of that same poem (e.g., metre, rhyme scheme, etc.) (Baldick 340-41)
- Italian for “song”
- a subdivision of an epic poem or other narrative poem
- may be further subdivided into *stanzas* or other smaller units
- equivalent to a *chapter* in a prose work (Baldick 52)

ottava rima*x**/ x / x / x / x / x /***a** She sat and sewed that hath done me the wrong
*x / x / x / x / x /***b** Whereof I plain and have done many a day,
*x / x / x / x / x /***a** And whilst she heard my plaint in piteous song
*/ x / x / x / x /***b** Wished my heart the sampler as it lay,
*x / / x / x / x /***a** The blind master I have served so long,
*/ x x / x / x / x /***b** Grudging to hear that he did hear her say,
*/ x / / x / x / x /***c** Made her own weapon do her finger bleed
*x / x / x / x / x /***c** To feel if pricking were so good indeed.
x / x / x / x / x /

Sir Thomas Wyatt, “Epigram XLI” (1542)

- Italian for “eighth rhyme”

- a verse stanza consisting of eight lines in iambic pentameter rhyming **abababcc**

- usually used in narrative verse, but occasionally in lyric poems

- first used by Italian poet Boccaccio in 14thC, perfected by Ariosto in 16thC, introduced to English by Wyatt in 16thC

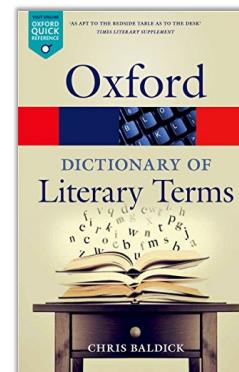
- used most often by Romantics Byron, Keats, and Shelley, and later by Yeats (Baldick 261-62)

epic vs mock epic**mock epic**

- a poem employing the lofty style and the conventions of epic poetry to describe a trivial or undignified series of events
- a kind of satire that mocks its subject by treating it in an inappropriately grandiose way
- often include epic conventions such as invocations, battles, supernatural machinery, etc.
- most famous example in English is Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (Baldick 229)

epic

- a long narrative poem celebrating the great deeds of legendary heroes, in a grand ceremonious style
- the godlike hero performs superhuman exploits in marvellous battles or voyages, saving nations or the world
- “secondary” epics (e.g., Milton’s *Paradise Lost*) are based on “primary” epics of Virgil (*The Aeneid*) and Homer (*The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*) (Baldick 119)

picaresque

- from the Spanish *picaró*, meaning “rogue” or “scoundrel”
- traditionally, a work with a *picaresque* as its hero, a quick-witted servant of several masters
- recounts their escapades in first-person with an episodic structure
- can now refer to a loosely structured sequence of episodes recounting a hero’s long journey
- mostly in prose, but Byron’s *Don Juan* is a poetic example (Baldick 277-78)

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