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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report

of

Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Herbert Clefton for the degree of Master of Arts.

They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Report

of

Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Herbert Clefton final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts. . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

June 4 1918

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Byronism in Alfred de Musset.

A Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the
College of Science, Literature and the Arts of the
University of Minnesota

by

H. E. Clefton

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When Byronism swept over France in the early nineteenth century, Alfred de Musset, budding Romanticist, was a school-boy. As did all the youngsters of France, he added to his already precocious reading, the poetry of Lord Byron⁽¹⁾. The sombre genius of the English poet so profoundly impressed the sensitive spirit of the later author of "Rolla", that even his contemporaries accused him of drawing his poetic inspiration from a Byronic fount.⁽²⁾ Musset denies that he is a plagiarist:⁽³⁾ he often mentions Byron in his writings,⁽⁴⁾ rarely with ridicule,⁽⁵⁾ often with respect.⁽⁶⁾ To show to what extent and in what manner the Byronic influence

(1) E. Estève: "Byronisme et le Romantisme Français." P. 408 and 217-8.

A. Houssaye: "Confessions" t. I. p. 272.
(2) "Musset après Byron et tout après Musset".

P. Boyer: "Claudina."
(3) "On m'a dit l'an passé que j'imitais Byron:
Vous qui me connaissez, vous savez bien que non.
Je hais comme la mort l'état de plagiaire:
Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois
dans mon verre."

"Dédicace de la Coupe et les Lèvres."
(4) Namouna II. 9. Le Temps, Lettres de Dupuis et Cottonet. Un mot sur l'art moderne. A mon frère.
A. Alfred T ~~xxxx~~.

(5) Histoire d'un merle blanc.

(6) La Confession d'un Enfant du siècle, A la Malibran.
Lettre à Lamartine

is evidenced in the works of Musset, is the object of this thesis. It will attempt to prove that Musset draws freely from Byron for ideas and the expression of them, that he expresses the Byronic personality in his writings. Comparison of the poets is made in five capital divisions : their natures, according to their own statements; their religion; their voluptuous characteristics - love, women, and passion; their romantic heroes; their peculiar style.

I.

Personality.

The juice of the writings of Musset and Byron is the revelation of their natures, the story element is only the rind. This intensely personal character of their writings gives reason for a chapter on the natures of the two poets, as they express them in their works. Byron, baring his soul with its turbulence, ennui, pride and cynicism, won, thereby, immense popularity. If Musset, young reader of Byron when Romanticism was the fashion and France was ready for a French Byron, was affected in his writings by the English poet, a great part of the evidence of influence will be found here, in a comparison of personal elements of their poetry. If influenced to any extent by Byron, Musset must have taken to himself a large part of the most popular thing in the author of Don Juan: the Byron nature in its emphasized elements. Absolute parallel in each characteristic is impossible, for a man such as Musset would alter his borrowings by his own personality. A demonstration, however, that the most evident elements of Byron's character, as he himself reveals it, find a similar emphasis in Musset, points to the fact that Musset was profoundly affected by Byronism. The ideas which are emphasized in Byron, and later in Musset, are these: their ennui, the thought that man is governed by an irresistible force superior to his will, that philosophy can not explain his existence,

that civilized man is a despicable being, that the sophisticated poet flees him to solitude, finds some relief from his world-disappointment in bitter-sweet memory of past sorrows and a final relief in death. "Ennui" differs in the two poets, in cause and character. In the chapter on Romantic ~~here~~, it is seen that Byron's heroes come to satiety because of dissipation while Musset's heroes plunge into dissipation because of ennui. Similar is the case of the ennui of the poets themselves: Byron comes to bitterness and ennui after he has squandered his youth in dissipation, Musset reflects the "mal du siècle", which is not disillusionment, but pre-disillusionment. Byron takes the attitude of the man who has discovered by his own experience, ⁽¹⁾ the nothingness of life. Musset blames the eighteenth century philosophers, especially Voltaire, for tearing the veil from the ugliness of reality - Byron and Goethe, for advancing this cry of sorrow in their poetry. Byron gives reason for his weariness as result of youthful excess. Vice, to youth is fascinating. ⁽²⁾ Once under its sway, vice is the worst of tyrants ⁽³⁾ and leaves the former zestful youth;

(1) "Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well-known."
Don Juan XV -18.

(2) "Oh, vice, how soft are thy voluptuous ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who can escape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?"
Childe Harold I- LXV.

(3) Sardanaphus I - 2.

"The wither'd frame, the ruined mind,
The wrack of passion left behind,
A shrivel'd scroll, a scatter'd leaf," (1)
Sear'd by the autumn blast of grief!"
The Giaour.

This is the Byronic path of the follower of pleasure. The author, according to his own words, followed the same way:

"But now at thirty years my hair is gray ...
My heart is not much greener, and, in short, I
Have squandered my whole summer while'twas May,
And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
Have spent my life, both interest and principal, (2)
And deem not, what I deem'd my soul invincible."
Don Juan I -CCXIII.

Early old age, caused by too rapid burning of youth's fire, is his lot:

"When our moon's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's way."
Don Juan XIII - IV.

Besides a physical ruin from youthful wildness, Byron was mentally hurt because of his people's injustice of him. Their rejection of him left a sore that would not heal:

(1) See also Childe Harold III - 4 and 5.

(2) To the Countess of Blessington; 1824:
"I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head."

Long years! - It tries the thrilling frame to bear
And eagle spirit of a child of song -
Long years of outrage, calumny and wrong:
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude,
And the minds canker in its savage mood.
Lament of Passo, I.

The loss of friendship added to his bitterness:

"The death of friends, and that which slays even more -
The death of friendship..
Don Juan IV - 12.

With a broken heart, (1) with regret for his vanished youth, (2)
with a disillusioned mind, (3) Byron finds, at middle-age,
that life holds nothing for him:

"Through life's road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three and thirty,
What have those years left to me?
Nothing, except thirty-three."

Don Juan VII - 9.

Although Musset's "ennui" is mainly due to another
cause, we do find the expression of the ill-effects of de-
bauchery in his works, especially in "La Confession d'un
Enfant du Siècle." (4) In the chapter on Religion is men-
tioned the fact that Musset blames his lack of religious

(1) Childe Harold III - 31 - 34.

(2) " " II - 18.

(3) "All present life is but an interjection,
An "Oh!" or "Ah!" of joy or misery,
Or a "Ha! Ha!" or Bah!" - a yawn or "Pooh!"
Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

Don Juan XV - I.

(4) Quoique je ne fusse plus un débauché. Il m'arrive
tout à coup que mon corps se souvint de l'avoir été...
Une espèce d'inertie stagnante, colorée d'une joie amère,
est ordinaire aux débauchés. C'est une suite d'une vie
de caprice, où rien n'est réglé sur les besoins du
corps, mais sur les fantaisies de l'esprit, et où l'un
doit toujours être prêt à obéir à l'autre. La jeunesse
et la volonté peuvent résister aux excès; mais la nature
se venge en silence. et le jour où elle décide qu'elle
va réparer sa force, la volonté pour l'attendre et en
abuser de nouveau". - IV - II.

belief to the destructive philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is this lack of religious belief, this pre-disillusionment by others, that causes the sorrow of Musset - as it did that of his brothers in Romanticism - not the after effect of debauchery.

"Le Mépris, Dieu puissant, voilà donc la science!...
Quel hideux ocean est-ce donc que la vie."
La coupe et les Levres.

The house of faith destroyed, no shelter remains to the man of Musset's time from the storm of life. This idea is developed in the first part, second chapter of "La Confession d'un Enfant", and in "Rolla". "Rolla" is the man of the century, as was Musset, who, his belief destroyed, suicides because he can see no object in life:

"Et penses-tu (Voltaire) cependant que si quelque croy-
ance

Si le plus léger fil le resterait encor,
Il viendrait sur le lit prostituer sa mort?
Voilà ton oeuvre, Aronet, voilà l'homme
Tel que tu l'as voulu. - C'est dans ce siècle qu'
C'est d'hier seulement qu'on peut mourir ainsi."

The world had been made empty, hence ennui. (1) Then "les colosses de douleur, Goethe and Byron, instilled "désespérance" in all the young hearts of France, including Musset's (2)

"Ennui" in Byron, is caused by experience with life, "Ennui" in Musset, is caused by experience with books and the thought of others. It brought Byron to a bitterness and sense of futility, it is found by Musset to be a state

(1) "Aujourd' hui' rien n'est beau, ni le mal ni le bien." Rolla.

(2) "La Confession d'un Enfant". I - 2.

worse than death: "Une grande douleur est souvent un grand bien. L'ennui, au contraire, ronge et détruit l'homme..... N'avoit plus la raison de vivre est un état pire que la mort."

Frederic et Bernarette. To Musset, afflicted with ennui:

"Le bonheur n'est pour lui qu'un horrible mélange,
Car le miel le plus doux sur ses lèvres se change
En un breuvage amer."

Stances (Oeuvres post-humes).

Byron's "ennui" then, is the weariness of a man who has seen the world and is tired of it; Musset's "ennui" is that of a century taught by Byronic men, which finds life unpleasant because of disillusionment gotten by them. Musset is the pupil who adopts the character of his master without passing through the experience that forms that character.

Other elements of the nature of the poets, as expressed in their poetry, are striking in their similarity. Besides "ennui" a number of ideas, that the gist of Byron's poetry, are developed in the same manner by Musset. Such is the feeling that man is guided through life, by a force superior to his own will, that philosophy and science cannot explain the source, purpose, or end of life. Byron and Musset express fatalistic ideas in their poems. Fate is so irresistible that it is useless to struggle against it:

"To strive too, with our fate were such a strife
As if the corn sheaf should oppose the sickle."
Don Juan V - XVII

When man's hour is come, one must yield, when the grave yawns, one must descend into it, for

"Qui peut sous le soleil tromper sa destinée?"
Portea.

The same rule that governs all things, "from the star to the winding worm must be obeyed by man:

"You must obey what all obey, the rule
of fix'd necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not. " The Deformed Transformed. I-2

Hope and renown, the loved and the loving, all must bow to
the inexorable law of Fate:

"Comment lutterais - je avec l'onde
Dont les flots ne reculent pas?" A Juana.

Man is belittled by this engulfing Fate, that blots all
out, that makes his troubles vain. (1)

When he seeks to know the "what" and "why" of
this relentless Force, philosophy gives him no help, nor
does science avail him anything. Both poets react toward
philosophy and science in a similar way, which is, that all
his labor for enlightenment and all his pretended knowledge,
has brought man no explanation of his existence:

...."then what is life or death?....
But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
And there we go: but where?...
We, whose minds comprehend all things?
Don Juan V - 39

"L'alchimiste courbé, d'une main impuissante,
Frappa son front ridé dans le calme des nuits.
Le philosophe oisif, dessequa sa pensée."
Le Saule. II.

A "Reverie" (Oeuvres Posthumes) restates the theme that man,
for all his progress, has not penetrated the secrets of life
and death. The peasant sows his seed and awaits the crops;
told by his wife "Je suis enceinte", he awaits the child;
he sits at the bedside and sees his father die:

(1) See: Childe Harold III - 2. The two Foscari II - 1
Don Juan II - 4, etc.

"Que savons nous de plus?....et la sagesse humaine,
Qu'a-t-elle découvert de plus dans son domaine?
Sur ce large univers elle a dit-on, marché:
Et voilà cinq mille ans qu'elle a toujours cherché!

Byron feels the same lack, that human science cannot satisfy:

"How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be!"

Don Juan XV - XCIX.

Musset's thought, when, in "L'Espoir en Dieu", he refuses to accept
one after another of the philosophic systems, (1) is expressed by

Byron in Manfred III - 1:

"If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all other vanities the motliest".....

Both reached the conclusion, that from philosophy and science,
nothing can be learned of the beginning or the end of man:

"All that we know is, nothing can be known."
Childe Harold II - 7

When we consider the reaction of our poets to human society,
we find that Byron is more bitter in his opinion of civilization.
This is natural, for never was Musset, like Byron, exiled from his
native land and rejected by his former friends. We do find in
Musset, though, a dissatisfaction with the world that may be only
a reflection of the fashion of the times, or may be a direct in-
fluence of Byron. Let us see by comparing the main points of
this subject, emphasized by both. Cities are places where man is
diverted from his high plane by the contact with his fellows:

(1) This is the passage commencing:

"Ou sont-ils, ces faiseurs de systèmes,
Qui savent, sans la foi, trouver la vérité,
Sophistes impuissants qui ne croient qu'aux-mêmes?
Quels sont leurs arguments et leur autorité?"

"And tall, and strong, and swift were they
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care or gain....."

Don Juan VIII - LXVI.

Musset finds cities have the same narrowing influence:

"Là, du soir au matin, fument autour des hommes
Ces vastes alambics qu'on nomme les cités.
Intrigues, passions, perils, et voluptés."
Dédicace a la coupe et les Lèvres.

Humanity, in general, is ungrateful, cruel, and blood-thirsty.

Association with one's fellow men is not a pleasant thing.

Here we find Byron more bitter and more specific than Musset.⁽¹⁾

Musset finds Europe spiritually dead⁽²⁾ and humanity but a
corpse:

"Où l'humanité n'est-elle qu'un cadavre dont les mem-
bres et les fibres sont livrés à la corruption, en attendant
qu'ils le soient au néant?"

Neither does Byron see nobility in the race of man,⁽³⁾ Civili-
zation, as it is does not please him:

"The inconvenience of civilization
Is that you neither can be pleased nor please..."
Don Juan VIII - LXIV.

To Musset, humanity is ungrateful and cruel :⁽⁴⁾

(1) Some passages are peculiarly fitting these days of
the Great War:

"some watch-word for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the right;
Religion - freedom - vengeance - what you will,
A word's enough to raise mankind to kill:
Some factious phrase, by cunning caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed!"
Lara II - 8.

(2) "Tout est mort en Europe - oui, tout, - jusqu'à l'amour!"
Les vœux steriles.

(3) "the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts".

(4) See also "A la Malibran." The Deformed Transformed

"Ansi s'attache à nous l'ingratitude humaine;
Jusque sur la souffrance elle épuise sa haine
D'autant plus implacable en son impunité,
Qu'elle paye en orgueil toute sa lacheté."
.....La Servante du Roi.

Men suffer in comparison with nature, in Byron's mind:

"How beautiful is all this invisible world!
How glorious in action and itself.....
....men are - what they name not to themselves
And trust not to each other..."
Manfred I - 2

Here Byron often has a violence that greatly exceeds Musset's
invectives against men:

"Dogs, or men - for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs - your betters far - "
Don Juan VII - 7.

"On earth you have only fiends for friends."
The Deformed Transformed.

Likewise, Byron's satire of society - it was English Society
that cast him off - is comparatively rare in Musset, except
in a few places like:

"C'est ainsi qu'en entrant dans la société
On trouve ses égouts.".....Rolla.

"Don Juan" and "Childe Harold" are sown with such attacks:

"Society is now one polish'd horde
Formed by two mighty tribes, the borers and the bored."

More raw is this picture of the man of "good society:"

"He was the mildest manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat;
With such true breeding as a gentleman
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society."
Don Juan III - XLI.

Along with this disgust with man and his selfish ways,
both poets show a thorough sophistication and cynicism. Byron

takes a middle-aged and disillusioned man's view of sex relations. (1) On a heroine who was caught in her loving, he remarks:

"But they who blunder thus are raw beginners:
A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
The loveliest oligarchs of our gynocracy:"
Don Juan XII - LXVI.

He pictured aptly a certain type of women that is not exactly extinct today:

"When tired of play, She flirted without sin
With some of those fair creature who have prided
Themselves on innocent tantalization
And hate all vice except its reputation!"
Don Juan XII - XLVIII.

Musset's cynicism takes a somewhat different form. as though he were trying - a child - to ape an elder in some worldly trick. (And is not that what we are trying to prove?) Examples of his sophistication are found plentifully in *Namouna*, where, for instance, Hassan, when he is tired of his slave girls, is wont to tell them: "d'aller courir les rues," - and Musset adds:

"Système assurément qui n'a rien d'inhumain."

A short extract from "*Les secrètes pensées de Rafael*," will illustrate his manner, his pose as a wicked and world-weary fellow:

"Fille de l'Occident, un soir tu t'es couchée...

Lecteur, puisqu'il faut bien à ce not redomté
Tot ou tard, à present, tout honnête homme en vienne,
C'est, après le dîner, une faiblesse humaine
Que de dormir une heure en attendant le thé."

What to do, when with a fatalistic feeling in their

(1) See also, Don Juan II - LXI, I - CXXXVI, XII - XLVIII,
II - LXXIV.

hearts, when knowledge cannot answer them the questions they ask of their own being sated with the world, they find their fellow-man unpleasant to live with? Seek solitude and commune with nature. This is Musset's idea in the "Souvenir des Alpes" - where he mentions Byron⁽¹⁾ - when Fatigué, brisé, vaincu par l'ennui", the traveler finds repose amidst the mountain pines:

"Peut-être en savent-ils autant et plus que nous,
Ces vieux êtres muets attachés à la terre,
Qui, sur le sein fécond de la commune mère,
Dorment dans un repos si superbe et si doux."

To find relief from world suffering in solitude, especially in the mountain's silent height, is frequent in Byron, as for example, in "Manfred" and "Childe Harold":

"Oh! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share."
Childe Harold I - 30.

And:

"to me
"High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of Human cities torture!"
Ditto I - LXXII.

And:

"To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain."
Ditto II - LXXXII.

While:

"To climb the trackless mountain all unseen...
This is not solitude: 'tis but to hold
Converse with nature's charms, and view her
stores unroll'd."
Ditto II - XXIV.

Musset expresses this need of the sorrowful for solitude,

(1)"Byron, dans sa tristesse altière,
Disait un jour, passant par ce pays:
Quand je vois aux sapins cet air de cimetière,
Cela ressemble à mes amis."

again in "Pierre et Camille:" "Toute vraie douleur donne, la plupart du temps, ce besoin de solitude a l'homme comme la souffrance physique aux animaux."

An essential part of Musset's nature is the finding of a bitter-sweet emotion in remembrance of past sorrows. Of human feelings, tears alone are true. (1) The recalling of bygone woes brings an exquisite pang to him that is a sort of pleasure. (2) The finest enjoyment in life is dreaming of the past. (3) Byron is rather inclined to find increase in sorrow from memory. (4) (5) The hidden secrets, gnawing cancers in the souls of Manfred, Lara, and Childe Harold illustrate this. Though memory is generally poignant pain to him, we do find now and then, statements that remind of Musset's idea, that remembrances of past sorrow is pleasurable, a kind of sweet pain:

".....he meditated, fond
of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep."
Don Juan XVI - CX.

The thought that pain is often akin to pleasure, that one can not, at times distinguish them, is common to both: (6)

(1) "Bien mieux, car les pleurs seuls sont vrais"
Simone.

(2) The theme of "Tristesse": "Le seul bien qui me
reste au monde, Est d'avoir quelquefois
pleure."

(3) "Souvenir."
"we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep".
D. J. IV - 4.

(5) Musset parallels this idea when he claims that
of memory it is, "le regret":

Qui ravive la souffrance epuisee, et qui
empoisonne le souvenir." Carmosine II - 2.

(6) Byron: "Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks of
pain and pleasure, two names for one feeling."
Sardanaplus V - 1.

....."qui pourrait dire: c'est est gai
ou triste?" Les Caprices de Marianne. III.

An element of this regretful "tristesse" is the
thought of the human heart, how fresh and beautiful it is
before contamination by the world, how when "le vieux Destin"
crushes its hopes, (1) it loses:

"...what was once a world; for worlds could never
Restore to me those pure feelings, gone forever."
Don Juan VI. - V.

The heart is the source of pity, suffering and love; it is
the rock in the desert of life, (2) once broken, one must
bear:

"The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told:"
Don Juan IV - II.

Musset realizes that when the heart is emptied of its elixir
nothing but the shell remains:

"C'est l'histoire du coeur, - Tout va si vite en lui! (3)
Tout y meurt comme un son, tout, excepté l'ennui!
Moi qui vous dis ceci, que suis-je? une cervelle
sans fond." Les Marrons du Feu I - 1.

Byron has suffered thus and regrets his loss in a beautiful
lyric passage :

"No more, no more, - Oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we see
Extract emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee:
Thinkst thou the honey with those objects grew?
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
To scoble the sweetness of a flower."
D. J. I - 215.

(1) Chanson: "Faut-il dans, que le vieux Destin
Ait une si jeune maîtresse?"

(2) A. B. douard B

(3) "that fragile mould,
The porcelain of human clay"... Don Juan IV - 9.

Death is a refuge from the world - this place of torment; the tomb is an "asile", (1) whence there is no returning. Byron feels in view of man's unhappy existence, that he is fortunate who dies early and avoids the ills of life:

"Thrice happy ne'er to feel nor fear the force,
Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse."
The Bride of Abydos.

Musset feels the same, for the man who lives his life must die many deaths in its course; in his hopes, in his friends, as that:

"Il ne reste de nous qu'un cadavre vivant
Le désespoir l'habite, et le néant l'attend."
Lettre à Lamartine.

In comparing, then, the main elements the poets express of their own nature we find much similarity. Musset's complains of an "ennui" that is not exactly Byronic, but that is the sort of "ennui" the reading of Byron would cause; like Byron; he chants the evil in the world; like Byron, he takes to task philosophy and science for failing to show man the reason for his existence; like Byron, he gets satisfaction in the expression of his sophistication for the edification of the reader; like Byron, he romantically seeks solitude to heal his wounds; like Byron he derives pleasure and pain from memory of past sorrows; and regret of vanished innocence; and feels that death is a welcome relief from the emptiness of life. As we find the expression of their personal feeling similar, so do we find much agreement with Byron in Musset's ideas on religion.

(1) Don Paez.

II.

Religion.

It had been customary among the Romanticists to profess a kind of religious emotion since the "Genie du Christianisme." Musset falls in with the fashion, as in "Le Tableau d'Eglise." We must see if the "religion" of Musset is entirely a reflection of the then fad, or if a part of it might have been Byronic. We will find Byron more serious as regards belief in a Divine being and Immortality, and several things in the one that are not in the other; but in a comparison of "L'espoir en Dieu" with some of Byron's verse, especially "Cain" there will develop some significant similarities. In the opening stanza of "L'Espoir en Dieu," Musset would live like others, in peace of mind, but :

"Je ne puis - malgre moi l'infini me tourmente."
To believe, he must know. So with "Cain" in Act I - 1. He is troubled with doubt, he will not with the others, thank God for his goodness, when only evil is evident to him. Musset decides next that one must be a believer or atheist. All right, put oneself in the hands of God, what does it mean? With all his weakness, he is under the eye of an eternal witness in the evils and temptations of the world where:

"Mon juge est un bourreau qui trompe sa victime."
Cain will not give homage to a God to whom he owes noth-

ing, and who gives him life under ban of the original sin.

"Mon seul guide est la peur, et mon seul but la mort." It is Cain's proud nature, that keeps him aloof from the other humans. He will not be a slave of a divine being who offers him not happiness, but death.⁽¹⁾ Musset cannot return to the pagan practice of scorning the Gods and living for joy, because it is too late for that doctrine though man can be sure of no other. This is a common theme in the French poet, a theme that is often found in Byron:

" 'Tis true some new prophet should appear,
Opinions wear out in some thousand years,
Without a small refreshment from the spheres."
Don Juan XV - XC.

Next, in this same poem. Musset discovers that philosophy though vaunted as such, is not a way between indifference and religion. So in Byron:

"If from great nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss -
But that would spoil much good philosophy."
D. J. XIV - 1.

Then Musset finds the remedy to bring man peace. - To cast aside all the trumpery of his finite mind, to kill his reasonable doubt with a blind faith. As with the preceding ideas, this, too, is Byronic:

"But what's reality! Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No: she too much regrets,
Religion? Yes.... Don Juan XV - LXXXIV.

(1)... "let that altar stand - 'tis hallow'd now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah
In his acceptance of the victims (Cain): His!
His pleasure! Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation:
III - 1.

Improbability, according to Byron also, should not prevent belief: a blind faith is best for man:

"But St. Augustine has the greatest priority
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
"Because 'tis so...."

Don Juan XVI - V.

"And therefore mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe; - if 'tis improbable, you must;
And if it is impossible you shall
'Tis always best to take things upon trust."
Don Juan XVI - VI.

The prayer ending "L'Espoir en Dieu" might be a "melange" of extracts from Cain. Since God has put into the heart of man, belief in Him, why does He tempt man's good faith? Why allow evil on earth where he could permit only good? Why if man's suffering does not affect Him, does He not shut Himself away from the world and not tantalize man by vain hopes? - All questions that Cain has to ask the Deity. Other places in Byron mention the same problem:

"...if Heaven the while
On man and Man's research would deign do more than
smile."

Childe Harold III-CV

And the fact that man in his ignorance, mistakes the ways of God:

"...And thou Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken.."
D. J. XV - 18.

Elsewhere than in "L'Espoir en Dieu" Musset seems to have passed through a period, when he disbelieved entirely and blamed the eighteenth century philosophers for it, (1)

(1) "Empoisonné, dès l'adolescence, de tous les écrits du dernier siècle, j'y avais sucé de bonne heure le lait sterile de l'impieté L'orgueil humain, ce dieu de l'egoiste, fermait ma bouche à la prière tandis que mon âme éffrayé se refugiait dans l'esperoir du néant" - La Confession d'un Enfant - VI - 6.

into a period where, from what he says, we take it:

"Je ne croyois qu'à Dieu sans
forme, sans culta, et sans révélation." -
La Confession d'un Enfant.

He is not consistant, however. In "La Coupe et les Lèvres,"
he asserts: "Et l'homme, resté seul ne croit plus qu'à la mort;"
while the refrain in the "Lettre à Lamartine" is

"Ton âme est immortellâ...."

In Suzon: "....Pour moi, je ne crois rien,
Sinon ce que je vois..."

Rolla:

"Je ne crois pas, o Christ! a ta parole sainte:
Je suis venu trop tard dans un monde trop vieux"

"La tableau d'église" where the image of Christ inspires
Musset in a sort of religious ecstasy to wonder if Christ,
too, had terrible "doubt" feeding on his soul, is a reflection
of the religiosity of the times. In "La nuit d'août" he
gives the conventional explanation for human evils, that man
must buy his welfare with his tears. In "Cain", this is Adam's
idea, and a thing objected to by Cain. We can say, in general
that Musset had some sort of a belief in a Divine Being and
Immortality.

Byron shows a similar inconsistency, though he makes
more frequent and seemingly more sincere statements of belief:

"That life of Immortality secure
To none, save them whose faith in Christ is pure."
Lara II.

And, on the other hand:

" 'till man shall learn
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope
is built on reeds."

Childe Harold II - III.

With a more firmly rooted belief in his heart than had Musset, Byron often attacks hypocrisy in religion and the abuse caused by the various sects. (1)

".....they
Who doom to hell, themselves are on the way
Unless these bullies of eternal pains
Are pardon'd their bad hearts for their worse brains"
The Island IV. - 12.

Musset, now and then, also attacks hypocrisy:

"Et, quoiqu'ait invente l'humaine hypocrisie
Rien de vrai la dessons que le squelette humaine."
La nuit d'aût.

In Byron there is an element of conscience and remorse that is not found in Musset:

"So writhes the mind Remorse has riven."
The Giaour

"Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er Glory's din:
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the oracle of God."
The Island.

Another difference in their religious spirit is the constant recurrence of the observance of Nature as a symbol of Divine Presence: (2)

"Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print - that I have no devotion:
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting in to heaven the shortest way;
My altars are mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars, - all that springs from the
 great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul."
Don Juan III -CIV.

(1) Don Juan II - LV and XVI - VI.

(2) See also Childe Harold III - 73 and
The Prayer of Nature": "Thy laws in nature's
works appear."

A little of this found in Musset, but only a bit, while it is a large element of Byron's beautiful lyric passages. Note in the prayer of "L'Espoir en Dieu":

"La monde entier te glorifie" etc.

The trick of jesting about religion is common to both, to Musset in the Byronic manner. (1)

"There's naught, no doubt, the spirit calms
As rum and true religion."

Don Juan II - 34.

Placing side by side the religious element in the poems of the two poets we find these similarities: that the argument in "L'Espoir en Dieu" may be found emphasized in Byron, especially in his mystery play, "Cain"; that both poets are alike in the inconsistency of statement as regards belief; that both poets attack hypocrisy in religion and both jest about religious things. Differences are: Byron is a more thorough believer, we feel the Anglo-Saxon conscience and capacity for remorse in his verse; he makes a prominent theme of his lyrics the manifestation of God in Nature. Somehow, we have the feeling that Musset's religious feeling was merely a following of the fad of the times, - which began with "La Génie du Christianisme". Byron's belief in a Divine Being and Immortality is also, no doubt, partly

(1) See Les secrètes pensées de Rafael:

"Notre âme, (si Dieu veut que nous ayons une âme)
N'est pas assurément une plus douce flamme,
Un feu plus vif. forme de rayons plus ardents,
Que ce sylpha léger qui plonge et qui balance
Dans le bol ou le punch rit sur son trepied d'or"

poetic "camouflage", tho to a less degree than Musset's. Where the poets really try to answer for themselves the question, - shall I believe or not? - as in "L'Espoir en Dieu" and "Cain", we find a great deal of resemblance.

Another element of the character of the poets that should be studied for influence on account of its importance in their writings, is that of love and, consequently, of attitude toward women and "volupté".

III

L'Amour, les Femmes, La Volupté.

If Musset was much influenced by Byron, we would certainly find some kinship in the two poets' ideas of love, women and passion. And we do find a striking similarity in their treatment of these three themes.

Love, the only emotion that remains worth while to Byron and Musset, is a varied thing, as were varied and changing the natures of the two poets. At times it is delicate, at times gross, the triumph of the young and sustaining memory of the old. On the very pleasant journey thru their writings, are found, oftentimes, significant definitions which are similar. First, this love idea that both hold as the supreme good, is necessarily an ideal, which can not be attained because of the imperfectibility of the human machine. Musset, while he represents love in its finest form, makes this reservation:

"La perfection n'existe pas: la comprendre est le triomphe de l'intelligence humaine; la desirer pour posséder est la plus dangereuse des folies."

La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle
I - 4

And Byron, who believes love is capricious power easily troubled by bodily ills, gives an equivalent exposition, though not elegant, in a stanza of Don Juan:

"Love who heroically breathes a vein
Shrinks from the application of hot towels,
And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,

Seasickness death: his love was perfect; how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before! "
D. J. II - XXIII.

As in Byron, where first loves are pure, (1) and
succeeding loves vicious; Musset is not consistent in his
attitude toward the greatest emotion. (2) Silvio's Amour is not
material:

"Une larme, un soupir, voilà pour moi l'amour".
"A quoi revent.." IV.

While Hassan in Namouna, is fleshy in his regard to the op-
posite sex. Namouna is begun with this quotation from Cham-
fort:

"Qu'est-ce que l'amour? L'échange de deux fanta-
sies et le contact de deux épidermes."

Love would be a less powerful force were it checked by cold
reason and a certain realistic baseness. It is idealization
and introspection that magnify its strength:

"Il y a une justice à rendre à l'amour, c'est que
les motifs qui le combattent sont forts, simples, irrecusables,
en un mot, moins il a les sens communs, plus la passion s'irrite
et plus on aime" Les Croisilles. V.

Following the same theme, Byron explains that it is for this
reason that idleness is such an effective aid to love, that

(1) See Beppo IV. Don Juan IX - LXXIII.

(2) "Il y a des gens qui pensent que l'amour n'est
qu'une sorte de parfum: il est vrai que la
fleur qui exhale est la plus belle de la
création."

Les Croisilles V.

occupation will narrow the sphere of passion:

"Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labours an indifferent go-between"
Don Juan XIV - 76.

As, in Don Juan, prudes are several times assailed with great gusto for keeping out of their lives the greatest good because of their false shame, so Musset finds prudery an obstacle to love:

"De tous les obstacles qui nuisent à l'amour, l'un des plus grands est sans contredit ce qu'on appelle la fausse honte, qui en est bien une très véritable."
Les Croisilles - V.

Love, to neither poet, brings necessarily happiness. It causes internal turmoil, is vain, selfish, and withal, maddening:

...."for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 'tis a mere insanity,
A meddening spirit that would strive to blend
Its elf with beauty's frail inanity
On which the passions self seems to depend."
Don Juan IX - 63.

"Non. Aimer, c'est domter d'un autre et soi-meme
C'est voir tour a tour dédaigner on trahir,
Pleurer, veiller, attendre, avant tout cest souffrir!"
Luison. II.

That love is ideal, that is without ruse, natural, and free giving. Such is the attachment of Don Juan and Haidee, which blends the earthly and the sublime:

"For their's were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession: unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd."
Don Juan IV - XVI.

Musset's opinion of "l'amour la plus belle" is much the same:

"Se voir le plus possible et s'aimer seulement
Sans ruse, etc.....
Vivre à deux et donner son coeur à tout moment".
Sonnet.

The heart of Musset's philosophy is this: Love brings suffering. but it is necessary to have loved to live; for the remembrance of love is greater and finer than its reality. Numerous expositions of this theme, or part of it, may be found throughout his works. To love, to suffer, then to love again, - nothing else matters :

"O Muse! que m'importe on la mort on la vie!
J'aime, et je veux pâlir; j'aime, et je veux souffrir
.....Après avoir souffert, il faut souffrir encore;
Il faut aimer sans cesse, après avoir aimé."
La nuit d'adout.

The necessity of love for life, and the value of its remembrance which make the theme of "On ne badine pas"..., is exemplified by Perdican in his advice to Camille not to become a nun. "Tous les hommes sont neurtriers... etc; toutes les femmes sont perfides etc.....; mais il y a au monde une chose sainte et sublime, c'est l'union de deux de ces êtres si imparfaits et si affreux...on se dit: J'ai souffert souvent, je me suis trompé quelquefois, mais j'ai aimé. C'est moi qui ai vécu, et non pas un être factice créé par mon orgueil et mon ennui." (1)
Act. II - 5

Byron often develops a similar idea. To him, also, real love is the "seul bien d'iei bas"⁽²⁾ and he, too, recognizes its necessity to life in spite of the consequent pain:

(1) See also. Le Saule I.

(2) L'Espoir en Dieu.

"Give me the pleasure with the pain
So would I live and love again."
The Giaour.

On love depends men's happiness, other phases of life do not
matter in comparison with this one great emotion, Love:

...."which is
The bloom and blight of all men's happiness,
(For Glory's pillow is but restless, if
Love lay not down his cheek there".
Werner IV - 1.

In "A quoi rêvent", Musset emphasises the idea that one will
have lived if he has loved, though earthly things do perish. (1)
This is the theme of a part of Lucifer's dialogue with Cain:

"Lucifer: I pity thee who lovest what may perish.
Cain: And I thee who lov'st nothing."
Cain II - 2.

In "Il ne faut jurer de rien", the motivation of the universe
and its very existence depend on "l'amour" (2) In "le Saule",
a burning eulogium of love begins:

"Amour! torrent divine de la source infinie" I.

Compare Byron:

"Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven
A spark of that immortal fire". The Giaour.

Here too, love is old as eternity and ever re-born:

...."for love is old,
Old as eternity, but not outworn
With each new being born or to be born."
Island I - 9.

And love in "Don Juan", is "the best interpreter of Nature's
oracle" and

(1) I - 2: "Si la mort vous enlève,
La vie est un sommeil, l'amour en est le rêve
Et vous aurez vécu, si vous avez aimé".

(2) Par l'éternel amour. - les soleils tomberaient
en poussière si l'un d'entre eux cessait
d'aimer.." etc.

"that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall."
II - 189.

In both Musset and Byron, the old confess the might of love,
with poignant, and pleasant memory.

"Who doth not feel, until his failing might
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might, the majesty of loveliness?"
The Bride of Abydos.

Musset exhorts "vieillards" to think upon love at twenty
years:

.....dîtes - nous
Comme un coeur à vingt ans bondit au rendez-vous! "
Portia - I.

Rolla, "jeune vieillard" suicide at twenty-two, wins forgive-
ness for his vicious life when, on the morning of his death,
his first pure love enters his heart:

"Dous ce chaste baiser son âme est partie,
Et pendant un moment, tous deux avaient aimé".

The following verse from Byron would have made an excel-
lent introduction to this theme of "Rolla":

"Oh Love! young love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as they will,
These hours, and only these, redeem Life's years of
ill."
Childe Harold II-
IXXXI

While love was necessary and the main object in
life to both writers, they picture it as giving pain. Dis-
appointed love, to them, is the greatest cause for human suf-
fering. In the chapter on the Romantic Hero, is mentioned
that the reason for Byronic hero's plunge into debauchery
was disappointment in love, so we find the same theme in nu-
merous personal statements in his works. In an "Epistle to

a friend", 1811, Byron deals with his failure in love and his lady's disdain, and foretells this as a result:

"But if, in some succeeding year,
When Britain's "May is in the sere",
Thou hears't of one whose deepening crimes
Suit with the noblest of the times,
Of one whom love nor pity sways...etc.
Him wilt thou know, and knowing pause,
Nor with the effect forget the cause."

Don Paez: "Je n'ai plus maintenant d'amour que pour ma haine." I.
Disdained love is many other times the cause of woe. This fact doesn't prove anything when taken by itself, but along with the rest of the similarities it adds its part. Take Octave's denunciation of a love ignored:

"C'est toi, pâle souci d'une amour dédaignée,
Deseâpoir miserable et qui meurs ignoré" I.

And Byron:

"Perhaps he'll love, - and is not love in vain
Torture enough without a living tomb? "
Prophecy of Dante III.

This tendency of love to make suffering is execrated by both poets. Musset:

"Amour, flean du monde, exécration folie
Toi qu'un lien si frêle à la volupté lie,
Quand par tant d'autres noeuds tu tiens à la douleur".
Don Paez I.

Byron :

"Oh Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved. Ah why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh? "
Don Juan III - 2.

Love then, in Byron and Musset, is material or ideal according to the then mood. This ideal, an unselfish and noble love, cannot be attained because of the imperfectibility of man.

Excess of love may be checked by cold reason and practicality; prudery, however, is a thing to be avoided. Love is the greatest good here below; the centre of man's life, the axis on which the earth turns, the redeemer from earthly sorrow and ennui. Though it is all-important in man's existence, it unfortunately brings him pain instead of happiness: the worst of ills is disappointment in love. In these points the two poets agree. Since love meant much the same thing to Musset as to Byron, it might be interesting to see if their ideas of women were equivalent.

Byron and Musset both had precocious experiences with women. Byron was hounded out of England for his amours; Musset's experience with George Sand at the age of twenty-three, made him old before his time. In a number of ways, they resemble each other in their opinions of the opposite sex, which are varied and, at times, contradictory, - as was natural to such natures as theirs. Byron confessed⁽¹⁾ that women were his bane, that he had always had a great contempt for them, that he had tended to exalt the sex in his writings⁽²⁾ that woman was a child, and thus the Turkish treatment of them was better and more suited to their nature than our chivalry. Much of the same spirit we find in Musset:

"Les femmes, j'en conviens, sont assez ignorantes.
One ne dit pas tout haut ce qui les rend contentes:
Et comme, en général, un peu de fausseté

(1) "Conversations with Lord Byron" - Medwin.

(2) In "Confession d'un enfant du siècle" I - 5, Musset admits that one must not look for perfection in woman, but accept what is there.

Est leur plus grand plaisir apres la vanité.
On en peut, par hasard, trouver qui sont méchantes.
Mais qu'y voulez - vous faire, elles ont la beauté."
Après une Lecture.

That this attitude is extensive, in both authors may be shown
by extracts here and there:

Byron: She chose (and what is there they will not chose
If only you will oppose their choice?")
Beggs.

And Musset often airs his opinion of their childishness:

"Je anis un ange, mais un ange femenin: c'est s dire
que si J'avais une paise de chevaux, nous irions avec à la
messe." Barberine I - 3.

Patience and restraint are not to be found in these infantile
beings:

"All furious as a favor'd child
Balked at its wish; or fiercer still
A woman piqued - who has her will."
Mazeppa 12.

"Ce n'est plus de la gaieté, c'est de la patience,
et il n'est jamais bon d'avoir affaire à elle; c'est l'ennemie
mortelle des femmes" On ne saurait penser à tout.

After his affair with George Sand, Musset found (1)
woman a cruel, perfidious thing who would tear the heart
strings of poor man with perfect equanimity; to whom it was
characteristic, with a "sourire" and "un petit air distrait"
to "tromper, mentar, - mentir du fond du coeur; faire de son
corps un appât, jouer avec tout ce qu'il ya de socre sous le
ciel, comme un voleur avec des pipés"... That woman lies, is
tricky and faithless, is also claimed by Byron:

(1) Le Chandelier I - 2.

As Juan mused on mutability,
Or on his mistress - terms synonymous."⁽¹⁾
Don Jaun XVI - 20

"Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false..."
English Bards and Scotch.
Reviewers.

"But once beguiled and ever more beguiling.." ⁽²⁾
Bride of Abydos.

There are a number of passages in the two poets that smack
of the Turkish. ⁽³⁾ "Une femme n'est elle pas aussi un vase
precieux, scellé comme un flacon de cristal? Ne renferme-
t-elle pas une ivresse grossière or divin, selon sa force
et sa valeur." Les Caprices de Mortanne. LII - 10.

Haidee, though almost a perfect lover - according to the
Byronic ideal - is certainly more of the warm south than
of the cold north:

"Haidee was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidee was Passion's child, born where the sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of her gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen: what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing.."
Don Juan II - CCII.

Musset in his "Conseils à une Parisienne", advises her to be
"aimable, jolie, insouciant, de glace et de flamme," then:

"Je voudrais enfin, tant mon coeur vous aime,
Etre en tout vous-même...
Pour deux ou trois ans".

At times the brutal thought, of love dying after possession
is entertained: ⁽⁴⁾ the woman is to be cast off:

- (1) Compare Musset. "...Uncertain et changeant
Comme une femme." Les Marrons de Feu. I-1
- (2) Je me sens plus loche qu'une femme."
Perfide comme l'onde". La nuit venitienne
- (3) See also Musset's "Suzon" III-8
- (4) Werner III - 3.

"Qu'elle porte un amour à fond, comme une lame
Torse, qu'on n'ôte plus du coeur sans briser l'âme;
Si c'est alors qu'on pent la laisser, comme un vieux
Soulier qui n'est pas plus bon à rien."
Les Marrons du Fen. I-1.

On the other hand, woman is often treated as a delicate ethereal being - more in Musset than in Byron - is mad an ideal woman who is imagined, not believed to exist: "Si donc cette chose plus légère qu'un monde, plus insaisissable que le vent, plus impalpable et plus délicate que la poussière de l'aile d'un papillon, cette chose qui s'appelle une jolie femme, réjonit tont, et console de tont, n'est-il pas juste qu'elle soit heureuse, puisque c'est d'elle que la bonheur nous vient?...
Carmosine I - 8.

Byron returns to a more Anglo-Saxon attitude in his description of Zuleika.

"Such was Zuleika, such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her alone -
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonized the whole,
And oh! that eye was in itself a soul!
Bride of Abydos.

Love, for a woman, is her life, according to both poets: Byron:

"Alas! the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of their's upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone...
Don Juan II - CXIX.

Musset : "Une femme ne vit et ne meurt que d'amour,"...
Les Marrons du Fen. I - 4.

That man's love and woman's love have not the same strength nor personal importance is told also by both poets. According to

Musset, "l'amour" is ,

For man: "Un homme, sans doute, doit, s'en défendre, la réflexion, la courage, la force, l'habitude de l'activité, la métier des armes, surtout doivent le sauver.

For woman: Mais une femme! Privée de ce quelle aime, on est son soutien? Si elle a du courage, on est sa force?"

Carmosine. II - 8.

Compare Byron:

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart...
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again, undone."

Don Juan I - CXIV.

Woman, then, had much the same value in Musset's eyes, as in Byron's. Emphasis is laid, by both poets, on her essential ^{irresponsibility} childishness whence her caprice, cruelty, perfidy, disceitfulness and unfaith. Love is recognized by both as the all in all in woman, while only a part - though a great one, - of the life of man. Having compared the two poets in "amour" and "les femmes", it would be interesting and natural to see if their attitudes towards "volupté" are similar.

In scenes of "volupté", Musset poetry is more Latin than Byron's. There is a fleshiness, boldly stated, which can only be found suggested in the Englishman's verse. Byron is inclined to let scenes of passion be imagined, to "talk around" them, to drop a curtain for the moment on his act

at the point when it might offend our Anglo-Saxon "pudeur". In Don Juan", an episode of the harem where is Don Juan dressed as a woman, gives an example of this trick. Juan, his sex unrecognized, is put to sleep with Dudu, a fair member of the harem. In the dead of night Dudu cries out so loudly as to wake the other sleeping beauties. Pressed as to the cause of her emotion, she attributes it to a strange dream, then when Juan ("Juanna") intercedes for her when the inmates wish to take her from him, Byron inserts this characteristic stanza:

"As thus Juanna spoke, Dudu turn'd round
And hid her face within Juanna's breast;
Her neck alone was seen, but that was found
The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blush'd, nor can expound
The mystery of this rupture of their rest;
All that I know is that the facts I state
Are true as truth has ever been of late."
D. J. VI - 85.

Budding passion, in Byron, is delicately treated. He uses suggestiveness extensively. Haidee, coming to love Don Juan whom she had succoured after a shipreck, guards him in a cave, known only to herself and her servant. She would come:

"To see her bird reposing in his nest:
And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
As O'er a bed of roses the sweet south."
D. J. II - 168

Musset does not hesitate to describe passion. He does not have Byronic coyness about such things. In his poems, are varied and numerous tenderly and wildly voluptuousness scenes. For quietness after violent passion, take:

"Amour, disait l'enfant, après que, demi-nue,
Elle s'était, mourante, à ses pieds étendue,
Vois-ta comme tout dort? Que le silence est doux!
Dieu n'a dans l'univers laisse vivre que nous."
Fortia.

In the fleshy description of L'Andalouse we have a picture that is distinctly non-Byronic:

"Elle est tout à moi, moi seul au monde.
Les grands sourcils noirs sont à moi,
Son corps souple et sa jambe ronde...etc.
Quelle est superbe en son désordre,
Quand elle tombe, les seins nus,
Qu'on le voit, béante, se tordre
Dans un baiser de rage, et mordre (1)
En criant des mots inconnus!
Elle fait, sur son flanc qui ploie,
Craquer son corset de satin!"

One might multiply indefinitely passages similar to above, could they make the case any clearer. Of course, there are other sides to the subject of volupte in Byron and Musset than the suggestiveness of the former and the boldness of the latter. Both have a trait of revealing from time to time in a rather crude manner, their own sophistication as regards "volupte".

Musset: "La petite inessille est la peau la plus douce
On l'aie encore frotte ma barbe jus quici."
Don Paer.

"Je n'ai pas le talent de réchauffer les marbres."
Suzon.

(1) The one scene in Byron which approaches at all the manner of the above is the following. It is much less free and less bold:

"They look upon each other, and their eyes,
Gleam in the moonlight, and her white arms clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that's quite antique
Half-naked, loving, natural and Greek.

Byron: But there was something wanting on the whole-

"I don't know what and therefore cannot tell -
Which pretty women - the sweet souls! - call soul."
Don Juan XV Xiv - 70

"It press'd upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm heart under"
Don Juan XVI - CXXIII.

And then, each has a talent for description that has a greater resemblance, where is absent Byron's jesting suggestion and Musset's passionate earthiness. In *Rolle*, the sleeping Marion:

"Le ciel sur la beauté répandit la pudeur
Elle dort toute nue et la main sur son coeur
Que ces molles clartés palpitent autour d'elle
Comme si, malgré lui, le sombre Esprit du soir
Sentait sur ce beau corps frotter son manteau noir"

Byron, picturing one of the harem-women in *Don Juan*:

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her white arm,
And raven ringlets gather'd in dark crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
The moon breaks, half unveil'd each further charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night
All bashfully to struggle into light.
Don Juan VI - 56.

There is a certain "mollesse" of wording, a liking for soft smoothness that is common to both poets. In speaking of his taste for the Italian tongue, Byron says:

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin."
Byron 44.

In saying the same for the French tongue, Musset reveals this tendency to permit a sort of sexual languor to enter into his description:

Idioms de l'amour si doux qu'à le parler
Tes femmes sur la lèvre en gardent un sourire;
Le miel le plus doré qui sur la triste lyre
De la bouche et du coeur ait pu jamais couler!"
Les secrètes pensées de Rafael.

Byron, (1) Musset, (2) and Goethe, (3) all three find the waltz, then a popular and new thing, a dance that has much in it of voluptuousness, and "douce ivresse." Byron mentions Goethe's "Werther" in his hymn to the Waltz, (4) Musset, in "A la mi-carême" (5) mentions the German source of the waltz, so that he might not have got his idea to put the waltz into poetry from Byron, but from Goethe or himself.

Another kind of pleasure-loving expressed in the poetry of the two Romanticists is the praise of Boechus with Venus. Byron says:

"One of the two, according to your choice
Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys...
It were much better to have both than either."
D. J. IV - 25.

And Musset:

"Allons! vive l'amour que l'ivresse accompagne! ..
Chantons l'or et la nuit, la vigne et la beauté!"
Rolla.

Moreover they both express the idea of "Drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die;"

Byron: "the cave-bowl fill high!
Drain every drop! tomorrow we may die!"...
The Island II - 2.

Musset: "Buvons au temps qui passe, à la mort, à la vie!"
Rolla.

(1) Byron: "The Waltz" "Don Juan".

(2) Musset: "A la mi-carême". "La Confession" ..II-IV.
"Don Paez."

(3) Goethe: "Werther" Ed. in French by Pierre Leroux
Page 71.

(4) "Seductive waltz! tho on thy native shore
Even Werther's self proclaim'd thee half a whore."

(5) "Et je voudrais du moins qu'une duchesse en France,
Sut valser aussi bien qu'un bouvier allemand."

In scenes of "volupté", then, Musset is Latin in his passion and boldness of statement; Byron more Anglo-Saxon in his suggestiveness. Their more delicate descriptions of women have a greater similarity. Both, by a certain crudity of expression, reveal, at times, their own sophistication. A certain "mollesse" of touch is a trait in common. Both in several places express the voluptuous pleasure they derived from the waltz, as did Goethe in "Werther". In praise of wine and women they show equivalent tastes.

To sum up, Musset and Byron had the same ideal of love, this idea made it the main spring of man's life, though it brought sorrow to him: women, to both was an essentially childish creature whose sole object in the world is love; love and women being a "volupté" is similar in both, but expressed in part as suits the race they write for. From results of the comparisons in these points, we must judge, at least, that if Musset and Byron were not almost alike in character and thought, then Musset must have been profoundly influenced by Byron in the lyric vein of love, women, and "volupté".

Another possible point of similarity, might be found in a comparison of the type of hero Musset chose for his story-poems and plays, with the very popular and well-known Romantic Hero of Byron's verse.

IV.

The Romantic Hero.

All of Musset's hero's, and especially those heroes of the story-poems he wrote early in life,⁽¹⁾ have a significant resemblance to the heroes of Byron's verse. World-weary, debauched, moody, sophisticated lover; mysterious, black-mantled, proud scorner of men - such is the Byronic Hero in Musset's youthful poetry, and such he is, in some one or many of these characteristics, in his later works; novels, poems and plays. To demonstrate this similarity clearly, is necessary a comparison of the prominent characteristics of the Romantic Hero in Byron and Musset. Citations will be from all of Byron's story poems, and, for the most part, from only the early⁽²⁾ narrative poems of Musset, though a great number of similarities can be found in the later work of the French poet.

Both Byron's and Musset's romantic heroes spent their youth in debauchery. There is a significant difference, however, Byron's hero has spent his youth in pleasure-seeking for the sake of pleasure; he dissipated because of his zest for life; he was young in spirit, and fresh, and, as yet, not disillusioned. It was on account of this youthful debauchery that he became a prey to ennui, that he came to scorn humanity, and lost his heart for life. He did not seek women and the wine cup to

(1) Namouna, Don Paez, Rolla, Mardoche, Le Saule.
Also La Coupe et les Lèvres.

(2) Before George Sand.

drown his disgust with the world. When he chose the way of vice, vice had a glamour.

"Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtues ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy air of night."
Childe Harold I - 2.

Byron reminiscences of his wild and happy youth of his heroes. When naught but the empty shell remains, the life that was once so full of mirth and beauty, looks, in retrospect, especially bright. It makes the present life even more dull:

"But in that instant, o'er his soul
Winters of memory seem'd to roll."
Giaour.

The period of early manhood is regretted as a past delight; its innocence and bloom is appreciated:

"Here youth which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and health
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flush'd and crowded wassailers."
Marine Faliere. IV - 1.

While Byron's heroes enjoyed the debauchery of their still hopeful youth, Musset's heroes did not. They came into the world old. The riotous living of their early days had the contrary cause of zest for life: ennui and pre-disillusionment. In any of his story-poems, Musset's heroes are young "viellards", they seek the dazzle of merriment to blind them to the emptiness they find in life. Don Paez, Hassan, Mardoche, Rolla dissipate at the very time of their despair; Childe Harold, Lara, Manfred, and Don Juan were disillusioned because of their fast life, and when black ennui settled at

last over their hearts, left the scenes of pleasure. Consider, for a moment, Rolla and Don Juan as representatives of these two types. Rolla, product of the century when Voltaireanism had torn the veils from life's ugliness and Byronism had chanted a universal despair, seeks forgetfulness in vice: he is old before his time. At twenty-two, when he takes poison because he has no more money to pay for his pleasures, he is more vicious and cold than is Don Juan at the end of the sixteenth canto. He was satiated with life before he had tasted its sweets:

"Et, trop vieux pour s'ouvrir, ton coeur s'était brisé
Comme un roc, en hiver, par la froidure usé...
...Rien ne peut lui donner
Ni consolation ni lueur d'espérance." Rollo.

Don Juan is a broader, more manly, and less inhuman person than Rolla. The sequence of his many love adventures show him approaching the "mal du siècle" type; but the greater part of his experience left him alert for the interesting changes life brings. In his first love with Dona Julia he is a timid, blushing boy, though she is a married woman.⁽¹⁾ Fresh from the ideal amour with Haidee,⁽²⁾ Don Juan, though sophisticated, will not enter into loveless relations with the sultana.⁽³⁾ He certainly shows no trace of the "mal du siècle" when he fights with the Hessians against the Turks and, later, when he protects and adopts the little girl found on the battlefield. Even when at the court of Catherine the Great, Don

- (1) Don Juan I - CII.
(2) " " II-CXXVII.
(3) " " VI- CXI.

Juan has loveless relations with the empress, he is not far gone on "la spirale sans fin de son long suicide", (1) for he carries on this for political power. Although both types of heroes debauched in youth, Byron's debauched because they loved life, satiety from pleasure caused final ennui in them; Musset's heroes debauched because of satiety, they sought to drown their hopelessness in riotous living. This difference is significant in that it seems to point to Musset's reading of Byron's poems and to the different attitudes with which the two poets began life. As the poetry of both is very personal, we can say that the Byronic hero represents Byron; shows him as a pleasure-loving, hopeful youth whose incontinent life finally brought him satiety and bitterness. And we can look upon Musset as a precocious youth, who, by reading the poetry of the already world-weary Byron, and by falling in with the despairing spirit of the times, was ready to meet life where Byron left it, with cynicism and disillusionment in his heart.

What form does this sophistication take? Does it have the same effect on the heroes of both authors? In general, the results is the same. There are more cases and more emphasis on satiety with life in Byron than in Musset, where Rolla and Hassan are the best representatives. In Byron, take Childe Harold who

"....felt the fulness of satiety:" I - IV.

"With pleasure drugg'd, he almost sought for woe" I - VI.

"Pleasure's pallid victim"..... I - LXXXIII.

Or Daemaetus, who runs the gamut of emotions, and then:

"But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former chain
And what was once his bliss, appears his bane."

(1) Rolla.

Hours of Idleness.

Or the Giaour who smiles, mirthless, at his misery:

"Not oft to smile descendeth he,
And when he doth 'tis sad to see
That he but mocks at misery."
The Giaour.

Or Sardanaplus, of whom it is said:

He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul....
Sardanaplus. I - 1.

Or Don Juan, whose dissipation has the same effect:

".....must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish."
Don Juan X - XXIII.

That Rolla was surfeited with pleasure, has been shown. Perdican, in "On ne badine pas".... deploras the transitory nature of our happiness:

"Helas cette vie est elle-même un si pénible rêve!
Pourquoi encore y melar les nôtres? O mon Dieu! le bonheur est une perle si rare dans cet océan d'ici bas!.....nous en avons fait un jouet.....Il a bien fallu que nous fissions du mal, car nous sommes des hommes!" - On ne bodine pas avec l'amour. III.

Hassan is brought to disgust with women and to a cold viciousness in his treatment of them by overindulgence:

"C'est la satiété qui calcule et qui pense."
Nanouna XL.

The world weariness of Musset's heroes takes a more general form. The reason for this ennui is not as specific; it is not due to some definite incident. His heroes are tired of life because life in general has been proved empty to them; it is from the sorrows of others that they get their point of

view; ie: Voltaire, Goethe and Byron.

These world-weary heroes have a scornful and monumental pride that draws them away from their fellow-men. In Byron, Childe Harold conceals his sorrows because of pride;⁽¹⁾ he chooses friends for his hours of pleasure only, otherwise he is solitary;⁽²⁾ he feels himself a super-man:

But soon he knew himself the most unfit,
Of men to live with man, with whom he held
Little in common.

Proud though in desolation: - Childe Harold
III - XII.

The same thought is found in the Prophecy of Dante, I, Don Juan is noted for the pride of his bearing, which got him high places in Russia and England; Marino Faliero has the same characteristic:

"His faults are those that dwell in high bosoms
...too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely foster'd...."

In Musset, a similar "orgueil" is a prominent trait of his romantic men. Rolla smiles scornfully at the suggestion that he might work for a living rather than kill himself because he has squandered his inheritance. He is described:

"Jacques était grand, intrepide and superbe...
....et garda pour ses dieux
L'Andace et la fierté, qui sont ses soeurs aînées."

~~M~~ardoche:

"Bornez-vous à savoir qu'il avait la pucelle
I'Orléans pour aieule en ligne maternelle" - I.

(1) Childe Harold I - VI.

(2) Childe Harold I - IX.

Frank in "La Coupe et les lèvres" is pleine d'orgueil"which is "scellé comme un cercueil de plomb". I - 1.

We find wrapped in mystery, retired in solitude, and warped by study Manfred, Lara, as is Tiburce, in Le Saule.

Lara: "He comes at last in sudden loneliness
And whence they know not, why they cannot guess."
I O IV.

Tiburce: "Mais pourquoi cherchait-il la solitude?
On ne sait - Dès Longtemps il cherissait l'étude..."
Le philosophe oisif dissequa sa pensée..."
Le Saule.

Lara: "Books...
With eye more curious he appear'd to scan
And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day.
From all communion he would start away"
I - IX.

Manfred: "The tree of knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science...and the wisdom of the world
I have essayed." I - 1.

Like those of Byron, the heroes of Musset's poems have scorn for man.

Of La haine, - l'intérêt, - l'ambition - L'amour,
Tiburce n'en connaît qu'une, - la plus terrible...
A facile mépris de l'homme et de la vie"-Le Saule.

Rolla also feels himself above the herd:

"Et jamais fils d'Adam, sous la sainte lumière,
N'a,.....
Un plus large mépris des peuples et des rois."

Frank in "La Coupe et les lèvres" curses humanity:

"Maudite la famille et la société!" I - 1

Compare these two extracts, the one from "La Coupe et les Lèvres." the other from the Corsair:

Frank: "Tu te fais vagabond, dans ton orgueil de roi;
Et tu fais ton voisin d'être semblable à toi".
I - 1.

Conrad: "He hated men too much to feel remorse...
He knew himself a villain - but he deem'd
The rest no better than the thing he seem'd;
And scorn'd the best as hypocrites."

Manfred says cynically:

"I have found good even among men" I - 1.

But Byron's heroes, in their scorn for man, have also an element not present in those of Musset: tolerance of human frailty. Though they will not associate with their fellow beings, they are often indulgent:

"Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng;
But view'd them not with misanthropic hate;
Childe Harold I - LXXXIV.

The voluptuary Sardanapalus feels:

.....a disposition
To love and to be merciful, to pardon
The follies of my species..." I - 2.

Lara gazes on the festival "sedately glad" though his "soul was sad." (1) Evidently Musset did not appreciate the humanistic element of Lara, for he emphasized only the misanthropic side in comparing him with Hassan:

"..quelque Lara qui se sont meconnaître
Rend haine contre haine, et dédain pour dédain,"
Namouna XXXV.

In general the attitude of the heroes, we are comparing, is different toward love. (2) Musset's take a material, vicious position: they have to a great extent the spirit of the legendary Don Juan, seducer of women. Hassan receives the first of each month "deux jeunes filles nues:" (3)

"Chez lui la jouissance était une paroxysme
Vraiment inconcevable, et fait pour effrayer."
Namouna XLIV.

(1)

Lara I - XXI.

(2) Namouna LXVI. See also XLIV.

(3) I give here only the material, fleshy side of Musset's heroes. Musset's idealized idea of love: his "philosophy of love" is taken up in another chapter.

Octave is a veritable example of the typical Don Juan:

"Je ne suis qu'un débauché sans cœur, je n'estime point les femmes: l'amour que j'inspire est celui que je ressens, l'ivresse passagère d'un songe. Ma gaieté est comme le masque d'un histrion; mon cœur est plus vieux qu'elle, mes sens blasés m'en veulent plus"- Les Caprices de Marianne I - 6.
Of three methods to win his mistress - "la ruse, la force, ou l'amour", Rosenberg in Barberine (III - 2) chooses "la ruse".
On the eve of his suicide, Rolla looks on the young girl he has purchased for the night with a mercenary eye: "Marion coûtait cher."

This material idea of love is less characteristic of the Byronic Hero. The real cause of their secret sorrows is not despair of times and only partly ennui from dissipation; it finds its roots in a disappointment in true love. Examples are:

There is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age....
Some perishing of pleasure,...
And some of wither'd or of broken hearts:
Manfred III - 1.

Examples are:

Conrad: "His heart was form'd to softness, warp'd to
wrong;
Betrayed too early, and beguil'd too long:
The Corsair.
Lara: "...vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved so well"
Lara XVII.

Prince Aso, in Parisina, is warp'd by the unfaithfulness of his wife. Here disappointment in love is symbolised:

The tainted branches of the tree
If topp'd with care, a strength may give
by which the rest may bloom and live

All greenly fresh and wildly free;
But if the lightning in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The mossy trunk the ruin feels
And nevermore a leaf reveals."

XX.

Childe Harold:

"Had sigh'd for many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas! could ne'er be his."

I - V.

That Byron's hero were not as cold in their love as Musset's is true. Don Juan truly loved when he had relations with Dona Juana, then Haidee, and showed himself not sullied by these amours when the passionate Sultana offers herself to him:

"The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor I
Serve a sultana's sensual phantasy
Thou askst, if I can love? Be this the proof
How much I have loved - that I love not thee".

Don Juan V - CXXV.

The misanthropic Conrad, who tries to shut up his soul to all emotion, yet:

".....'gainst that passion vainly still he strove
And even in him it asked the name of love!
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench the lovliest one!"
The Corsair.

While we make this distinction between the materialized love of Musset's heroes and the idealized love of Byron's we can not make it absolute. In Mazeppa, Cosimir's idea of women is comparable to Hassan's:

Cosimir: " he took
Another mistress, or new book."
Mazeppa.

For Hassan: "Une femme n'etait qu'une posse-temps".
Namouna XXXIII.

And Werner and Rolla are a prey to their passions:

Werner: My passions are all living serpents,
Twined like the Gorgon's 'round me.
Werner I - 1.

Rolla: ~~Q~~u'est pas Rolla qui gouverne sa vie
C'étaient ses passions."

Cordiani has a vision of idealized love that contrasts with the vicious passion in Namouna and resembled the emotion of Byron's Don Juan:

"quel est l'homme ici-bas qui n'a pas vu
Apparaître cent fois, mille fois, dans ses rêves, un
être adoré, fait pour lui devant vivre pour lui".
Andre del Sarto III.

Jerome, in Musset's Byronic story-poem, Silvia, treasures a love for Silvia during two year's absence. Returning to find Silvia married, he dies in bed with her, - chastely. She expired on his coffin:

".....et la mort fit
Ce que l'amour n'avait pu faire."

In Byron's heroes, there is an element of wildness, of impatience, of chaotic moodiness, of unrestraint:

Manfred: (1) "Patience and patience! Hence - that word was
For breasts of burthen, not for birds of prey;"
made

I cannot rest
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
II - 4.

Christian: The wish - which ages have not yet subdued
In man - to have no master but his mood.
The Island. II.

It was the French spirit, at this time, to seek individual liberty and rebel against restraint. Musset's heroes are like Rolla:

"...qui n'a pour tout bien qu'un mot: la liberté.
Rafael in Les Marrons du Feu, is a plaything of fantasy,
as is, of course, Fantasio.

"moi, j'ai donné ma vie
A ce dieu faméant, qu'on nomme fantasie."
Les Marrons de Feu I - 4.

Hassan, in Namouna is "Très enfant":

"Il change le dessein comme on change l'habit"

XVII.

(1) See also Manfred III - 1.

A frequent emotion of the heroes of both poets is their love and regretful memory of their mothers. Musset's mother was pious and tried to teach him to lead a good life. His heroes, then, find a check on their downward course in the thought of their mother:

"Au milieu de toutes ces folies, Valentin avait dans le coeur un sentiment qui devait le préserver, s'était son affection pour sa mere."
Les Deux maîtresses.

"Jeune homme, crea-t-il, as-tu dans quelque lieu Une mère, une femme?...
Jure-moi par ton Dieu, par ta mère et ta femme."
Don Paéz

Byron's mother was moody. At times she would smother him with caresses, at other times twit him cruelly about his lame foot. Byron's heroes have no moral safeguard in the memory of their mothers, but they do think of them tenderly. This emotion comes to both Childe Herald and Don Juan, when they are exiled from their native lands:

"But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother...
So that he had much better cause to grieve.."
Don Juan II - IV.
Childe Harold had a mother - not forgot,
though parting from that mother he did shun"..
Childe Harold I - I.

It might be worthy of note here that the principal cause of the wrong doing of both Rolla and Don Juan was the faults of their parents. Rolla's father supplied him with money for his pleasures, then died and left him a pittance, thus causing Rolla's suicide: Don Juan's mother, cold and mathematical, by restraint of her son led him to feast on the erotic and threw him into the arms of Dona Julia, thus causing his exile from

home. (1)

In concluding a comparison of the romantic heroes of Musset and Byron, it is necessary to note that Musset, although he made use of the spirit of Byron's characters, satirizes them in several places, notably in "A quoi rêver les jeunes filles" and the well-known "Histoire d'un merle blanc." In the former, a father who favors Silvio for one of his daughters, plans to interest them in this man of his choice by making him a Byronic hero - mystery and seduction, black mantle and golden spurs:

"Vous êtes un Lara "he says to his son-in-law to be. An extract from "l'Histoire d'un merle blanc" is not inapropos here: The blackbird, discovering that he is white, intends to hold himself aloof from the common black variety, even as Byron's heroes knew themselves of rarer clay than their fellow-men. "C'est quelque chose, me dis-je, que d'être un merle blanc: cela ne se trouve point dans le pas d'un âne. J'étais bon de m'affliger, de ne pas rencontrer mon semblable; c'est le sort du génie, c'est le mien! Je voulais fuir le monde. Je veux l'étonner! Puisque je suis cet oiseau sans pareil dont le vulgaire nie l'existence, je dois et prétends me comporter comme tel, ni plus ni moins que le Phénix, et mépriser le reste de volailles. Il faut que J'achète les mémoires et les poèmes de lord Byron; cette nourriture substantielle m'inspirera un noble orgueil; sans compter celui que Dieu m'a donné. Oui, je veux ajouter, s'il se peut, au prestige de ma naissance. La nature m'a fait rare, je me ferai mystérieux. Ce sera une fa-

(1) Don Juan I - XLI and II - III.

veur, une gloire de me voir...Il faut que le monde apprenne que j'existe. Je ne manquerai pas, dans mes vers, de déplorer mon isolement: mais ce sera de telle sorte, que les plus heureux me porteront envie. Puisque le ciel m'a refusé une femelle, je dirai un mal affreux de celles des autres...Je veux me créer tout d'abord une puissante position littéraire. J'irai à Venise, et je louerai, sur les bords du grand canal, au milieu de cette cité féerique, le beau palais moenigo, qui coute quatre livres dix sous par jour; là je m'inspirerai de tous les souvenirs que l'auteur de "Lara" dort y avoir laissés... Du fond de ma solitude, j'inonderai le monde d'un déluge de rimes croisées, colquées sur le strophe de Spencer, on je soulagerai ma grande âme, je ferai soupirer toutes les bécasses, et hurler toutes les vieilles chouettes. En un mot, je serai un parfait merle blanc, un véritable écrivain excentrique, fêté, choyé, admiré, envié, mais complètement grognon et insupportable."

The characters of Byron and Musset in their poem-stories have so much in common that it is safe to say that Musset must have been well steeped in Byronism when he wrote. Differences that have been shown in the common points taken up are of the sort that can be explained as the natural change that one author's manner will take when it is assumed by another writer of different character and environment. To sum up: Both types of heroes spend their youth in debauchery, Musset's because of ennui, Byron's through love of life; both are satiated with life early, Byron's because of their dissipation, Musset's more because they fall in with the spirit

of the times; both scorn mankind, though Byron's are tolerant of human frailty; the love, in general, of Musset's heroes is more cold, and less idealized than Byron's, where disappointment in love is a cause of ennui; both are lovers of liberty and guided by their moods; when they think of their mother, a trace of the dissimilar character of maternal influence on the authors is evident; Musset's ridicule of Byronism is comparatively of small amount and not consistent.

The last important point of comparison, is that of "style". Both Musset and Byron differed from their fellow poets in manner of writing. Did they resemble each other?

V.

Style.

In matter of style, one is often reminded in Musset of Lord Byron. Both authors have a number of story-poems in which the narrative is only a thread to connect their satiric, flippant, and personal remarks. Such are, in Byron, Don Juan, Childe Harold, Manfred, the Corsair, etc; in Musset, Mardoche, Namouna, Les secrètes pensées de Rafael, and others. These similarities, which are really quite striking, I will discuss in three divisions: Observations to the reader; description; and flippant, sophisticated remarks.

As the work of both poets is intensely personal, the meat of similarity between the two lies in their asides to the reader. Most of the material for other chapters is found in their remarks to the reader, here let us examine some parallels in manner. While a common characteristic of both poets is to discourse freely between incidents of their story, they both excuse themselves often for this fault. Estève(1), as example for this, gives Don Juan III - 96, and Namouna III - 2. There are many other instances, too, which, as they have already been pointed out by others it is hardly necessary to reproduce here. (2) They both beg pardon for their poor ryhmes, finding it undesirable to "stuff" their

(1) "Je jure devant Dieu que mon unique envie
Était de raconter une histoire suivie."
Namouna III - 1.

(2) Byron et le Byronisme Française."

verse:

"Mais j'ai toujours trouver honteux de cheviller"
Dédicace à la Coupe.."

"I know that what our neighbors call "longueurs"
We've not as good a word, but have the thing."

I matter of faulty writing, such as the use of an ungrammatical or misspelled word to get rime, so common in Byron, who makes facetious remarks on his own weakness, is often quoted as a similarity in Musset, who has just used the coined word "mahométanisme":

"Or det mahométisme, et j'en suis bien fâché
Il fallait m' lever pour prendre un dictionnaire".
Namouna I - LXXIV.

Both take a similar attitude of being "naughty". They relish after the presentation of some scene or the use of some statement "off-color", a mock-solemn promise to the reader that all is for the sake of morality and a lesson:(1)

"'Tis always with a moral end
That I dissert. like grace before a feast."
Don Juan XII - 39.

"Je ne sais, ô lecteur! si notre ami Mardoche
En cette occasion eût s'en bien sans reproche
Mais il en profeta."
Mardoche IV.

In Namouna, of the fact that Hassan is naked, Musset makes much in this way. Mardoche is rich in stanzas that seem almost to have been written by Byron, as regards this trick of playing for the prudery of the "gentle reader":

"Some people whisper (but, no doubt, they lie,
For malice still imputes some private end)
That Inez had ere Don Alfonso's marriage
Forgot with him her very prudent carriage."
Don Juan I - LXXVI.

(1)See also Don Juan I - CCVII.

"O sages demi-dieux, expliquez-moi ceci:
On ne volerait pas, à coup sûr, une obole
À son voisin: pourtant, quand on peut, on lui vole..
Sa femme!" Mardoche XV.

...et que sa femme
"(En ne le faisant pas c -) n'eut pas été.
Plus fort n' plus souvent battue, en verite
Que celle de monsieur de C**".
Mardoche IV.

"Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian
All pretty pastimes in which no offence is."
Don Juan III - 35.

"Peut s'en faut qu'un auteur, qui pas a pas chemine
Ne vous fasse coucher avec son héroïne."
Mardoche XIX.

With pens that could form such fine word-poetry, Byron and Musset enjoyed contrasting the pretty with the vulgar, and dropping swiftly from the bright clouds of poesy to the sombre earth of prose. The well known passage in Byron where Don Juan's tender musings on his mistress are interrupted by fits of retching, illustrates this:

...."and, since all is over,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia..
Then I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of anything, excepting thee;
A mind diseased no remedy can physio
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew seasick)
Sooner than heaven kiss earth -(here he fell sicker)
Oh Julia! what is every other woe?...
Oh Julia! this cursed vessel pitches so)..
Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!
Here he gré^r inarticulate with retching." II - XX.

Though there is no case of contrast in description on the same subject as the above, in Musset, yet we often find a descent to very unpoetic subject matter:

"Rafael! Rafael! le jour que^{de} mon front
Mes cheveux sur mes pieds un à un tomberont;
Que ma joue et mes mains bleuiront comme celles.

D'un noyé, que mes yeux laisseront mes prunelles
Tomber avec mes pleurs, alors tu penseras
Que c'est assez souffert, et tu t'arrêteras!"

Les Marrons du Feu I-6.

Just as unpoetic as hairs falling out of a head, as eyes dropping with the tears from a face, blue like a drowned person's, is the following verse of Byron to his loved one who is sleeping with upturned face:

"Whilst I, admiring, too remiss
Forgot to scare the hovering flies,
Yet envied every fly the kiss
It dared to give your slumbering eyes."
To Emma" in Hours of Idleness.

Or note the quick turn of thought in these stanzas:

"And 'tis, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phoedus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband, - or some other brute.

"La naiade aux yeux verts pleurant en le quittant
Or entendait à peine au fond de la baignoire
Glisser l'eau fugitive, et d'instant en instant
Les robinets d'airain chanter en s'égoûtant."
Namouna.

Byron and Musset often commence their narrative poems in a similar manner. The opening stanzas⁽¹⁾ of Childe Harold, quoted elsewhere:

"Whilome in Albions isle there dwelt a youth" I - 2

have the same careless swing as this extract from Rolla:

"De tous les débauchés de la ville du monde
On le libertinage est à meilleur marché
De la plus vieille en vice et de la plus féconde,
Je veux dire Paris, - le plus grande débauché
Était Jacques Rolla...."

Equivalent examples of this quick and informal narrative style are found in "Don Juan", "The Corsair", "Namouna" "Mardoche", "Les

(1) See also Don Juan VIII - 24.

Pensées de Raphael," etc.

Byron has some beautiful descriptive passages that can not be paralleled in Musset. Nature often furnishes him with a theme:

Now o'erhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spurning the dark sea
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwrecked men."
Don Juan II-XCI.

More akin to Musset's poetic description,⁽¹⁾ are the passages where Byron finds in nature symbols of his romantic sorrow:

"The sad but living cypress glooms
And withers not, though branch and leaf
Are stamped with an eternal grief,
Like early unrequited love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove -
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair" -
Bride of Abydos.

Nothing is more amusing to either author than to treat with flippancy what one generally takes as serious, to jest about the dignified and solemn moments of life, to don an air of sophistication. A few passages, of which there are many, will serve to illustrate the point. Immorality's interesting and amusing side is often mentioned:

"Certes, c'est un loisir magnifique et commode
Que la paisible ardeur d'uns intrigue à la mode!"
Les Marrons du Feu I -4.

(1) Tout repose dans la velles
Le rossignol chante sous la feuillée
La mélancholie et l'amour"
Jeanne d'Arc.

Recapitulation.

Byron's ideas, expressed in a Byronic way, have been found extensively in Musset. The super-man, that Byron pictures himself, who shrinks from the vileness of the world and his fellow-men into solitude and disdainful pride, whose "ennui" is only aggravated by knowledge, who regrets his vanished innocence, finds a bitter-sweet pain in memory of former sorrow, and welcomes death as a relief from life's emptiness, is reflected in Musset's self-expression. Musset's compatibility with the English author's nature caused him to reproduce a French Byron when he depicted his own character in his poetry. Like the work of other Romanticists, Musset's writings have religiosity, in which the thought is oftimes clearly Byronic, excepting the influence of the Anglo-Saxon conscience. Musset's "philosophy of love" has been found developed in Byron, Musset writes of women with a Byronic point of view, and resembles the English author in voluptuous description, though he adds a Latin freedom of expression. Especially in his ^{early} poems, - where he would naturally be more liable to Byronic influence - Musset's romantic heroes are very much like Byron's in their character: a blend of pride, moodiness, weariness, misanthrophy and sorrow. Musset's poetic style, a part of authorship readily influenced by reading, often strongly recalls Byron's manner in "Childe Harold" and "Don Juan". The English author's trick of using his story only as a thread to hold together his personal remarks to the reader,

is adopted by Musset in his story-poems, where, particularly in Mardoche and Namouna, the reader is charmed with, and alternately shocked^{and soothed} in the approved Byronic mode. A striking likeness to Byron in spirit, a significant emphasis on Byronic amorous, philosophic and religious convictions, a close resemblance to the English author in narrative-poem material and manner, such is Byronism in Alfred de Musset.

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