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NATURE, CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN WORDSWORTH, BYRON AND
SHELLEY

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I

The aim of this paper is to discuss certain key texts of Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley in relation to the questions of Nature, Culture and Education. The various models of education, diseducation or re-education presented by the three poets will be considered, in the wider context of the concepts of Nature (the external non-human world) and Culture (human society and history). "Education" is taken to mean, not necessarily only formal education, but the formation of the human subject by environmental and cultural forces. Wordsworth will be discussed first, before a contrastive analysis of Byron and Shelley arranged by theme; this arrangement is justified by the existence of simultaneous convergences and divergences between the two "second-generation" poets. The principal texts discussed are "The Prelude" (Wordsworth), "Don Juan" (Byron) and "Laon and Cythna" (the first version of "The Revolt of Islam") (Shelley).

WORDSWORTH

II

Wordsworth's model in "The Prelude" (1805, published 1850), as is well known, is essentially one of education by Nature. The text explicitly rejects a utilitarian/empiricist model of the type imposed on John Stuart Mill by his father¹, the child produced by such a model is seen as a "monster birth" (A-292)², knowledgeable in "telescopes, and crucibles, and maps" (330), but indifferent to Nature and deficient in imagination. Wordsworth proposes a counter-model, to be based on "books and Nature" (447) — and implicitly, on the type of pre-capitalist social relations prevailing in the Lake District (see VIII - 144-58) — but with Nature as, in practice, the dominant educative force. This is the model expounded in "The Prelude" and in the related Book I of "The Excursion" (1814)³.

Before proceeding further, it will be useful to de-naturalise the term "Nature". As Raymond Williams has stressed, it is "perhaps the most complex word in the language"⁴, and is, besides, a highly dangerous term ideologically; the term signifies a series of realities — those of the external non-human world — that are objectively heterogeneous and *plural*, by means of a *singular* noun, thus tending to reduce them to a "singular and essential nature, with consistent and reconcilable laws"⁵. This tendency is visibly operative in Wordsworth. Nature is typically presented as, in the last analysis, totally beneficent, and thus homogeneous; it is the empty space in which all contradictions are resolved:

"Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light,
Were all like workings of one mind" (PVI - 567-8)

Among the antagonisms thus ideologically resolved in the term Nature is that between Desire and Law. In one of the Lucy poems ("Three years she grew in

1 see Mill (1971), pp. 1-24.

2 All quotations from "The Prelude" are from the 1805 text, with one exception (see note 9).

3 For "The Excursion" (Book I), see section III below. Although "The Excursion" was not published until 1814, the account of the Wanderer's education was drafted as early as 1798, and passages from the earliest drafts eventually found their way into "The Prelude" (see MacGillivray (1972)).

4 Williams (1976), p. 184 (entry: "Nature").

5 Williams (1980), p. 70.

sun and shower" — 1800), Nature personified declares:

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse" (7-8);

the young girl will perceive in natural objects "an overseeing power/ To kindle or restrain" (11-12). Nature is thus seen as the source of *both* "impulse" (the sexual desire that "kinds") and "law" (the cultural forces that "restrain"). In practice, in Wordsworth's work, Nature intervenes more often to impose the Law than to validate Desire; the erotic and reproductive side of Nature is played right down, to an extent that provoked Shelley, in "Peter Bell the Third" (1819), to label Wordsworth a "moral eunuch" (314), afraid to look at Nature in her nakedness.

Thus, in another Lucy poem ("Strange fits of passion have I known" — 1800), the lover is riding uphill towards Lucy's cottage, when suddenly the proud, ascending movement of his horse is checked by the "descending moon" (20). The natural object intervenes as signifier, not only of death, but of the Law which blocks and negates desire:

"O mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!" (27-8)

The agency of Nature here may be read as a projection of the workings, within the subject, of the authoritarian values of a repressive patriarchal culture; Nature intervenes to impose the Law of the Father. This context may also be applied to the otherwise perplexing "Anecdote for Fathers" (1798): Here, a five-year-old boy tells his father that he would rather live in a place called Killybeg than in Liswyn, his present home, because "at Killybeg there was no weather-cock" (55); the child's aversion to weather-cocks may be read as both displacement and symbolisation of his unconscious fear of the castrating Oedipal father.

The antagonism between Desire and Law in the child's mind, with its Oedipal origins, may be considered to determine certain key episodes in "The Prelude". Indeed, episodes which Wordsworth ideologically attributes to the educative force of Nature may be read, in Benjamin's phrase, "against the grain"⁶, as signifying the child's formation by *social* forces, through the internalisation of the

6 Cf. Benjamin (1973), p. 259; the reference is to the materialist view of history, but the concept can equally be applied to the reading of literary texts. Cf. Eagleton (1981), p. 113.

In all the episodes, pleasure is textually signified, before being blocked: the child's "joy" (1-313), "desire" (325), "pleasure" (389), his "proud hopes" (XI-281), are typically signified by *movement*, actual or anticipated — rowing or horse-riding. This movement, however, is either cut short (the child turns back, or dismounts) — or it never happens (the horses are not seen to arrive). The inhibiting agent is perceived by the child, in the "stolen boat", as a natural object mysteriously animated, and elsewhere, as a natural object taking on an admonitory function — thus, in the "bird's-nesting", the wind warns the child with a "strange utterance" (1-348-9), while in the "wait for the horses", the expected horses are replaced by a phantasmagoric mist,

"Which on the line of each of those two roads
Advanced in such indisputable shapes" (XI-381-2).

The narrating adult interprets the child's frightening experiences as instances of the disciplining function, the "severer interventions" (1-370) of Nature. Nonetheless, the discipline of the Father can be seen at work behind these incidents. The text refers twice, quite specifically, to "my father's house" (1-288; XI - 366), placing the events within patriarchal culture, while the pleasurable movements, rowing and riding, can be read as symbolic expressions of the child's sexuality. The rhythmic movement of the oars — "I pushed, and struck the oars and struck again" (1-385) — would support such a reading, as would the textual comparisons of the child's movements with those of an *adult* male:

"My little boat moved on,
Even like a man who walks with stately step" (1-387-8);
"We were a pair of horsemen; honest James
Was with me" (XI-283-4).

The child's "proud" rowing (1-396), his "proud hopes" of horsemanship (XI-281) correspond, then, to the Oedipal desire to replace the father in his position of power. This unconscious desire may also be seen as determinant of the child's fear of the murderer's name (in a sense, *he* is the "murderer"), and of his irrational sense of guilt on his father's death.

Those external, more powerful forces which block the child's desire may be seen as symbols of the punitive, castrating Oedipal father. The wind's "utterance" is in the discourse of Authority, the mist has the "indisputable" force of paternal power. Above all, the cliff in the "stolen boat", erect and "growing still in stature" intimidating role of the cliff/father.

In this sense, the poem may be read as illustrating Williams' recently proposed model of "text" and "subtext": "you may say, 'this is what is reproduced from the ideology', but also, 'this is what is incongruously happening in this text which undermines it or questions it or in certain cases entirely subverts it'"⁷

Five episodes from Books I and XI will now be considered, in which Wordsworth presents fictionalised versions of childhood events. In these episodes, the child: 1) hunts woodcocks at night and is frightened by an imaginary pursuer (1 - 309-32); 2) steals bird's eggs on the mountain and is frightened by the wind by an animated cliff, and turns back (1 - 372-427); 4) comes by chance on the sight of a gibbet and the name of a murderer written in the grass (XI-279-326); 5) looks out, from a hilltop, for two horses which are to take him and his brothers home for the Christmas holidays — holidays during which his father is to die (XI - 345-89).

Wordsworth presents these incidents as examples of his formation by Nature: he claims to have been "framed" by Nature (1-363), in an educative process that included both "pleasure" and "fear" (631-2). However, in episode after episode, the pleasure is effectively blocked by the fear. As Jonathan Bishop has pointed out in a Freudian-oriented study⁸, there is a sequence of events that repeats itself across the text: pleasurable movement is inhibited by a more powerful, external counter-force, frequently in the shape of a phantom pursuer or "grim shape"⁹. The episodes tend to follow this structure, all involving prohibitions or inhibitions which, in the real social world, are imposed on the child by his *culture*. The first three episodes all involve theft; in the "woodcocks" and "stolen boat" the theft is specifically a crime against private property, since the birds and boat are another's (1 - 327, 373). In the "gibbet" the child is frightened by the idea of murder, while the "wait for the horses" is followed by his father's death, for which he feels somehow responsible. The blockage of the child's desire is, then, placed in close association with the biblical (i. e. cultural) prohibitions on theft and murder.

Williams (1981), p. 63. The model of "text" and "subtext" is here applied primarily to Wordsworth; in the cases of Shelley and Byron, it is less necessary from a materialist viewpoint, given the relatively "unrepressed" character of the texts. Shelley and Byron, in contrast to Wordsworth, were consciously aware of the sexual significations of their rhythms, images, etc.

8 see Bishop (1972), pp. 135-7, 140.

9 "The Prelude" (1850 text), I, 381. The "grim shape" is the pursuing cliff in the "stolen boat" episode; the 1805 text has "huge cliff" (I, 409). 1850 here intensifies the punitive,

Nonetheless, the ideological myth of "The Prelude" consists of the *natura-
lisation* of that patriarchal culture. Both "impulse" and "law" are presented as deri-
ving from Nature; thus, the discourse of "impulse" is effectively silenced by natu-
ralising the process of its repression and control. It is true that at other points in
"The Prelude", pleasure is not so violently or painfully inhibited, as in the skating
(1452-89) or the hooting to the owls (V-389-413). However, the seeds of Words-
worth's eventual conservatism may be traced to "The Prelude". It should be
remembered that book I validates not only the patriarchal law, but also private
property; the view of theft is here far more orthodox than that presented in the
earlier "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" (1798), where Nature intervenes in favour
of a poor woman who steals firewood from enclosed land. Wordsworth's model
of education in "The Prelude" is, in some respects, a model of insertion into an
authoritarian Culture — and a particularly dangerous model, since that insertion
takes place under the sign of Nature. It is not altogether surprising to find the later
Wordsworth, in "The Excursion", Book IX (1814), writing in favour of a national
education system, on the reactionary grounds that universal literacy will neutralise
revolutionary tendencies among the poor and provide skilled cohorts for imperia-
lism (293-415).

SHELLEY & BYRON

III

In "The Prelude", then, if the "text", in Williams' sense, affirms the myth
of education by Nature, a "sub-text" (or, indeed, "counter-text") may be cons-
tructed which signifies the process of the child's socialisation into Culture. In the
work of both Shelley and Byron, the existing Culture is quite openly called into

question. (cf. Bostetter, 1973). It may be noted that it was Wordsworth who suggested the
shooting of the Albatross to Coleridge (see Wordsworth, "Notes dictated to Isabella
Fenwick" (1843), in Jones and Tydemann (1973), pp. 24-5); there are clear analogies
with "The Prelude", in the "crime" committed against a bird, as metonym for Nature,
and in the disproportion between "crime" and "punishment" (cf. respectively, the
bird's-nesting and the "stolen boat").

(1409), may be read as signifying the superior power of the castrating father. The
biological father does not have to be actually present, or even alive; on his death,
his place is filled at once by "God, who thus corrected my desires" (XI-368-70).
What is happening in these episodes is, on this reading, a re-run of the Oedipal
drama¹⁰; the child's desire is inhibited by his recognition of a more powerful
rival in the Father, and his consequent internalisation of the paternal image.

Indeed, the drama of the young Wordsworth runs parallel to that of Little
Hans, as exposed in Freud's celebrated case history of 1909, "Analysis of a Phobia
in a Five-Year-Old Boy" — down to the horse symbolism: "For Hans, horses had
always typified pleasure in movement. . . this pleasure in movement included
the impulse to copulate"¹¹. The male child finally accepts the inhibition of
desire "now" in return for the hope of deferred gratification "later"¹²; it may
be noted that in the "gibbet" episode, the spot is later revisited by the young-
adult Wordsworth in a more pleasurable context, "in the blessed time of early
love" (XI-318) — i.e. at the point of full entry, as an adult male, into the Law of the
Father. The Oedipus complex may be seen, as in Juliet Mitchell's reading of Freud,
as "the internalized law of patriarchal human order"¹³, making the moment
of the subject's entry into culture in our civilisation; but the process of socialisation
which it initiates demands a severe psychological price, via the internalisation of the
paternal image. On the shattering of the Oedipus complex, the image of the Father
is internalised as a punitive, sadistic agency of Law within the subject's mind. Hence,
in "The Prelude", the extremity of the child's fear; hence the disproportion between
"crime" and "punishment": After temporarily borrowing a boat, he is terrorised
for "many days" (1-418) by "huge and mighty forms" (425) haunting his dreams,
while he sees his father's death as a "chastisement" (XI-370) imposed on himself
by God for expecting too much pleasure from the holidays. These episodes, then,
re-confirm the child's post-Oedipal insertion into culture, in the context of a cruel,
authoritarian and punitive patriarchal order¹⁴.

10 cf. Bishop, p. 146.
11 Freud (1977), p. 296.
12 see *ibid.*, pp. 257-9, 288.
13 Mitchell (1975), p. 413. On her reading of Freud's work, "the individual ego makes the
general human culture his own" through the Oedipus complex and its shattering (72);
"the patriarchal law speaks to and through each person in his unconscious, and the
reproduction of the ideology of human society is thus assured in the acquisition of the law
by each individual. The unconscious that Freud analysed could thus be described as the
domain of the reproduction of culture or ideology" (413).

14 Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) may be read on similar lines, as
exposing the operations of a cruel patriarchal order within the mind of the subject

question, though with different emphases; the conservative Southey quite correctly identified them as the "Satanic school", who "have rebelled against the holiest ordinances of human society".¹⁵ Where Wordsworth assents in society's regulation of desire, in both Byron and Shelley sexuality is positively valued against the culture that controls and represses it. Thus Shelley declares sarcastically in the notes to "Queen Mab" (1813): "Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wandering of passion"¹⁶, while Byron satirises the attempts of educators to "destroy" the "natural spirit" ("Don Juan" I-50).

Both younger poets stand in a "professional" relation to Wordsworth marked by a high degree of ambivalence. The work of both contains a brief "Wordsworthian" phase, followed by satiric condemnation of the older poet's sellout ("Alastor", "Childe Harold" III; "Peter Bell the Third", "Don Juan" *passim*). *At no point*, however, in spite of undeniable influences, does either Byron or Shelley present a model of Nature that can be identified with Wordsworth's. In Shelley's case, "Alastor" (1814) is, as Harold Bloom has pointed out¹⁷, both a recognition of Wordsworth's influence, and an attempt to work through it in order to shake it off. The poem is, as Bloom stresses, "prompted by 'The Excursion'"¹⁸, in whose first book Wordsworth had recently published the only full account of his model of education-in-Nature to which Shelley had access.¹⁹ There, Wordsworth's protagonist, the Wanderer, is educated, once again, by books and Nature, but primarily by Nature. In "Alastor", which is the biography of an imaginary poet, Shelley's protagonist, himself a "wanderer" (626), undergoes a comparable education. But while his sensibilities are formed by study, travel and exposure to Nature, he fails to recognise himself as social and sexual being.²⁰ His repressed sexuality finally emerges in the form of an erotic dream vision which drives him to a premature death. "Alastor" includes passages of a sunset and some lines on the poet's "mystic sympathy" with Nature — which may be read as ironic re-writes of similar passages from "The Excursion"²¹; ironic, for "Alastor" as a whole implies that Wordsworth's model of education could easily lead to what Shelley calls "self-centred seclusion"²², to the denial of sexuality and the rejection

- 15 Southey (1821), in Rutherford (1970), pp. 180-1.
 16 Shelley, "Even love is sold" (in "Notes on *Queen Mab*", 1812), Oxford "Works", p. 796.
 17 see Bloom (1961), pp. 278-80.
 18 *ibid*, p. 278.
 19 Neither Shelley nor Byron had access to "The Prelude", barring the few brief extracts which Wordsworth published in their lifetime.
 20 Shelley consistently defined the human subject as a "social being" (see, e.g., "On *Frankenstein*", in "Prose Works" I, pp. 417-9).
 21 Compare "Alastor" 550-9 with "Excursion" I, 197-205; and 4, 651-3 with *E.I.*, 153-62.
 22 Shelley, "Preface" to "Alastor" (Oxford "Works", p. 14).

of all social relations. Further, Nature is in this text presented as essentially inconsistent and ambivalent — natural phenomena are endlessly "mutable" (447), and landscapes contain both calm rivulets and treacherous cataracts (369-408). Nature and human society are parallel but separate domains; Nature is *not*, as in Wordsworth, the primary formative influence on the human mind. This anti-Wordsworthian position is repeated in "Mont Blanc" (1816); while natural objects can be interpreted and appropriated as symbols that validate human desire, these significations are generated by "the human mind's imaginings" (143) — they are *not* inherent in Nature.
 Byron, in the Lake Geneva sequence of "Childe Harold" III (1816), having been "dosed" . . . with Wordsworth physics" by Shelley²³, temporarily and uncertainly assumes a Wordsworthian mask for a few stanzas (68-75), where Nature is seen as (perhaps) constitutive of the subject:

"Are not the mountains, waves and skies a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them?" (75);

but this mask is quickly blown to pieces by the subsequent vision of Nature as a destructive force, in the account of a violent storm on the lake (29-7). Here, too, Byron privileges the erotic dimension of Nature, all but repressed by Wordsworth; the tempestuous night recalls "the light/Of a dark eye in woman" (92). Shelley, it may be added, had already introduced a non-Wordsworthian sexual dimension into the natural landscapes of "Alastor", where parasite flowers erotically "twine their tendrils" round the trees (444).

V

The conflict between Desire and Law, which Wordsworth resolves in favour of Law, thus takes place in a different ideological context in both Shelley and Byron. In both poets' work, insurgent Desire challenges the cultural Law; the revolt of Desire is validated in the name of an eroticised Nature. At the same time, and in spite of a certain surface rhetoric of Nature in both poets, there is in both a tendency that points away from *any* ideology of Nature; certain elements in their texts imply, not the contestation of Culture by Nature, but the substitution of one cultural order by another — the possibility of establishing a new, and less repressive culture.

In the first four cantos of "Don Juan" (1819-21), Juan, after his sexual initiation at Julia's hands, is discovered with her by her husband, on which Julia is sent into a convent while Juan is sent abroad. Shipwrecked on a Greek island, Juan has his second affair with Haidee, daughter of Lambro, a wealthy pirate, during her father's absence. Lambro, believed dead, returns, discovers Juan and sends him to be sold into slavery. Haidee responds to her father's intervention with madness, silence and finally death.

In both episodes, Desire rebels against Law — against marriage, the family, the institutional regulation of sexuality. The text tends to validate desire, male or female, in terms of Nature. Thus the triumph of Julia's desire over her attempts to control it is compared to the outbreak of a storm:

"But passion most disassembles, yet betrays
Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky

Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
Its workings through the vainly guarded eye" (1-73).

Equally, the Juan-Haidee relationship is consummated under the sign of Nature, on the beach at sunset:

"each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm" (II-184).

The text calls Haidee "Nature's bride" (II-202), thus implying that their union, while subverting the maritalist norms of their culture, is validated by Nature:

"And now 'twas done — on the lone shore were lighted
Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches. . .
Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed" (II - 204)²⁴.

²⁴ cf. a similar trope in Shelley, "Rosalin and Helen" (1818), 851-4.

IV

As has been shown, Shelley clearly dissociates himself from the Wordsworthian model of education. The same is true of Byron in "Don Juan" Canto I (1819), where there is an explicit rejection of any model that denies sexuality. The young Juan is subjected by his mother, Donna Inez, to a moralistic, censorious education, which the narrator sees as an attempt to "(tame) him down" (50), indeed as a denial of Nature in its sexual and reproductive aspect:

"But not a page of anything that's loose,
Or hints continuation of the species,
Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious" (1-40).

The satire is directed mainly at Byron's ex-wife, but Wordsworth seems to be the target in the lines:

"how sage, and still, and steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already" (1-50).

There is probably an ironic reference here to the sexless child of the "Immortality Ode" (1807), the celebrated "best philosopher" (110), "trailing clouds of glory" (64). In spite of his mother's efforts, Juan gains his sexual education at the hands of Donna Julia, a married friend of his mother's. Before their relationship is consummated, he goes to the woods, with the aim of forgetting his desire — and here Byron parodies the sexless Wordsworthian view of Nature:

"He Juan (and not Wordsworth), so pursued
His self-communion with his own high soul" (1-91).

But Nature sends Juan's thoughts back to sexual themes, and to Julia, through association of ideas; the woods suggest "wood-nymphs" (94), and the sky suggests "Donna Julia's eyes" (92).

The narrator violently rejects Donna Inez's model of education:

"I think, I know
That sons should not be educated so" (53)

(not daughters, presumably); but equally under attack is the Wordsworthian model, known to Byron from a "drowsy, rowzy poem call'd "The Excursion"" (III-94), and implicitly charged with falsifying Nature by repressing its erotic dimension.

Nevertheless, in both cases the patriarchal law finally punishes those who transgress it. Julia falls victim of the sexual double standard, and wastes away in a convent. Haïdée, deprived of Juan by her father, resorts to madness as a form of protest. In her dream, just before her father's return, she sees Juan "lifeless at her feet" (IV-34), until his face

"Faded, or alter'd into something new
Like to her father's features" (IV-35);

the dream signifies the replacement of the rule of Desire (Juan) by the imposed patriarchal Law (Lambro). After Juan's removal, Haïdée refuses to speak to, or even look at, her father (IV-64,68) but she cannot contest his power in any practical sense.

In the universe of "Don Juan", it seems that pleasure must be paid for:

"Oh Pleasure! you're indeed a pleasant thing,

Although one must be damn'd for you, no doubt" (I-119).

The explosion of desire is seen as biologically inevitable, but the punishment of libidinal revolt is seen as socially inevitable; on Haïdée's death, the narrator declares: "A heavy price must all pay who thus err" (IV-73). The text can thus be read as a proto-Freudian document of cultural pessimism, presenting a social universe ruled by a double determinism, both biological and environmental — in which the continuation of culture requires the inexorable punishment of acts of revolt which are, themselves, unavoidable . . . 25

However, other readings are possible; "Don Juan" can be read as vindicating "Nature", or sexuality, against "unnatural" social arrangements. The first two cantos were defended in these terms by Leigh Hunt, who wrote in 1819: "If to do this [referring to Julia's adultery] be immoral, we can only say that Nature is immoral . . . he [Byron] merely shows the folly of setting up forms and opinions against nature" 26. For Hunt, then, Julia's and Haïdée's desire is natural while arranged or mercenary marriages are unnatural. On the other hand again, it can be argued that, in some respects, the Haïdée episode, at least, exhibits a tendency towards, neither the defence of the existing culture, nor the privileging of Nature — but, rather, towards the construction of an *alternative culture*. The affair is

initiated partly under the sign of Culture; when Haïdée and her maid Zoe tend the shipwrecked Juan in the cave, the text emphasizes the breakfast which Zoe *cooks* for him. In the preceding shipwreck episode, it is stressed, "all his latter meals had been quite raw" (II-157); but now, Zoe transforms the raw into the cooked and thus helps reinsert Juan into Culture:

"But Zoe the meantime some eggs was trying,
Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
Must breakfast" (II-144).

The breakfast helps initiate the lovers' relationship; Haïdée and Juan share the eggs (II-144-5) which, as the text later reminds the reader, happen to be "amatory food" (170), i.e. aphrodisiac. The love-affair will be presented, ideologically, as a return to Nature; but the breakfast signifies it as objectively *social*.

Further, after the mourning for Lambro's supposed death, Juan and Haïdée celebrate with an elaborate party (III-27 ff.) Here the text signifies, in elaborate detail, a profusion of *cultural practices*; there is a dinner of "a hundred dishes" (III-62), wine, coffee, fancy dress, music, storytelling, smoking. This carnivalesque "holiday" (42) ties in the face of the profit motive which dominates Lambro's activities (14-16, 35). The food and drink are offered free to all comers (39, 69); the new regime has "turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure" (39), while Juan and Haïdée have "not one hour to spare from loving" (ibid). Of course, the hedonist insurrection is far from a complete revolution. Haïdée thinks neither of freeing her father's slaves (see 61), 27 nor of freeing herself from her bondage of ill-teracy (see II-62). Libidinal revolt is not inserted into a coherent revolutionary programme. Nonetheless, the brief utopia of sex, plenty and pleasure points, however imperfectly, to the possibility of a cultural alternative; marriage, the Law of the father, the rule of profit, are replaced by a saturnalian regime in which the "illicit indulgence" of desire (III-13) is permitted, and the products of labour cease to be commodities. In this sense, the Juan-Haïdée regime, with its accumulated signs of pleasure, constitutes, if in distorted form, an image of a possible universe of plenty. One may compare Benjamin's interpretation of the Arcades of nineteenth-century Paris, the glass-roofed pedestrian walkways which

27 In contrast, the protagonist of "Lara" (1814) shows his liberalism by abolishing serfdom in his domain (I-210-219).

25 cf. Freud (1961): "It is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built up upon a renunciation of instinct" (p. 97).
26 Hunt (1819), in Rutherford (1970), p. 177.