Developing Poetic Commentary:
Romantic Poetry Edition

"Those who will not reason, are bigots, those who cannot, are fools, and those who dare not, are slaves."
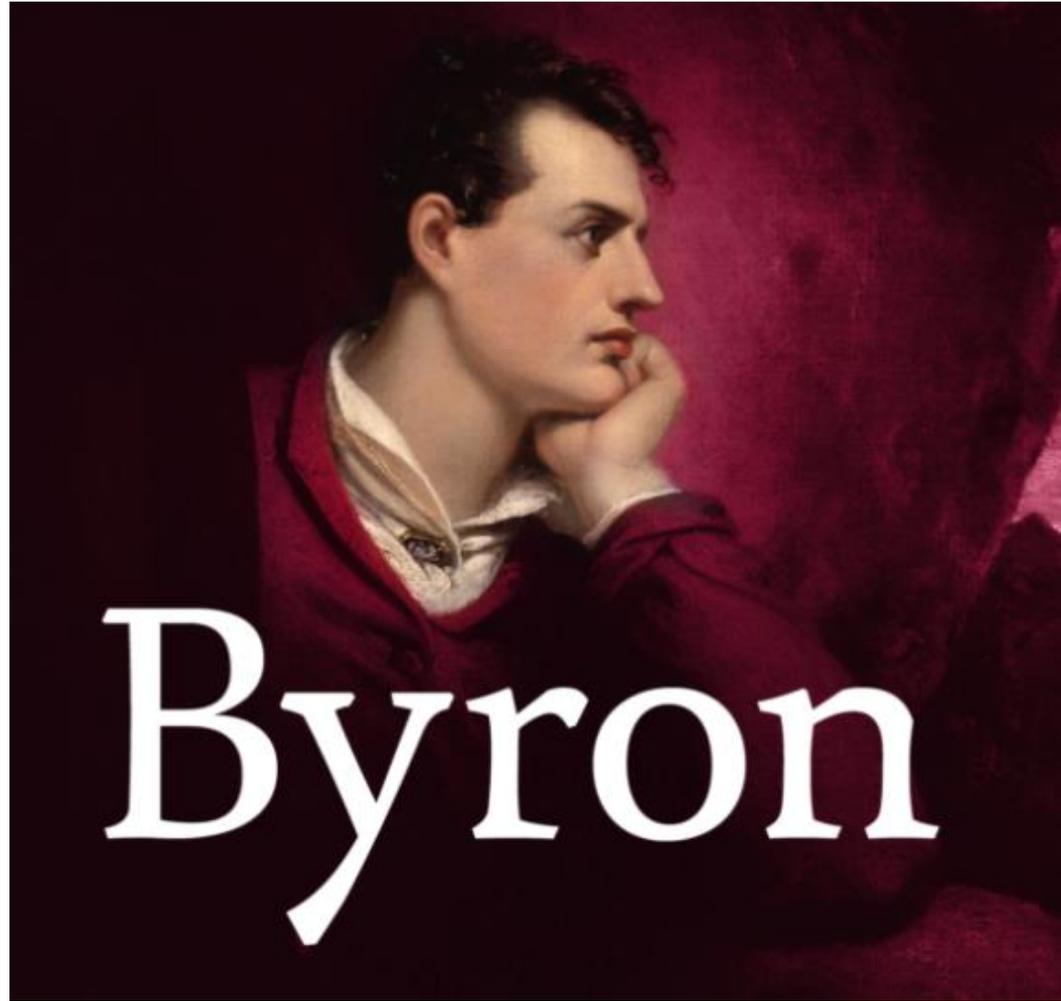
- Lord Byron

FB/THE FREETHINKER

Take Out Byron TP-CASTT

Lesson Objectives

- Analyze and talk about Romantic Poetry

- Note Byron's eccentricity and rampant fame

- Review what we already know about Poetry Analysis

- Develop endurance when delivering poetic commentary

I awoke one morning and found myself famous.

(Lord Byron)

Byron: Lord Gordon Fun Facts

1. His dog in college was named "Smut."

2. Later in life in his *palazzo* in Venice, he kept a menagerie. His close friend Percy Shelley describes this arrangement: 'Lord B's establishment consists...of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon...just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea hens and an Egyptian Crane.'

3. He was bisexual and thought "men were cleverer but women kissed better."

4. He was five feet nine inches tall.

5. After a long relationship with his half-sister (leading to one child), he had affairs with actresses, married society women and many young men.

6. The reputedly haunted seat of the Byron family, Newstead Abbey, became a favorite venue for Byron's entourage. His gothic flamboyance perpetuated this sense of the spooky. A coffin stood at one end of the dining room, which Byron had turned into an indoor shooting gallery. Skulls of the monks who had been at buried at the abbey and Byron's own ancestors from the family crypt were used as flowerpots that lined the walls. He also had a drinking mug made from one of these monkish skulls and served drinks in others. Byron and his friends even wore long, dark, hooded robes as worn by medieval monks, for their soirees. When Percy Shelly was cremated, Byron asked if he could keep Shelley's skull but he was refused because of his fetish for using them as goblets.

Newstead Abbey

Ada Lovelace: Byron's only "Legitimate" Child
10 December 1815 – 27 November 1852
The World's First Computer Programmer

- Byron separated from her mother a month after Ada was born and left England forever four months later, eventually dying of disease in the Greek War of Independence when Ada was eight in 1824.

- Ada's mother remained bitter towards Lord Byron and promoted Ada's interest in mathematics and logic in an effort to prevent her from developing what she saw as the insanity seen in her father.

- However, Ada remained interested in Byron despite her mother's efforts (although he never had a relationship with her) and was, upon her eventual death, buried next to him at her request.

- She died at 36, the same age as her father. In her final years she was like her father in other ways, including romantic scandals, problems with alcohol and opium, and gambling debts.

Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace (*née* Byron)
The World's First Computer Programmer

- Ada worked with mathematician Charles Babbage on the Difference Engine, a calculator, and the Analytical Engine, a mechanical computer for which she wrote the world's first algorithms. She showed amazing foresight concerning the abilities of computers to do more than deal with numbers.

- Ada was the world's first computer programmer and the programming language ADA was named in her honor.
  - **She was the first to recognize that the machine had applications beyond pure calculation, and published the first algorithm intended to be carried out by such a machine.**

OUR MOTHER OF COMPUTING

ADA LOVELACE

Focus and structure of your Six-Minute Context & Poetry Commentary

- Students should aim to identify and **explore all significant aspects of the extract**. These include:
  - **Briefly explaining context for the poem**
    - **Author, Era, Form, Etc.**
  - **Analyzing the writer's techniques, including the use of stylistic devices and their effect(s) on the reader.**
- A commentary should be **sustained and well organized**. *It should neither be delivered as a series of unconnected points nor take the form of a narration or a line-by-line paraphrase of the passage or poem.*
- **The commentary should not be used as a springboard for a discussion of everything the student knows about the author & work in question.**

Develop your Commentary:
A Verbal Essay

- **Intro: Introduce your commentary by briefly explaining the historical and literary context for the poem**
  - **Author, Era, Form, Etc.**
  - **Dominant-Effect Thesis Statement**
- **Body: Analyze the writer's techniques, including the use of stylistic devices and their effect(s) on the reader.**
  - **Use a method like TP-CASTT to plan an organized commentary**
- **Conclusion: Conclude with what was dominant thematically and in terms of writing, and what the effect of those thematic and writing choices was on you**

- **Title**--Consider the title.
- **Paraphrase**--Put the poem into your own words. Get the surface "meaning": what is the poem about?
- **Connotation**--
  - Sound devices (alliteration, rhyming pattern, etc.)
  - Point of view
  - Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification)
  - Symbolism
  - Tone
  - Irony
  - Comparisons / contrasts
- **Attitude**--What is the speaker's attitude? What is the tone of the poem? What is the author's attitude/tone? Does it differ from the speaker?
- **Shift**--Is there a shift or progression from one idea to another in the poem?
- **Title**, again
- **Theme**--What is the poem saying? What message or idea is the author getting across?

Poetic Commentary Reflection: On a Note Card

1. On a scale of 1-10, how easy (1) or difficult (10) was it for you to create and say each of the three components of the commentary? Why? Explain.
   A. Intro
   B. Body
   C. Conclusion

2. Evaluate your partner's analysis and delivery of their poem in the same three categories.
   A. Intro
   B. Body
   C. Conclusion

SIDE TWO Write a dominant-effect thesis statement about the Byron poem that you didn't present on, showing what you learned from the other student's presentations.