

THESIS ABSTRACT

Lord Byron is undeniably one of the most prominent representatives of both British and European Romanticism. He is most known for his flamboyant lifestyle, rebellious heroes and passionate poetry. His works, which overflow with great emotional intensity and intellectual depth, precisely capture the spirit of the Romantic era. Byron's influence transcends the realm of literature, impacting art, music, culture, and political movements.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage was published between 1812 and 1818, and occupies a significant place among Byron's work. After all, it was this poem that went on to change the trajectory of the poet's life and catapult him to immediate stardom. Byron began writing the poem during his Grand Tour which lasted from 1809 to 1811. Although the Grand Tour had long figured as an essential part of the education of young aristocrats, Byron's choice to depart at a time of the raging Napoleonic Wars, made his tour truly unique in many ways.

There are two key elements which set the poem apart from others of its time — the places it described and the intimacy of the poetic voice. I believe it was especially the latter that contributed most significantly to the enormous success of the poem. This thesis thus focuses on the different manifestations of intimacy as presented in the four cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

To reach my goal, I have thoroughly researched Byron's personal life, paying close attention to areas most relevant to my analysis — the numerous love affairs and scandals, close friendships, family dynamics and marital life. I have also explored Lord Byron's (much debated) sexuality as well as the personal and social circumstances accompanying the publication of the poem. I have identified two distinct types of intimacy in the poem — physical and emotional. These are explored in their own designated chapters, which are further separated into subchapters according to the analysed themes.