

DON JUAN: Preface to cantos VI, VII and VIII

edited by Peter Cochran

The details of the Siege of Ismail in two of the following Cantos (i.e. the 7th & 8th) are taken from a French work entitled “Histoire de la Nouvelle Russie.”¹ – Some of the incidents attributed to Don Juan really occurred – particularly the circumstance of his saving the infant² – which was the actual case of the late Duc de Richelieu then a young volunteer in the Russian service – and afterwards the founder and benefactor of Odessa – where his name and memory can never cease to be regarded with reverence.³ – In the course of these cantos a stanza or two will be found allusive to the late Marquis of Londonderry⁴ – but written some time before his decease. – Had that person’s Oligarchy died with him – they would have been suppressed – as it is – I am aware of nothing in the manner of his death or of his life – to prevent the free expression of the opinions of all to whom his whole existence was consumed in endeavouring to enslave. – That he was an amiable man in *private* life – – may or may not be true – but with this the Public have nothing to do – and as to lamenting his death – it will be time enough when Ireland has ceased to mourn for his birth.⁵ – As a Minister, – I for one of millions – looked upon him as the most despotic in intention – and the weakest in intellect – that ever tyrannized over a country. – It is the first time too indeed since the Normans, – that England has been insulted by a *Minister* (at least) who could not speak English – and that Parliament permitted itself to be dictated to in the language of M^{rs}. Malaprop.⁶ – – –

Of the manner of his death little need be said except that if a poor radical devil such as Waddington or Watson⁷ had cut his throat – he would have been buried in a cross roads – with the usual appurtenances of the stake and mallet.⁸ – But the Minister – was an elegant Lunatic – a sentimental Suicide – he merely cut the “carotid artery”⁹ (blessings on their learning!) and lo – the Pageant – and the Abbey! and “the Syllables of Dolour yelled forth”¹⁰ by the Newspapers – and the harangue of the Coroner in an eulogy over the bleeding body of the deceased – (an Anthony worthy of such a Cæsar) – and the nauseous and atrocious cant of a degraded Crew of Conspirators against all that is sincere or honourable. In his death – he was necessarily one of two

1: The Marquis Gabriel de Castelnau’s *Essai sur l’Histoire ancienne et moderne de la Nouvelle Russie* was published in 1820. It is an apologia for Russia’s annexation of the Ukraine under Potemkin during the 1780s.

2: Armand Emanuel du Plessis, Duc de Richelieu, fought for the Russians at Ismail. His feat in saving the infant (see below, VIII sts.91-6) is reported by Castelnau, via a quotation from his diary, in a note to pp.216-17 of the *Essai*’s second volume.

3: Richelieu was, from 1803 to 1814, governor of Odessa on the Black Sea. During his time there the city prospered phenomenally; his statue is still to be seen at the top of the famous granite steps.

4: Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, Marquis of Londonderry, was Foreign Secretary from 1812 to his suicide, on August 12 1822. B.’s detestation of him has already been recorded above, at Dedication, sts.9-16.

5: In his capacity at Secretary for Ireland, Castlereagh had presided over the bloody suppression of the United Irishmen in 1798.

6: Mrs. Malaprop is a character in Sheridan’s *The Rivals* (1775) whose frequent abuse of language was subsequently paralleled by the poor quality of Castlereagh’s tropes: see above, V st.87.

7: Samuel Ferrand Waddington and James Watson were two noted radicals.

8: Wilful suicides were buried at crossroads with stakes through their hearts: Castlereagh, being declared insane, was buried in Westminster Abbey. The coroner let it be known as his opinion that “no man can be in his proper senses at the moment of his committing so rash an act as self-murder.”

9: Castlereagh cut his throat with a pen-knife.

10: See Malcolm’s words at *Macbeth*, IV iii 5-8: ... *new sorrows / Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds / As if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out / Like syllable of dolour.*

things by the *law* – a felon or a madman * – and in either case no great subject for panegyric. – In his life he was – what all the world knows – and half of it will feel for years to come – unless his death prove a moral lesson to the surviving Sejani of Europe.¹¹ § – –

It may at least serve as some Consolation to the Nations – that their Oppressors are not happy – and in some instances judge so justly of – their own actions as to anticipate the sentence of Mankind. – Let us hear no more of this man – and let Ireland remove once the noble Ashes of her Grattan from the Sanctuary of Westminster.¹² – – – –

Shall the Patriot of Humanity repose by the Werther¹³ of Politics!!!

With regard to the objections which have been made on another score to the already published Cantos of this poem – I shall content myself with two quotations from Voltaire¹⁴ –

“La pudeur s’est enfuie des Coeurs; et c’est réfugiée sur les levres – ”

“Plus les Moeurs sont depravés – plus les “expressions deviennent mesurées; on croit regagner en langage – ce qu’on a perdu en vertu.”¹⁵ – –

This is the real fact as applicable to the degraded and present hypocritical Mass which leavens the English generation – and is the only answer they deserve. – The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer – which with radical – liberal – Jacobin – reformer – &c. &c. are the changes which the hirelings are daily ringing in the ears of those who will listen – should be welcome to all who recollect on *whom* it was originally bestowed. Socrates and Jesus Christ were put to death publicly – as *blasphemers* – and so have been & may be – many – who dare to oppose the most notorious abuses of the name of God – and the mind of man. – But Persecution is not refutation – nor even triumph – the “wretched Infidel Carlile”¹⁶ as he is called is probably happier in his prison – than the proudest of his Assailants; – with his opinions I have nothing to do – they may be right – or wrong – but he has suffered for them – and that very Suffering for Conscience’s sake

11: Sejanus ruled Rome while the Emperor Tiberius was indulging himself on Capri: he was a byword for cruelty, and Tiberius finally had him killed. The phrase *moral lesson* is from a letter from Wellington to Castlereagh, written in Paris on 23 September 1815, about the return of the art treasures which Napoleon had plundered. The letter concludes: *It is, besides, on many accounts, desirable, as well for their own happiness as for that of the world, that the people of France, if they do not already feel that Europe is too strong for them, should be made sensible of it; and that, whatever may be the extent, at any time, of their momentary and partial success against any one, or any number of individual powers in Europe, the day of retribution must come. / Not only, then, would it, in my opinion, be unjust in the Sovereigns to gratify the people of France on this subject, at the expense of their own people, but the sacrifice they would make would be impolitic, as it would deprive them of the opportunity of giving the people of France a great moral lesson. / Believe me, &c. / WELLINGTON* (Wellington, *Dispatches*, ed Lieut. Colonel Gurwood, London, John Murray (1838) vol. XII pp.645-6.) B. uses the phrase at *TVOJ*, Preface, and *Ode from the French* l.78.

12: Henry Grattan was a reforming Irish patriot, and advocate of Catholic emancipation. He died in 1820, and was also buried in Westminster.

13: Werther is the suicidal hero of Goethe’s novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774).

14: Voltaire is the hero of B.’s last long prose piece relating to *Don Juan*; the note on Bacon annexed to Canto V above.

15: DJP locates the quotations at *Lettre de M. Eratou à M. Clopître Aïmonier de S.A.S.M. le Landgrave* (1759): *Shame has fled men’s hearts and taken refuge on their lips ... The more depraved morals become, the more sober becomes language; we believe we can regain linguistically what we have lost morally.* The quotation could be an epigraph for all of *Don Juan*; it demonstrates with what thoroughness B. read Voltaire.

16: Richard Carlile was the most famous of the radical publishers of B.’s day, and was often imprisoned. He pirated Southey’s *Wat Tyler* in 1817.

will make more proselytes to Deism – – than the example of heterodox ¶ prelates to Christianity – Suicide Statesmen or over-pensioned homicides¹⁷ to the impious Alliance to Oppression which insults the world with the name of “Holy!”¹⁸ I have no wish to trample on the dishonoured – or the dead – but it would be well if the adherents to the Classes from whence those persons sprung should abate a little of the *Cant* – which is the crying sin of this double-dealing & false-speaking time of selfish Spoilers – and – – but enough for the present.

* Note. I say by the *law* of the *land* – the laws of Humanity judge more gently; but as the legitimates have always the *law* in their mouths, let them here make the most of it.

§ From this number must be excepted Canning;¹⁹ Canning is a genius, almost a universal one, an orator, a wit, a poet, a statesmen; and no man of talent can long pursue the path of his late predecessor Lord C. If ever man saved his country, Canning *can*; but *will* he? I, for one, hope so.

¶ Note. When L^d. Sandwich²⁰ said “he did not know the difference between Orthodoxy and Heterodoxy” – Warburton²¹ the bishop replied “Orthodoxy – my Lord – is *my doxy* – and Heterodoxy is *another man’s doxy*. –” a prelate of the of the present day has discovered it seems a *third* kind of doxy²² which has not greatly exalted in the eyes of the elect – that which Bentham calls “Church-of-Englandism.”²³

17: A reference to the Duke of Wellington.

18: The Holy Alliance between Russia, Austria and Prussia, was a clear case of totalitarian intention disguised with Christian cant. Even Castlereagh was embarrassed by it.

19: George Canning was the more liberal Foreign Secretary who succeeded Castlereagh. B. admired him in part because of his earlier contributions to the right-wing satirical magazine *The Anti-Jacobin*.

20: The Earl of Sandwich was a debauched eighteenth-century nobleman and wit. He gives his name to the mundane snack, with the invention of which he is credited.

21: Warburton was an eighteenth-century bishop, editor of Pope and Shakespeare.

22: A reference to the Bishop of Clogher, caught in the act of sodomy with a guardsman in a pub off the Haymarket in July 1822. B. jokes further about him below, at VIII st.76.

23: The reference is to Bentham’s *Church-of-Englandism and its Catechism examined* (1818).

Don Juan Canto Sixth

edited by Peter Cochran

<January X February X 1822>²⁴

Motto “Think’st thou? that because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more Cakes and Ale? – Aye! and Ginger shall be hot in the Mouth too! – – Twelfth Night or What You Will. – Shakespeare.²⁵

1.

“There is a Tide in the affairs of Men
“Which taken at the flood” – you know the rest,²⁶
And most of us have proved it now and then,
At least we think so, though but few have guessed
The moment till too late to come again – 5
But no doubt every thing is for the best –
Of which the surest sign is in the end,
When things are at the worst they sometimes mend.²⁷

2.

There is a tide too in the Affairs of Women²⁸
“Which taken at the flood leads,” – God knows where, 10
Those Navigators must be able Seamen²⁹
Whose charts lay down its currents to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen³⁰
With its strange whirls and eddies can compare: –
Men with their heads reflect on this and that – 15
But women with their hearts, or Heaven knows what!

24: B began Canto VI in defiance of the wishes of Teresa Guiccioli, who wanted him to stop writing the poem altogether. The date on the manuscript is erased; but seems to be one early in 1822.

25: BYRON’S EPIGRAPH: *Twelfth Night*, II iii, 108-12. Sir Toby, annoyed by Malvolio’s moral presumption in interrupting his late-night party, accuses him of being a Pharisee; Sir Andrew, too drunk and foolish to understand, adds a comment similar in tone, although devoid of paraphrasable content. This is one of three ottava rima epigraphs which B. takes from noted Shakespearean killjoys in comedy: the other two are from Jacques in *As You Like it* (for *Beppo*) and Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* (for *TVOJ*).

26: “*There is a Tide in the affairs of Men* / “Which taken at the flood” – you know the rest: conflates Brutus’ words about destiny at *Julius Caesar* IV iii 216-17 with a joke of B.’s own, relying on the combined innuendo of *proved* (line 3: signifies “conquer sexually”) and *come* (line 5). The gist is that the really fine moments in life are evanescent, try to grab them as we may. For *You know the rest* see Michael’s words to Southey at *TVOJ* 728.

27: *When things are at the worst they sometimes mend*: more Shakespearean games. See *Macbeth*, IV ii 24-5; but also *King Lear*, IV i 26-7.

28: *the Affairs of Women*: slang for female sex organ.

29: *able Seamen*: pun.

30: *Jacob Behmen*: Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) German mystic. For B.’s comparisons between him and Wordsworth, see *BLJ* IV 324 and VI 47.

3.

And yet a headlong, headstrong, downright She,
Young, beautiful and daring, who would risk
A Throne, the World, the Universe to be
Beloved in her own way – and rather whisk 20
The Stars from out the Sky, than not be free,
As are the Billows when the Breeze is brisk –
Though such She's a devil (if that there be one)
Yet she would make full many a Manichean.³¹

4.

Thrones, worlds, et cetera are so oft upset 25
By commonest Ambition, that when Passion
O'erthrows the same, we readily forget,
Or at the least forgive the loving rash one –
If Anthony be well remembered yet
'Tis not his Conquests keep his name in fashion, 30
But Actium lost – for Cleopatra's eyes
Outbalance all the Caesars' Victories.³² –

5.

He died at fifty for a Queen of Forty;³³
I wish their years had been fifteen and twenty,
For then wealth, kingdoms, worlds are but a sport – I 35
Remember when though I had no great plenty
Of worlds to lose, yet still to pay my court; I
Gave what I had – a heart; as the world went I
Gave what was worth a World – for Worlds could never
Restore me those pure feelings, gone forever.³⁴ 40

31: *Yet she would make full many a Manichean:* Manicheans were followers of Mani, a Christian-Zoroastrian heretic who lived in Persia in the third century A.D., preaching the division of flesh and spirit, dark and light, and the moral primacy of the latter. His name became synonymous with any faith in which two Principles struggled for supremacy – an idea by which B. was attracted: see *Cain*, II ii 401-7, or *TVOJ*, 277-80. However, at XIII below, ll.325-6, he appears to reject Manicheanism as ... *that same devilish doctrine of the Persian, / Of the two Principles* ... In B.'s present context, Dark might be female, and Light, Male.

32: *But Actium lost for Cleopatra's eyes / Outbalance all the Caesars' Victories:* Shakespeare's Antony would not necessarily consent to this judgement – see Antony and Cleopatra, III xii, *passim*.

33: *He died at fifty for a Queen of Forty:* at death, the ages of Antony and Cleopatra are thought to have been fifty-three and thirty-nine respectively; B. died at thirty-six, two years after writing these lines.

34: *for Worlds could never / Restore me those pure feelings, gone forever:* editors often adduce B.'s love for Mary Chaworth as the subject here: see *Stanzas to ——— On Leaving England* (CPW I 266-8). However, many of his early poems lament innocence lost, without reference to her. See *Love's Last Adieu* (CPW I 176-7) or *To Thyrza* (CPW 346-8).

6.

'Twas the Boy's "Mite," and like the "Widow's", may³⁵
 Perhaps be weighed hereafter, if not now –
 But whether such things do, or do not, weigh,
 All who have loved, or love, will still allow
 Life has nought like it; God is Love, they say, 45
 And Love's a God, or was before the brow
 Of Earth was wrinkled by the sins and tears
 Of³⁶ – but Chronology best knows the years. –

7.

We left our Hero and third Heroine in
 A kind of state more awkward than uncommon, 50
 For Gentlemen must sometimes risk their skin
 For that sad tempter, a forbidden woman;
 Sultans too much abhor this sort of Sin,
 And don't agree at all with that wise Roman,
 Heroic, Stoic Cato the sententious, 55
 Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.³⁷

8.

I know Gulbeyaz was extremely wrong,
 I own it, I deplore it, I condemn it;
 But I detest all fiction even in song –
 And so must tell the truth howe'er you blame it, 60
 Her reason being weak, her passions strong –
 She thought that her Lord's heart (even could she claim it)
 Was scarce enough; for he had fifty nine³⁸
 Years, and a fifteen-hundredth Concubine. –

35: *like the "Widow's"*: a reference to Jesus' reaction (at Mark 12, 41-4) to a poor widow, whose donation of two small coins to the Temple coffers he counted more blessed than those of wealthier believers.

36: *before the brow / Of Earth was wrinkled by the sins and tears / Of ...*: B. presumably wishes to imply "of the Christian religion".

37: *that wise Roman, / Heroic, Stoic Cato the sententious / Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius*: Cato the Younger (95-46 B.C.) ostentatiously Stoic, and an enemy of Julius Caesar, divorced his wife Marcia so that his friend Hortensius could marry her; on Hortensius' death, he remarried her. As she was much richer by then, he was much criticised by, among others, Caesar. He committed suicide in the defence of Utica against the First Triumvirate, thus inspiring Addison's tragedy *Cato*.

38: *She thought that her Lord's heart (even could she claim it) / Was scarce enough*: *heart* is a euphemism.

9.

I am not like Cassio an “Arithmetician,” 65
But by “the bookish theorick” it appears,³⁹
If ’tis summed up with feminine precision,
That, adding to the account his Highness’ years,
The fair Sultana erred from Inanition;
For were the Sultan just to all his Dears 70
She could but claim the fifteenth hundredth part
Of what should be Monopoly – the Heart.⁴⁰

10.

It is observed that ladies are litigious
Upon all legal objects of possession,⁴¹
And not the least so when they are religious, 75
Which doubles what they think of the transgression;
With suits and prosecutions they besiege us,
As the tribunals show through many a Session,
When they suspect that any one goes shares
In that to which the Law makes them sole Heirs. 80

11.

Now if this holds good in a Christian land,
The Heathen also, though with lesser latitude,
Are apt to carry things with a high hand,
And take what kings call “an imposing Attitude,”
And for their rights Connubial make a stand 85
When their liege husbands treat them with ingratitude;
And as four wives must have quadruple claims⁴²
The Tigris hath its jealousies like Thames.

39: *I am not like Cassio an “Arithmetician,” / But by “the bookish theorick” it appears ...:* from Iago’s jealous words about his rival at *Othello* I i, 19 and 24.

40: *... what should be Monopoly – the Heart:* euphemism. See note to ll.62-3.

41: *It is observed that ladies are litigious / Upon all legal objects of possession:* a glancing reference at the legal problems B. encountered on the death of his mother-in-law, Lady Noel, on January 28 1822 (see above, I 1.996n); but the main aim of the stanza is to pursue the indecency implicit in the last line of st.9: women are greedy for the masculine attention which is theirs by supposed contractual right.

42: *four wives must have quadruple claims:* B. often mocked Islamic marriage laws. See *Beppo*, ll.559-60:

*They have a number – though they ne’er exhibit’em,
Four wives by law, and Concubines “ad libitum”. –*

He knew, however, at least from his reading of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and of the book known as “Tully’s Tripoli”, if not from his own experience, that few Turkish or Arab husbands took full advantage of the law.

12.

Gulbeyaz was the fourth; and (as I said)
The favourite, but what's favour amongst four? 90
Polygamy may well be held in dread
Not only as a Sin but as a *Bore*;
Most wise men with *one* moderate woman wed,
Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear 95
To make the Nuptial Couch a "Bed of Ware".⁴³

13.

His Highness, the Sublimest of Mankind,
So styled according to the usual forms
Of every Monarch – till they are consigned
To those sad hungry Jacobins the Worms,⁴⁴ 100
Who on the very loftiest kings have dined –
His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz' charms,
Expecting all the Welcome of a Lover
(A "Highland Welcome" all the wide world over).⁴⁵

14.

Now here we should distinguish; for howe'er 105
Kisses, sweet words, embraces, and all that
May look like what, is – neither here nor there
They are put on as easily as a hat,
Or rather Bonnet, which the fair sex wear
Trimmed either heads or hearts to decorate, 110
Which form an Ornament, but no more part
Of heads, than their Caresses of the heart.

43: a "Bed of Ware": a famous Hertfordshire bed, twelve feet square. Compare *Twelfth Night* III ii 44, or Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*, I i 29. In B.'s day it was still in its original location, at The Saracen's Head in Ware; now it is in the V & A.

44: *those sad hungry Jacobins the Worms*: implying worms as the ultimate revolutionaries, with a glance at Hamlet's words to the King at IV iii, 21-5: *Your worm is your only Emperor for Diet: we fat all creatures else to fat ourselves, and fat ourselves for maggots.*

45: A "Highland Welcome": often seen as a reference to Waverley's reception at the house of Fergus Mac Ivor in *Waverley*, Chapters 19-20; but there is nothing erotic offered him there, least of all by Flora Mac Ivor. Padding may be suspected.

15.

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm mind
 Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
 More in the eyelids than the eyes, resigned 115
 Rather to hide what pleases most unknown,
 Are the best tokens⁴⁶ (to a modest Mind)
 Of love, when seated on his loveliest throne,
 A Sincere Woman's breast; for over *Warm*
 Or over *Cold* annihilates the Charm. 120

16.⁴⁷

For Overwarmth, if false, is worse than truth;
 If true 'tis no great lease of its own fire,
 For no one, save in very early youth,
 Would like (I think) to trust all to desire,
 Which is but a precarious bond, in sooth, 125
 And apt to be transferred to the first buyer
 At a sad discount; while your Over Chilly
 Women, on t'other hand, seem somewhat Silly. –

17.

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,⁴⁸
 For so it seems to lovers swift or slow, 130
 Who fain would have a mutual flame confest
 And see a sentimental passion glow
 Even were Saint Francis' paramour their guest
 In his Monastic Concubine of Snow;⁴⁹
 In short the maxim for the Amorous tribe is 135
 Horatian, "Medio Tu Tutissimus Ibis."⁵⁰ –

46: *the best tokens*: the word *token* occurs several times in *Othello*, always referring to the handkerchief: III iii 297 (Emilia); IV I 153 (Bianca); and V ii 63 (Desdemona) and 219 (Othello himself).

47: St. 16 is notable for its unequal equations of both passion and frigidity with legal contract. Even if passion (*Overwarmth*) is sincere (*true*) it brings no long-term guarantee (*no great lease ... but a precarious bond ... apt to be transferred to the first buyer / At a sad discount*). The opposite case – over-chilliness – is given shorter shrift, largely because it's less relevant to Gulbeyaz, the subject of B.'s current digression.

48: *their bad taste*: that is, the bad taste of *Over Chilly / Women*.

49: *Even were Saint Francis' paramour their guest / In his Monastic Concubine of Snow*: the second reference in *Don Juan* to Saint Francis and the emblem of his asceticism: see above, I 1.508 and note.

50: *In short the maxim for the Amorous tribe is / Horatian, "Medio Tu Tutissimus Ibis."*: what B. *means* is, that moderation is best, in love as in other matters. The way in which he *writes* it is confused by the fact that he is remembering a line, not from Horace, as his phrasing advertises, but from Ovid. At the start of Book II of the *Metamorphoses*, Helios the sun-god is instructing Phaeton, his son, who has asked permission to take over the chariot of the sun for a day; the line *medio tutissimus ibis* ("the middle way is safest") forms part of his advice – see II 136 – which Phaeton, owing to his lack of skill, proves unable to take. The line from Horace which B. thinks he is quoting is *virtus est medium vitiorum et utrimque reductum* ("Virtue is the middle path between vices, and far from both extremes") from Horace's Epistle to

18.

The “*Tu’s*” too much – but let it *stand* – the verse
 Requires it – that’s to say the English rhyme,
 And not the pink of old Hexameters;⁵¹
 But after all there’s neither tune nor time 140
 In the last line, which cannot well be worse,⁵²
 And was thrust in to close the Octave’s chime;
 I own no Prosody can ever rate it
 As a Rule, but *Truth* may, if you translate it.⁵³

19.

If fair Gulbeyaz overdid her part 145
 I know not – it succeeded – and Success
 Is much in most things, not less in the Heart
 Than other articles of female dress;
 Self-Love in Man too beats all Female Art;
 They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less⁵⁴ – 150
 And no one Virtue yet, except Starvation
 Could stop that worst of Vices – Propagation.⁵⁵

20.

We leave this royal Couple to repose;
 A bed is not a throne, and they may sleep
 Whate’er their dreams be, if of joys or woes; 155
 Yet disappointed joys are woes as deep
 As any; Man’s Clay Mixture undergoes;
 Our least of Sorrows are such as we weep;
 ’Tis the vile daily drop on drop which wears
 The Soul out (like the Stone) with petty cares. 160

Lollius (*Epistolae* I xviii 9). For an echo of the Ovid line, see the first stanza of IV above, with Lucifer substituting for Phaeton; also *TVOJ*, 828. See next note.

51: *the English rhyme, / And not the pink of old Hexameters:* the most notable example of hexameter writing that B. would know from recent English usage was that in Southey’s overreaching *A Vision of Judgement*, which he had travestied in his own *Vision* of 1821. Southey was a prime example of one who had, in his idiom as Phaeton in his, or Gulbeyaz in hers, “overdone his part” (see this canto, l.145).

52: *the last line, which cannot well be worse:* that is, l.136 above.

53: *I own no Prosody can ever rate it / As a Rule, but Truth may, if you translate it:* B. advertises his large faith, that truth in verse is preferable to skill in versifying. The complaint against Southey was, however, that his verse foundered beneath both his pompous matter and his canting manner.

54: *They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less:* echoes Shakespeare, Sonnet 138: *Therefore I lie with her, and she with me ...* The repeated pun would also echo Othello just before his epileptic fit (IV I 55-7): *Lie with her – lie on her? We say lie on her when they belie her. Lie with her. Zounds, that’s fulsome.*

55: *And no one Virtue yet, except Starvation / Could stop that worst of Vices – Propagation:* B. ironically echoes Malthus’ *Essay on the Principle of Population*; see I sts.128-32 above.

21.

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill,
 To pay, unpaid, protested, or discounted
At a percentage; a child cross, dog ill,
 A favourite horse fallen lame just as he's mounted,
A bad old Woman making a worse will 165
 Which leaves you minus of the cash you counted
As certain;⁵⁶ these are paltry things, and yet
I've rarely seen the Man they did not fret.

22.

I'm a philosopher; confound them all! –
 Bills, beasts, and men – and – no! *not* Womankind! 170
With one good hearty curse I vent my Gall –
 And then my Stoicism leaves nought behind⁵⁷
Which it can either pain or evil call,
 And I can give my whole Soul up to Mind,
Though what *is* Mind or Soul, their birth or growth, 175
Is more than I know, the deuce take them both.

23.

So now all things are damned, one feels at ease,
 As after reading Athanasius' curse,⁵⁸
Which doth your true believer so much please;
 I doubt if any now could make it worse 180
O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
 'Tis so sententious, positive, and terse,
And decorates the Book of Common Prayer
As doth a Rainbow the just clearing Air.⁵⁹

56: *A bad old Woman making a worse will / Which leaves you minus of the cash you counted / As certain:* yet another reference to Lady Noel, B.'s mother-in-law, who had died earlier in the year (1822). See above, this Canto, ll.73-4n, and Canto I l.996n.

57: *my Stoicism leaves nought behind:* the Stoic ideal is one at which B. affects to aim throughout the digressive passages in the epic. See Juan's conversation with Johnson on the slave market at the start of Canto V; or Canto I st.216; or below, Canto XVII ll.76-80. The gist of his lament is that to be a true Stoic is to be sub-human.

58: *Athanasius' curse:* the opening of which runs, in the Book of Common Prayer, *Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith, which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled: without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.*

59: *As doth a Rainbow the just clearing Air:* rainbows are normally treacherous harbingers in *Don Juan*; see above, II sts.91-2. The smugness of Athanasius' curse is succinctly contextualised by the simile.

24.

Gulbeyaz and her Lord were sleeping, or 185
 At least one of them; – oh the heavy Night!
 When wicked wives who love some bachelor
 Lie down in dudgeon to sigh for the light
 Of the Grey Morning, and look vainly for
 Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite, 190
 To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
 Lest their too lawful bedfellow should wake.

25.

These are beneath the Canopy of heaven,
 Also beneath the Canopy of beds,
 Four posted, and silk curtained, which are given 195
 For rich men and their brides to lay their heads
 Upon, in sheets, white as what bards call “driven
 Snows”⁶⁰ Well! ’tis all haphazard when one weds;
 Gulbeyaz was an Empress, but had been
 Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant’s Quean*. – 200

26.

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
 With all the damsels in their long array,
 Had bowed themselves before the Imperial eyes,
 And at the usual signal ta’en their way
 Back to their chambers, those long Galleries⁶¹ 205
 In the Seraglio, where the ladies lay
 Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms there
 Beating for love, as the caged Bird’s for air. –

60: *white as what bards call “driven / Snows”*: rare evidence of B.’s acquaintance with *The Winter’s Tale* (though see also above, II ll.940-2n): *Lawn as white as driven snow / Cypress black as e’er was crow ...* the words are from Autolycus’ song at IV iv 215. The last two lines of the Stanza may relate ironically to Perdita’s unhappiness at being espoused to Florizel; but a reference is normally found to the moral purity of Queen Caroline, as urged by her defenders. See above, Canto V st.61 and n, and below, XII, 41, 3.

61: *their chambers, those long Galleries*: echoes the melancholy galleries in which B. claims he passes most of his evenings, at V, 58, 7. See also XIII, 67, 1, and XVI, 17, 2-3.

27.

I love the Sex, and sometimes would reverse
The Tyrant's wish, "that Mankind only had 210
One Neck which he with one fell stroke might pierce;"⁶²
My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than fierce,
It being (not *now* but only while a lad)
That Womankind had but one rosy mouth, 215
To kiss them all at once from North to South.⁶³

28.

Oh enviable Briareus!⁶⁴ with thy hands
And heads, if thou had'st all things multiplied
In such proportion! – but my Muse withstands
The Giant thought of being a Titan's bride, 220
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;⁶⁵
So let us back to Lilliput,⁶⁶ and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of love
In which we left him several lines above.

62: "that Mankind only had / One Neck which he with one fell stroke might pierce": a statement attributed by Suetonius to Caligula.

63: *That Womankind had but one rosy mouth, / To kiss them all at once from North to South:* as with the references to *hearts* at ll.62-3 and l.72 above, B.'s euphemism is clear. Whether he anticipates Gigantic satisfaction from the kiss, or whether he feels that it would be a quick way of getting the problem out of the way, is not clear.

64: *Briareus:* a monster, with a hundred hands and fifty heads; in Homer, Virgil and Dante. Evidence that B. had started writing Canto VI in January 1822 may be seen in the echo here in a letter to him from Moore of that month: *You are, single-handed, a match for the world, – which is saying a good deal, the world being, like Briareus, a very many-handed gentleman, – but, to be so, you must stand alone.* (*Letters*, ed. Dowden, II 502).

65: *Patagonian lands:* southern Chile and Argentina, said to be populated by giants; see the description of Catherine the Great's favourites at IX st.46.

66: *let us back to Lilliput:* land of diminutive people in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. B.'s reference directs irony against dull humanity.

29.

He went forth with the lovely Odaliskes,⁶⁷ 225
 At the given signal joined to their array;
 And though he certainly ran many risks,
 Yet he could not at times keep by the way
 (Although the consequences of such frisks
 Are worse than the worst damages men pay 230
 In moral England, where the thing's a tax)⁶⁸
 From ogling all their charms, from breasts to backs.⁶⁹

30.

Still he forgot not his disguise; along
 The Galleries from room to room they walked,
 A Virgin-like and edifying throng 235
 By eunuchs flanked, while at their head there stalked
 A Dame who kept up discipline among
 The female ranks, so that none stirred or talked,
 Without her sanction on their She-Parades –
 Her title was “the Mother of the Maids.”⁷⁰ – 240

67: *the lovely Odaliskes*: an *Oda* was a room in the Harem; an *Odaliq* (gallicised *Odaliskes*) a woman who lived there.

68: *the worst damages men pay / In moral England where the thing's a tax*: refers to damages for enticement; see above, I ll.509-12, or *Beppo*, ll.295-6.

69: On December 27 1830, Mary Shelley wrote to Edward John Trelawny, who was trying to get her assistance in publishing his *Adventures of a Younger Son: I am sure that yours will be a book interdicted to women. – Certain words & phrases, pardoned in the days of Fielding are now justly interdicted – & any gross piece of ill-taste will make your bookseller draw back – I have named all the objectionable passages, & I beseech you to let me deal with them as I would with Ld Byrons Don Juan – when I omitted all that hurt my taste – Without this yielding on your part I shall experience great difficulty in disposing of your work – (Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, II 120)*. Here is the first example of her taste being so hurt: she refuses to fair-copy l.232, and B. has to do it himself.

70: *Her title was “the Mother of the Maids”*: B. gets the title from Sir Paul Ryecaut's *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1668, p.39) where the title is transliterated as *Kadun Kahia*; on the next page Ryecaut's printer gives it as *Kadan Kahia*. Ryecaut says that the title means the woman ... *who is carefull to correct any immorality or light behaviour amongst them* [the odaliskes], *and instructs them in all the rules and orders of the court*. Baron de Tott (*Memoirs*, I 100) gives the title as *Kiaya Cadun*, and defines the role as *Intendante of the interior apartments of the Seraglio*. He is misquoted by E.H.Coleridge as writing at “I 72”; this reference is taken over by DJV and DJP (the latter quoting R.Halsband, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's editor) who transliterate it *Kiaya Kadum*; and the title ends up at CPW V 721 at *Kiaya Kadim*. For other details taken from Ryecaut, see above, V 1.704n, 1.1200n and ll.1221-2n.

31.

Whether she was a “Mother,” I know not
Or whether they were “Maids” who called her “Mother” –
But this is her Seraglio title, got
I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott;⁷¹ 245
Her Office was, to keep aloof or smother⁷²
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they blundered.

32.

A Goodly Sinecure no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men 250
Except his Majesty, who with her aid
And Guards – and bolts, and walls, and now and then
A slight example, just to keep a shade
Along the rest,⁷³ contrived to keep this den
Of beauties cool as an Italian Convent, 255
Where all the Passions have, alas! but one Vent.

33.

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless – how
Could you ask such a question? – but we will
Continue; As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries, at the will⁷⁴ 260
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
Like Water-Lilies floating down a Rill,⁷⁵
Or rather lake – for *rills* do *not* run *slowly* –
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.⁷⁶

71: *So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott:* Demetrius Cantemir, Hospodar of Moldavia, wrote (having reneged on his Turkish allegiance and defected to the Russians) *The History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire* (tr. 1734-5) a book which B. had known from boyhood (see CMP 3, 4 and 220). Baron de Tott's *Memoirs* (1785) are another book from which B. drew some of his local details. Of the two, only de Tott refers to “The Mother of the Maids” (see above, this canto, 240n).

72: *smother:* reminds us again of *Othello*.

73: *now and then / A slight example, just to keep a shade / Along the rest, contrived to keep this den / Of beauties cool:* another reference to the sack and the Bosphorus; see above, V ll.734-6n.

74: *will ... will:* presumably the fact that each word has a distinct grammatical function excuses the rhyming.

75: *Like Water-Lilies floating down a Rill:* rills often suggested dangerously sentimental images to B.; see above, IV l.117; or below, this canto, l.539.

76: *maiden-like and melancholy:* echoes Milton's *Il Penseroso*, l.62: *Most musicall, most melancholy!*

34.

But when they reached their own apartments, there 265
 Like birds, or boys, or Bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at Spring-tide, or Women anywhere
 When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all) or like Irish at a fair,
 Their guards being gone, and, as it were, a truce 270
Established between them and Bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile and play.

35.

Their talk of course ran most on the new Comer,
 Her shape, her hair, her air, her everything;
Some thought her dress did not so much become her, 275
 Or wondered at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh their Summer,
 Others contended they were but in Spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in height,
While others wished that She had been so quite. 280

36.

But no one doubted on the whole that She
 Was what her dress bespoke – a damsel fair –
And fresh – and “beautiful exceedingly”⁷⁷ –
 Who with the brightest Georgians might compare –
They wondered how Gulbeyaz too could be 285
 So silly as to buy Slaves who might share,
If that his Highness wearied of his bride,
Her throne and power – and every thing beside. –

⁷⁷: *a damsel fair – / And fresh – and “beautiful exceedingly”*: the inverted commas signal a quotation from Coleridge’s *Christabel*:

*I guess, ’twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she –
Beautiful exceedingly! (I, 66-8)*

As CPW points out, the comic sexual situation which follows parallels indirectly the unnatural events of Coleridge’s poem.

37.

But what was strangest in this Virgin crew –
 Although her beauty was enough to vex, 290
After the first investigating view –
 They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new
 Than is the Custom of the gentle Sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or Heathen, 295
In a new face “the ugliest creature breathing.”

38.

And yet they had their little jealousies
 Like all the rest, but upon this occasion
Whether there are such things as Sympathies,
 Without our knowledge or our approbation, 300
Although they could not see through his disguise,
 All felt a soft kind of Concatenation,⁷⁸
Like Magnetism, or Devilism, or what
You please; we will not quarrel about that.

39.

But certain 'tis they all felt for their new 305
 Companion something newer still, as 'twere
A Sentimental friendship through and through,
 Extremely pure, which made them all concur
In wishing her their Sister, save a few
 Who wished She had a brother just like her, 310
Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,⁷⁹
They would prefer to Padishah, or Pacha.⁸⁰

78: *a soft kind of Concatenation:* as *concatenation* means literally a linking together as by chains, it would have to be soft in this context.

79: *sweet Circassia:* as with *Georgians* (this canto, 1.284 above) female Circassians were famed for their beauty. See also above, IV 1.906.

80: *Padishah, or Pacha:* that is, either the Sultan or one of his provincial governors.

40.

Of those who had most Genius for this sort
 Of sentimental Friendship there were three –
 Lolah, Kattinka, and Dudù – in short⁸¹ 315
 (To save description) fair as fair can be
 Were they, according to the best report,
 Though differing in stature and degree,
 And clime, and time, and Country, and complexion;⁸²
 They all alike admired their new Connexion. 320

81: *Lolah, Kattinka, and Dudù:* the three Seraglio heroines are named after the Macri sisters, Mariana (nicknamed Dudù) Teresa (nicknamed Loula), Katinka, and their cousin Mariana Roque (also nicknamed Dudù – see above, II 1.1017n); four girls whom B. had known very well socially in Athens during his first tour of the Levant. Several poems sprang from his association with them, principally the erotic *Maid Of Athens*:

*By those tresses unconfin'd
 Woo'd by each Aegean wind;
 By those lids whose jetty fringe
 Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
 By those wild eyes like the roe,
 Ζωη μου, σας αγαπω.*

*By that lip I long to taste;
 By that zone-encircled waist;
 By all the token-flowers that tell
 What words can never speak so well;
 By Love's alternate joy and woe,
 Ζωη μου, σας αγαπω.*

As B. seems not to have enjoyed the carnal favours of any of the Athenian girls (Teresa was only twelve years old when he addressed the above poem to her) nostalgia and wish-fulfilment may be suspected at work in the description of their *Odalisque* name-sakes. The anonymous author of *Don Leon* (1830s, printed 1866) gives a convincing account of the Macri sisters: *Theresa, Catherine, and Marianne, / (For so their Christian appellations ran), / Had eyes like antelopes, with polished skins, / And that ingenuous modesty that wins / Men's admiration by no schooling taught, / And wields a sceptre that was never sought. / Much talk their beauty had in Athens made; / Like others I my court and homage paid; / For rich men find an access where they will. / In adoration at their beauty's shrine, / And if they yielding proved, to make them mine. / They proved but statues: rarely would their speech / Beyond a simple affirmation reach. / They never heard of Almack's, never knew / Whose play was damned, who made the last debut. / On Broadwood's keys, arranged in ivory row, / Their taper fingers never learned to go. / Bound in morocco, there no album lay / To register each poetaster's lay. / They read no page beyond the morning mass, / Spelt with the aid of some revered papas: / But, half reclined upon a low settee, / With naked feet, and waist from corset free, / Their joy was Mocha's beverage to sip / From small finjans of Chinese workmanship, / Or count their rosaries in listless ease, / Whilst dying swains were sighing at their knees. / Felt I their charms? I felt them not; for me, / They just sufficed to tune my poetry (633-68).*

82: *clime, and time, and Country, and complexion:* compare Iago's words at *Othello*, III iii, 233-4: *Not to affect many proposed matches / Of her own clime, complexion and degree ...*

41.

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Kattinka was a Georgian,⁸³ white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seemed made to tread
But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's form 325
Looked more adapted to be put to bed –
Being somewhat large, and languishing, and lazy –
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

42.

A kind of sleepy Venus seemed Dudù,
Yet very fit to "murder sleep" in those⁸⁴ 330
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose,⁸⁵
Few angles were there in her form, 'tis true,
Thinner she might have been and yet scarce lose,
Yet after all, 'twould puzzle to say where 335
It would not spoil some separate Charm, *to pare*.

43.

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your Spirit like a May Day breaking –
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking;⁸⁶ 340
She looked (this Similie's quite new) just cut
From Marble, like Pygmalion's Statue waking –
The Mortal and the Marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into life.

83: *Kattinka was a Georgian*: B. would have learned from William Tooke's *Life of Catharine II* (III 50n) that "Kattinka" (so spelt) was the diminutive favoured by Grigori Orloff when addressing Catherine the Great, during the intimate years of their relationship.

84: *fit to "murder sleep"*: a not very apt quotation from Macbeth's words in the Daggers Scene, II ii 36 and 42. His insomnia will be, he fears, a consequence of his blood-guiltiness, not his erotic fantasies.

85: *Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose*: a low but wide forehead such as ancient Greek female statues have, and a straight, severe nose of the kind seen in the statues of Phidias, the Athenian sculptor.

86: *a tender taking*: a state of agitation.

44.⁸⁷

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name. 345
 "Juanna." – Well – a pretty name enough –
 Kattinka asked her also whence she came.
 "From Spain" – "But where *is Spain?*" – "Don't ask such stuff,
 "Nor show your Georgian ignorance, for shame!"
 Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough 350
 To poor Kattinka; "Spain's an Island near
 "Marocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier."⁸⁸ –

45.

Dudù said nothing, but sate down beside
 Juanna, playing with her veil, or hair,
 And, looking at her steadfastly, she sighed 355
 As if she pitied her for being there,
 A pretty Stranger without friend or guide,⁸⁹
 And all abashed too at the General stare,
 Which welcomes hapless Strangers in all places,
 With kind remarks upon their mien and faces. 360

87: Compare, *With one accord the whole party rose up from their mattresses, and, gathering around the frightened Hamida, abused her for telling such falsehoods – she! a low bred, Tcherkassian, without faith, or manners – and that too of Georgians like them, who at home used every day to go to mass, and had as much victuals as ever they wished to eat! But Hamida's own mettle rose at the base insinuation, and facing her assailants boldly: "It signifies much truly," replied she in an ironical tone, "from what country we come, when none of us will ever see it again; and whether we had much or little of our religion, when we have all renounced it alike! And as to our fat – which is the most material point – that must be seen to be judged of."*

"Then let it," replied all the others in chorus; "and trust to us for seeing nothing!" and immediately they fell upon poor Hamida; forcibly tore open her feridgé, and displayed her bosom. It might not satisfy the utmost amplitude of Asiatic ideas, but I confess, though I looked hard, I perceived no deficiency (Hope's Anastasius I, 318-19).

88: *"Spain's an Island near / Marocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier:* the Macri sisters seem to have been quite as innocent as Lolah and Kattinka, and B.'s implication about their intellectual qualities is as faithful as the one he gives of their physical ones (see quotation from *Don Leon*, printed as note to st.40 above). In fact he took great delight in belittling all forms of female mental accomplishment, especially in Islam: compare *Beppo*, sts.70-80. He was very two-faced about the matter, for in a note to *The Bride of Abydos*, II 1.72, he concedes that ... *many of the Turkish girls are highly accomplished, though not actually qualified for a Christian coterie. Perhaps some of our own 'blues' might not be the worse for bleaching.* Baron de Tott (see above, VI 1.245) gives the following anecdote about Turkish geographical innocence: *A Venetian Ambassador, coming to Constantinople with two ships of war of the Republic, fell in with the Grand Signior's fleet in the Archipelago, which, in time of peace, makes an annual cruise, to collect the tribute from the Islands. The Turkish Admiral invites his Excellency on board, to entertain him, and in the course of conversation, asks him if the dominions of the Republic were in the neighbourhood of Russia? Out of patience at this ignorance, the noble Venetian replies, "Yes; – there is nothing but the Ottoman Empire between them!" (Memoirs, 1885, II 16n).*

89: *A pretty Stranger without friend or guide:* Dudù's sympathy recalls the mixed Christian charity and erotic yearning with which Haidee first greeted the discovery of Juan, "... a Stranger", *dying, with so white a Skin*. See above, II ll.1031-2 and n. Dudù's act in playing with "Juanna's" hair may be a semi-conscious echo of the Willow scene between Emilia and Desdemona in *Othello*, IV iii.

46.

But here the Mother of the Maids drew near
 With, "Ladies, it is time to go to rest. –
 "I'm puzzled what to do with *you*, my dear,"
 She added to Juanna – their new Guest;
 "Your Coming has been unexpected here, 365
 "And every couch is occupied; you'd best
 "Partake of mine – but by tomorrow early
 "We will have all things settled for you fairly."

47.

Here Lolah interposed, "Mamma, you know
 "You don't sleep soundly; and I cannot bear 370
 "That any body should disturb you so.
 "I'll take Juanna; we're a slenderer pair
 "Than you would make the half of: – don't say No,
 "And I of your young charge will take due care:"
 But here Kattinka interfered, and said, 375
 "She also had compassion – and a bed."⁹⁰ –

48.

"Besides, I hate to sleep alone," quoth She;
 The Matron frowned; "Why so?" – "For fear of Ghosts,"
 Replied Kattinka – "I am sure I see
 "A phantom upon each of the four posts – –" 380
 "And then I have the worst dreams that can ever be –
 "Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Gouls in hosts;"⁹¹
 The Dame replied, "Between your dreams and you
 "I fear Juanna's dreams will be but few."

90: *She also had compassion – and a bed:* CPW points out the echo here of the ambiguous words of the heroine to Geraldine at Coleridge's *Christabel*, lines 120-2:

... we will move as if in stealth,
 And I beseech you in courtesy,
 This night, to share your couch with me.

She actually means, "Share my couch with me," but makes it sound as if Geraldine is doing her a favour – proof perhaps of the hypnotic power of the ghoulish woman is wielding over her. "Juanna" is in this analysis the *Ginn* of whom Kattinka is frightened.

91: *Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Gouls in hosts:* different varieties of spook. A Guebre is a fire-worshipping Zoroastrian (spelt "ghebers" in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, Part III); a Giaour is any Christian, viewed from a Moslem viewpoint; Ginns (or Jinns) are a species of Moslem devil or incubus; and Gouls (Ghouls) are, in Islamic superstition, demonic ghosts who prey on dead bodies. Kattinka is obviously overdoing it, with a view to getting Juanna as her bed-mate. How Juanna would protect her from the demons, she does not explain. Demetrius Cantemir (V l.1175 and VI l.245) writes thus of the *Jin*: *among the Turks, is the name of certain Devils, formed of a grosser substance than Shaitan (Satan,) which they believe to be male and female, and to beget children like men. – Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire, 374-5n.*

49.

“You, Lolah, must continue still to lie⁹² 385
 “Alone, for reasons which don’t matter; you
 “The same, Kattinka, until bye and bye;
 “And I shall place Juanna by Dudù,
 “Who’s quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
 “And will not toss and chatter the night through – 390
 “What say you Child?” – Dudù said nothing, as
 Her talents were of the more silent class;

50.

But she rose up, and kissed the Matron’s brow
 Between the eyes, and Lolah on both cheeks;
 Kattinka too, and with a gentle bow 395
 (Curtseys are neither used by Turks nor Greeks)
 She took Juanna by the hand, to show
 Their place of rest, and left both to their piques –
 The others pouting at the Matron’s preference
 Of Dudù, though they held their tongues from deference. 400

51.

It was a spacious Chamber (*Oda* is
 The Turkish title)⁹³ and ranged round the wall
 Were Couches, toilets, and much more than this
 I might describe – as I have seen it all⁹⁴ –
 But it suffices; little was amiss; 405
 ’Twas on the whole a nobly furnished Hall,
 With all things ladies want, save one or two –
 And even those were nearer than they knew.⁹⁵

92: ... *continue still to lie*: echoes Shakespeare, *Othello*, and Sonnet 138: see above, this canto, l.150n.

93: (*Oda is / The Turkish title*): see above, this canto, l.225n.

94: *much more than this / I might describe – as I have seen it all*: bluff. B. had got no nearer the Harem than the throne-room of Sultan Mahmoud II, and even there his right arm was restrained throughout the interview by a white eunuch (see Hobhouse’s *Travels through Albania*, pp.998-1001). For one of only two recorded accounts of the Harem’s interior by Franks, see the passage from Aubrey de la Mottraye, quoted above, V, ll.738-41n. See also below, this canto, ll.529-30n.

95: ... *save one or two – / And even those were nearer than they knew*: rare example of a truly rude joke in the epic.

52.⁹⁶

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet Creature;
 Not very dashing, but extremely winning, 410
 With the most regulated charm of feature
 Which painters cannot catch like faces sinning
 Against proportion – the wild strokes of Nature,
 Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
 Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike, 415
 And, pleasing or unpleasing, still are like. –

53.⁹⁷

But She was a soft Landscape of mild Earth,
 Where all was harmony, and calm and quiet,
 Luxuriant, budding; Cheerful without mirth,
 Which, if not happiness, is much more nigh it 420
 Than are your mighty passions, and so forth,
 Which some call “the Sublime;”⁹⁸ I wish they’d try it;
 I’ve seen your stormy Seas, and Stormy Women,
 And pity lovers rather more than Seamen.⁹⁹

54.

But she was pensive more than melancholy, 425
 And serious more than pensive, and serene,
 It may be, more than either – not unholy
 Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to have been;
 The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was wholly
 Unconscious, albeit turned of quick Seventeen, 430
 That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
 She never thought about herself at all.

96: The last three-and-a-half lines relate clumsily to the syntax of the previous four-and-a-half; *strokes* (l.413) is in apposition to *faces* (l.412). The gist of the statement is, that Dudù’s looks are too subdued and softly-proportioned to be captured by painters, who excel more in depicting the features of wild and irregular beauty. For comments relevant here on the visual arts, see *Beppo* sts.11-15, *TVOJ* st.29, or above, II sts.118-19.

97: One would like to know which of his Athenian girlfriends, Mariana Macri or Mariana Roque (both nicknamed Dudu: see above, this canto l.315n) B. is describing. Dudù is a midway between the sensual but innocent Haidee and the contemplative Aurora Raby (see below, XV sts.45-7).

98: *your mighty passions, and so forth, / Which some call “the Sublime:* CPW, rephrasing DJP, claims an echo of Burke’s *Essay on the Sublime* (1756) a work to which B. never refers; neither mention Longinus, whose tenth chapter is quoted by B. (and pedantically corrected by Hobhouse in proof) at I l.333 above. The Greek critic writes in his eighth chapter of “the stimulus of powerful and inspired emotions” as being the second source of Sublimity.

99: *Seamen:* as CPW concedes, “probably a pun”.

55.

And therefore was She kind, and gentle as
 The Age of Gold (when Gold was yet unknown,
 By which its Nomenclature came to pass; 435
 Thus most appropriately has been shown
 “Lucus a *non* Lucendo;”¹⁰⁰ *not* what *was*
 But what *was not*, a sort of Style that’s grown
 Extremely Common in this Age, whose Metal
 The Devil may decompose but never settle; 440

56.

I think it may be of “Corinthian brass” –
 Which was a Mixture of all Metals – but
 The Brazen uppermost.) Kind reader! pass
 This long parenthesis (I could not shut
 It sooner for the Soul of me) and class¹⁰¹ 445
 My faults even with your own, which meaneth – put
 A kind construction upon them and me –
 But *that* you won’t – – then don’t – *I’m* not less free.

100: *Thus most appropriately has been shown* / “*Lucus a non Lucendo;*” *not what was* / *But what was not*: the almost incomprehensible core of a complex political and classical joke. *Lucus* means “a grove”; *lucendo* means “admitting light”. Groves do not admit light; but the noun *lucus* does not derive from the participle *lucendo*, still less from its negation, *non lucendo*. The phrase is thus an example of gross misderivation. B. may or may not be aware that he is quoting the Roman rhetorician Quintilian (*Institutio Oratoria*, I, 6, 34); he is more likely to be remembering a line from Charles Churchill’s *The Ghost: As by the way of Innuendo* / *Lucus is made a non lucendo*; or one from W.S.Rose’s *Court and Parliament of Beasts*, VI, I, 3-4: *’Tis in the ground of Lucus non Lucendo / I dedicate this flight at fools to you*. Dudù’s beauty and grace recall the Golden Age (classical civilisation’s Eden) but as Gold is a primary cause of sin, it is unlikely to have been very important in the Golden Age, which phrase is thus another example of misderivation. B. derives from this the thought that we often apply, hypocritically, words which do not go well with the subject of our conversation. This thought leads in turn to the question, which metal *does* best represent the age for which *Don Juan* is written? He concludes (next stanza, 441): *I think it may be of “Corinthian brass”*: but this was a mixture of gold, silver and copper. As E.H. Coleridge comments, the title of B.’s later contemporary satire *The Age of Bronze* is an answer to the question here raised.

101: *Kind reader! pass* / *This long parenthesis (I could not shut / It sooner for the Soul of me)*: see Commentary opposite: B. returns (briefly) to the *Lucus a non lucendo* idea below, at XI, 20, 2, when meditating on the deceptive nature of London place-names.

57.

'Tis time we should revert to plain narration,
 And thus my narrative proceeds: Dudù – 450
 With every kindness short of Ostentation –
 Shewed Juan, or Juanna, through and through
 This labyrinth of females, and each station
 Described – what's strange – in words extremely few;
 I have but one Similie (and *that's* a blunder) 455
 For wordless Woman, which is *silent* Thunder.

58.

And next She gave her (I say *her*, because
 The Gender still was Epicene, at least
 In outward show, which is a saving clause)
 An Outline of the Customs of the East, 460
 With all their chaste integrity of laws,
 By which the More a Haram is increased,
 The stricter doubtless grew the Vestal-duties
 Of any supernumerary beauties.¹⁰² –

59.

And then she gave Juanna a Chaste kiss – 465
 Dudù was fond of kissing – which I'm sure
 That Nobody can ever take amiss –
 Because 'tis pleasant, so that it be pure,
 And between females means no more than this,
 That they have nothing better near, or newer;¹⁰³ 470
 "Kiss" rhymes to "*bliss*," in fact as well as verse –
 I wish it never led to something worse. –

102: *The stricter doubtless grew the Vestal-duties / Of any supernumerary beauties:* implies Dudù's sexual inexperience and frustration.

103: *And between females means no more than this, / That they have nothing better near, or newer:* with perhaps a further glance at the seemingly unnatural "seduction" in *Christabel*, Part I (see above, this canto, ll.282-3n and 376n).

60.

In perfect Innocence She then unmade
Her Toilet, Which cost little, for she was
A Child of Nature – carelessly arrayed;¹⁰⁴ 475
If fond of a Chance Ogle at her glass,
'Twas like the Fawn which in the lake displayed
Beholds her own shy shadowy Image pass,
When first She starts, and then returns, to peep
Admiring this new Native of the Deep. – 480

61.

And one by one her articles of dress
Were laid aside, but not before she offered
Her aid to fair Juanna – whose excess
Of Modesty declined the assistance proffered –
Which past well off, as she could do no less – 485
Though by this politesse she rather suffered,
Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins
Which surely were invented for our Sins,

62.

Making a woman like a Porcupine,
Not to be rashly touched, but still more dread; 490
Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 'twas mine,
In early youth to turn a Lady's maid!
I did my very boyish best to shine
In pricking her out for a Masquerade;
The pins were placed sufficiently, but not 495
Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

63.

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
And I love Wisdom more than She loves me;
My tendency is to philosophize
On most things from a tyrant to a tree, 500
But still the spouseless Virgin *Knowledge* flies;
What are we? – and whence came We? – what shall be
Our *ultimate* existence? what's our *present*?
Are questions answerless, and yet incessant. –

104: *for she was / A Child of Nature*: echoes the description of Haidee above at I l.1609. Compare the way in which the description of Gulbeyaz above, V, ll.862-4n) does the same.

64.

There was deep Silence in the Chamber; dim 505
And distant from each other burnt the lights,
And Slumber hovered o'er each lovely limb
Of the fair Occupants; if there be Sprites
They should have walked there in their Spriteliest trim,
By way of change from their sepulchral sites, 510
And shown Themselves as Ghosts of better taste
Than haunting some old Ruin, or wild Waste.

65.¹⁰⁵

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and clime, and root,
In some Exotic Garden sometimes found, 515
With cost, and care, and warmth, induced to shoot;
One with her Auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping, as the fruit
Nods from the tree, was slumbering with soft breath,
And lips apart, which showed the pearls beneath. 520

66.

One with her flushed cheek laid on her white arm,
And raven ringlets gathered in dark Crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm,
And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
The Moon breaks; half unveiled each further charm, 525
As slightly stirring in her snowy shroud
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of Night,
All bashfully to straggle into light:

105: The description of the sleeping harem occupants in sts.65 to 69 has been analysed as voyeuristic (see Jerome McGann, *My Brain is Feminine*, in *Byron Augustan and Romantic*, p.48) and masculine-proprietary (see Caroline Franklin, *Byron's Heroines*, p.152). Both analyses seem to ignore the way each of the five women is carefully individualised and contextualised within her unnatural environment. See also note to l.545 below.

67.

This is no Bull, although it sounds so, for
 'Twas Night, but there were lamps, as hath been said;¹⁰⁶530
A Third's all pallid Aspect offered more
 The traits of sleeping Sorrow, and betrayed
Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore,
 Beloved, and deplored; while slowly strayed
(As Night-dew on a Cypress glittering tinges 535
The black bough) teardrops through her eyes' dark fringes.

68.

A fourth, as Marble, Statue-like and Still,
 Lay in a breathless, hushed and stony sleep,
White, cold, and pure as looks a frozen rill,¹⁰⁷
 Or the snow Minaret on an Alpine Steep, 540
Or Lot's wife done in Salt,¹⁰⁸ or – what you will –
 My Similies are gathered in a heap,
So pick and chuse – – perhaps you'll be content
With a carved Lady on a Monument. – –

106: *This is no Bull, although it sounds so, for / 'Twas Night, but there were lamps, as hath been said:* *This is no Bull* would deny that there is a contradiction between *night* and *light*, the two previous rhyme-words. B., however, never having been in a harem, cannot know whether the bedchambers were kept permanently illuminated or not: he protests too much. Compare above, this canto, ll.403-4n.

107: *a frozen rill:* see above, IV l.117 and V l.262n.

108: *Lot's wife done in Salt, or – what you will:* nostalgic for sin, Lot's wife was unable not to look back upon the destruction of Sodom, and was changed by the Lord into a pillar of salt – see *Genesis* 19, 26. The inaptness of using her as an image of purity makes B. give up his attempted simile-accumulation.

69.

And Lo! – a fifth appears!¹⁰⁹ And what was She? 545
 A Lady of “a certain age” – which means
 Certainly aged – what her years might be¹¹⁰
 I know not, never counting past their teens,
 But there she slept, not quite so fair to see
 As ere that awful period intervenes 550
 Which lays both men and women on the Shelf,
 To meditate upon their sins and self.

70.

But all this time, how slept, or dreamed, Dudù?
 With strict enquiring I could ne'er discover,
 And scorn to add a syllable untrue; 555
 But ere the Middle Watch was hardly over¹¹¹ –
 Just when the fading lamps waned dim and blue –
 And Phantoms hovered – or might seem to hover
 To those who like their company – about
 The Apartment, on a sudden she screamed out; 560

109: *And Lo! – a fifth appears:* echoes Macbeth's despairing cries in the Cauldron Scene, as Banquo's issue warn him of his limitation (see IV i 119: *And yet the eighth appears*). An interesting usage in the context of a sequence of women.

110: *A Lady of “a certain age” – which means / Certainly aged:* contradicts *Beppo*, st.22:

*She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
 Which certain people call a “certain Age”
 Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
 Because I never heard, nor could engage
 A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
 To name, define by speech, or write on page,
 The period meant precisely by that word,
 Which surely is exceedingly absurd. –*

In the 1817 poem B. mocks the phrase by facetiously bleeding it of meaning; here, he defines it brutally.

111: *the Middle Watch:* military or naval term referring to the time between midnight and four o'clock. May echo *Hamlet*, I ii 198: *In the dead waste and middle of the night:* if so, another spooky Shakespearean allusion, emphasising again the nightmare that a succession of beautiful women constitute (in one masculine perspective). The reading is reinforced by ll.558-9: *And Phantoms hovered – or might seem to hover / To those who like their company.*

71.

And that so loudly, that upstarted all
The Oda in a general commotion –
Matron, and Maids, and those whom you may call
Neither, came crowding like the Waves of Ocean,
One on the other throughout the whole Hall – 565
All trembling, wondering, without the least notion,
More than I have myself, of what could make
The calm Dudù so turbulently wake. –

72.

But wide awake she was; and round her bed
With floating draperies, and with flying hair,¹¹² 570
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
And Bosoms, arms, and ancles, glancing bare,
And bright as any Meteor ever bred
By the North Pole,¹¹³ they sought her cause of care,
For she seemed agitated, flushed, and frightened– 575
Her eye dilated, and her colour heightened. –

73.

But what is strange, and a strong proof how great
A Blessing is sound Sleep,¹¹⁴ Juanna lay
As fast as ever husband by his Mate
In holy matrimony snores away; 580
Not all the Clamour broke her happy state
Of Slumber, till they shook her, so they say –
At least, and then she too unclosed her eyes,
And yawned a good deal with discreet surprize. –

112: *With floating draperies, and with flying hair:* recalls the ecstasy of the poet in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, ll.49-50: *Beware! Beware! / His flashing eyes, his floating hair!*

113: *... bright as any Meteor ever bred / By the North Pole:* both DJP and CPW aver that in B.'s day meteors were regarded as emanating from the same source as the Aurora Borealis. The sexual arousal of the previously placid Dudù – well conveyed by the swift movement and hurried participles of B.'s verse – is in this context a central factor to the entire poem: see below, VII 1.11.

114: *how great / A Blessing is sound Sleep:* recalls *Macbeth*, II ii 36-40.

74.

And now commenced a strict investigation, 585
 Which, as all spoke at once, and more than once,
 Conjecturing, wondering – – asking a narration – –
 Alike Might puzzle either Wit or dunce
 To answer in a very clear oration;
 Dudù had never passed for wanting sense, 590
 But being “no Orator as Brutus is,”¹¹⁵
 Could not at first expound what was amiss. –

75.¹¹⁶

At length she said that, in a slumber sound,
 She dreamed a dream – of walking in a wood –
 A “wood obscure,” like that where Dante found 595
 Himself in at the age when all grow good;
 Life’s half-way house, where dames with virtue crowned
 Run much less risk of lovers turning rude;
 And that this wood was full of pleasant fruits,
 And trees of Goodly Growth, and spreading roots. – 600

115: being “no Orator as Brutus is: building on *oration* in l.589, the phrase recalls Mark Antony’s *faux-naïf* words to the mob over Caesar’s body at *Julius Caesar*, III ii 216: for *orator* read *liar*.

116: The predecessors to the dream of Dudù are many, and are mostly associated with transgression. The “wood obscure” of l.595 is an immediate echo of the opening lines of Dante’s *Divina Commedia*:

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita

Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura

Che la diritta vita era smarrita.

[*In the middle of the journey of life I found myself within an obscure wood, in which the straight way had been lost.*]

76.

And in the midst a Golden apple¹¹⁷ grew –
 A most prodigious pippin – but it hung
 Rather too high and distant; that she threw
 Her glances on it, and then, longing, flung
 Stones, and whatever she could pick up, to 605
 Bring down the fruit, which still perversely clung
 To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
 But always at a most provoking height.

77.

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
 It fell down of its own accord, before 610
 Her feet; that her first movement was to stoop
 And pick it up, and bite it to the core;
 That – just as her young lip began to ope
 Upon the Golden fruit the Vision bore,
 A Bee flew out and stung her to the heart, 615
 And so – she woke with a great scream and start.

117: The *Golden Apple* at l.601 recalls simultaneously the fruit in the Eden (see *Genesis* 3, 6-7, or *Paradise Lost*, IX 575-7) and the golden apples of the Hesperides, gathered by Hercules for his Twelfth Labour (see above, III 1.945 and notes, for a further echo). But Dudù's impatience to get at the fruit recalls the wife's feelings beneath the pear-tree in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* – modernised by Pope as *January and May* (see above, I sts.172-3, marginal argument in proof):

*The longing Dame look'd up, and spy'd her Love
 Full fairly perch'd among the Boughs above.
 She stopp'd and sighing, Oh good Gods, she cry'd,
 What Pangs, what sudden Shoots distend my Side?
 O for that tempting Fruit, so fresh, so green;
 Help, for the Love of Heav'ns' Immortal Queen!*

78.

All this she told with some confusion and
 Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
 Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
 To expound their vain and visionary gleams;¹¹⁸ 620
 I've known some odd ones which seem really planned
 Prophetically, or that which one deems
 "A Strange coincidence", to use a phrase
 By which such things are settled now a days.¹¹⁹ –

79.

The Damsels, who had thought of some great harm, 625
 Began, as is the consequence of fear,
 To scold a little at the false alarm
 That broke for nothing on their sleeping ear;
 The Matron, too, was wroth to leave her warm
 Bed for the dream she had been obliged to hear, 630
 And chafed at poor Dudù, who only sighed,
 And said, that She was sorry she had cried. –

80.

"I've heard of Stories of a Cock and Bull,¹²⁰
 "But visions of An Apple and a Bee
 "To take us from our natural rest, and pull 635
 "The whole Oda from their beds at half past three
 "Would make one think the Moon is at the full¹²¹ –
 "You surely are unwell child! we must see
 "Tomorrow what his Highness's physician
 "Will say to this hysteric of a vision. – 640

118: *their vain and visionary gleams*: with perhaps, as CPW suggests, a glance at Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*, ll.56-7: *Whither is fled the visionary gleam? / Where is it now, the glory and the dream?*

119: "A Strange coincidence", to use a phrase / By which such things are settled now a days: John Wright in his 1832 notes quotes one of Queen Caroline's defenders, at her "trial" for adultery in 1821, saying that ... some of the most puzzling passages in the history of her intercourse with Bergami amounted to "odd instances of strange coincidence". Bartolomeo Bergami was her chamberlain, formerly a courier: see B.'s cruel joke about Semiramis above at V st.61.

120: *Stories of a Cock and Bull*: the most famous use of this phrase (implying blatant nonsense in a narrative) is the summatory final sentence of Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (IX 33): "L—d! said my mother, what is all this story about? – A COCK and a BULL, said Yorick – And one of the best of its kind, I ever heard."

121: ... *make one think the Moon is at the full*: compare Donna Julia to Don Alfonso at I l.1196 above: *I wonder in what quarter now the Moon is.*

81.

“And poor Juanna too! the child’s first night
“Within these walls, to be broken in upon
“With such a clamour; I had thought it right
“That the young stranger should not lie alone,
“And as the quietest of all, she might 645
“With you, Dudù, a good night’s rest have known;
“But now I must transfer her to the charge
“Of Lolah – though her couch is not so large.

82.

Lolah’s eyes sparkled at the proposition,¹²²
But poor Dudù, with large drops in her own, 650
Resulting from the scolding or the vision,
Implored that present pardon might be shown
For this first fault, and that on no condition
(She added in a soft and piteous tone)
Juanna should be taken from her, and 655
Her future dreams should all be kept in hand.¹²³ –

83.

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now;
She wondered at herself how she could scream –
’Twas foolish, nervous as she must allow – 660
A fond hallucination, and a theme
For laughter – but she felt her Spirits low,
And begged they would excuse her; she’d get over
This weakness in a few hours, and recover.¹²⁴ –

122: *Lolah’s eyes sparkled at the proposition:* whether because she welcomes Juanna as female company or as male is not clear.

123: *Her future dreams should all be kept in hand:* as CPW comments, *an obscene word-play.*

124: ... *she’d get over / This weakness in a few hours, and recover:* an optimistic calculation of the time she has *in hand* (1.656 above).

84.

And here Juanna kindly interposed, 665
 And said she felt herself extremely well
 Where she then was, as her sound sleep disclosed,
 When all around rang like a tocsin bell;¹²⁵
 She did not find herself the least disposed
 To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell 670
 Apart from one who had no sin to show
 Save that of dreaming once “Mal à propos.”

85.

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turned round,
 And hid her face within Juanna’s breast;
 Her neck alone was seen, but that was found 675
 The colour of a budding rose’s Crest;
 I can’t tell why she blushed, 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.¹²⁶ 680

86.

And so Good night to them – or if you will
 Good morrow – for the Cock hath crown,¹²⁷ and light
 Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
 And the Mosque crescent struggled into sight
 Of the long Caravan,¹²⁸ which in the chill 685
 Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each height
 That stretches to the stoney belt which Girds
 Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.¹²⁹

125: *like a tocsin bell:* though *Turkey contains no bells* (above, V 1.393) Juanna, as a Spaniard, may be allowed knowledge of them; but few others present would understand the simile. There is perhaps an ironic reference to the bell which awakens Desdemona in *Othello*, II iii.

126: *the facts I state / Are true as truth has ever been of late:* implies B.’s times to be addicted to untruth.

127: *the Cock hath crown:* rare Northern past participle, an alternative to *crowed*.

128: *the long Caravan:* compare *the helpless Caravan* above, at IV 1.439.

129: *the stoney belt which Girds / Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds:* Kaff is Mount Caucasus, said in Eastern myth to gird not just Asia but the whole earth (see Beckford’s *Vathek*, note to *horrible Kaf* (ed. Lonsdale, p.137). At the end of *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers* (1017-22) B. had written *Yet once again adieu! ere this the sail / That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale; / And Afric’s coast and Calpe’s adverse height, / And Stamboul’s minarets must greet my sight: / Thence shall I stray through beauty’s native clime, / Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crowned with snows sublime*. The Kurds, then as now, inhabited eastern Turkey and western Persia, south of the Caucasus.

87.

With the first ray, or rather Grey, of Morn
 Gulbeyaz rose, from restlessness, and pale 690
 As Passion rises with its bosom worn,
 Arrayed herself with mantle, Gem, and veil;
 The Nightingale, that sings with the deep thorn
 Which fable places in her breast of Wail,¹³⁰
 Is lighter far of heart and voice than those 695
 Whose headlong Passions form their proper woes.¹³¹

88.

And that's the Moral of this composition –
 If people would but see it's real drift –
 But *that* they will not do without suspicion –
 Because all gentle readers have the gift 700
 Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of Vision,¹³²
 While Gentle writers also love to lift
 Their voices 'gainst each other, which is natural –
 The numbers are too great for them to flatter all. –

89.

Rose The Sultana from a bed of Splendour, 705
 Softer than the soft Sybarite's,¹³³ who cried
 Aloud because his feelings were too tender
 To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side¹³⁴ –
 So beautiful that Art could little mend her,¹³⁵
 Though pale with conflicts between love and pride – 710
 So agitated was she with her error
 She did not even look into the mirror. –

130: *The Nightingale, that sings with the deep thorn / Which fable places in her breast of Wail:* the Nightingale was said to have been in love with the Rose, and thus to have received a thorn in her heart. This legend may have come to Europe from the Persian poet Hafiz, via the Troubadors (DJP). Its Occidental origin lies in Ovid's tale of Procne and Philomela (*Metamorphoses* VI: CPW) although no thorn is mentioned by the Latin poet.

131: *those / Whose headlong Passions form their proper woes:* CPW interprets this as a self-reference by pointing to the echo of ll.23 and 24 of the *Epistle to Augusta*:

*I have been cunning in mine overthrow
 The careful pilot of my proper woe.*

132: *all gentle readers have the gift / Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of Vision:* compare *TVOJ*, last Stanza: ... *the telescope is gone / Which kept my optics free from all delusion ...*

133: *Softer than the soft Sybarite's:* Sybarites came originally from Sybaris, a town celebrated for its luxurious living. See above, III l.493 and n.

134: *his feelings were too tender / To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side:* Myndirides, who was indeed of Sybaris, complained that the crumpled rose-leaves on which he was lying gave him discomfort. The reference is from Seneca, *Moral Essays*, II 25.

135: *So beautiful that Art could little mend her:* not for the first time (above, V ll.862-4n and 886-8n) Gulbeyaz recalls Haidee. For this echo, see above, III sts.75-6.

90.

Also arose about the self same time,
 Perhaps a little later, her great Lord –
 Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime, 715
 And of a wife by whom he was abhorred –
 A thing of much less import in that clime,
 At least to those of incomes which afford
 The filling up their whole connubial cargo
 Than where two wives are under an embargo.¹³⁶ 720

91.

He did not think much on the matter, nor
 Indeed on any other;¹³⁷ as a Man
 He liked to have a handsome paramour
 At hand, as one may like to have a fan,
 And therefore of Circassians¹³⁸ had good store 725
 As an amusement after the Divan¹³⁹ –
 Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
 Had made him lately bask in his bride's beauty.

92.

And now he rose, and after due ablutions
 Exacted by the customs of the East, 730
 And prayers, and other pious evolutions,
 He drank six cups of Coffee at the least,¹⁴⁰
 And then withdrew to hear about the Russians,
 Whose victories had recently increased,¹⁴¹
 In Catherine's reign, whom Glory yet adores 735
 As Greatest of all Sovereigns and Whores.¹⁴² –

136: *where two wives are under an embargo:* George IV was bigamously married, to Queen Caroline and to Mrs Fitzherbert. The *cargo ... embargo* rhyme recalls II ll.527-8.

137: *He did not think much on the matter, nor / Indeed on any other:* for the poem's wilful traduction of the character of Selim III, see above, V ll.1171-2 and n.

138: *Circassians:* see above, IV l.906. Circassians of both sexes were valued for their fair hair and great beauty.

139: *after the Divan:* after the affairs of State were ended. The Divan was the Ottoman throne.

140: *six cups of Coffee at the least:* see above, III st.63 and n.

141: *the Russians, / Whose victories had recently increased:* for only the second time in the poem (see above, V ll.119-20) B. gives his plot a specific historical context. Catherine the Great (see next note) had her son christened Constantine with a view to placing him one day on the newly-to-be-Christianized throne of Constantinople. Russian foreign policy throughout the eighteenth century was aimed at southwards expansion – into the Ukraine and Crimea, especially – in order to create Black Sea ports and to conquer the Turkish Empire. Juan soon finds himself embroiled as actor in this international drama, by his participation in the Siege of Ismail in Cantos VII and VIII, and by becoming Catherine the Great's newest lover in Canto IX.

142: *Catherine ... whom Glory yet adores / As Greatest of all Sovereigns and Whores:* just as we begin to say goodbye to Gulbeyaz, B. introduces her successor in his poetic line of heroines.

93.

But oh thou grand legitimate Alexander!¹⁴³
 Her Son's Son; let not this last phrase offend
 Thine ear, if it should reach; and now rhymes wander
 Almost as far as Petersburgh,¹⁴⁴ and lend 740
 A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
 Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which blend
 Their roar even with the Baltic's; so you be
 Your father's son, 'tis quite enough for me. –

94.

To call men love-begotten, or proclaim 745
 Their mothers as the Antipodes of Timon,
 That Hater of Mankind,¹⁴⁵ would be a shame,
 A libel, or whate'er you please to rhyme on,
 But people's Ancestors are History's game,
 And if one lady's slip could leave a crime on 750
 All Generations – I should like to know
 What pedigree the best would have to show.¹⁴⁶ –

143: *thou grand legitimate Alexander:* Alexander I (1777-1825) is the Tzar of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. He succeeded on the assassination of his unpopular father Paul, and was, on the defeat of Napoleon, principal architect of that Holy Alliance which B. mocks above at I.1.1681 – with Madame Krüdner as his spiritual assistant (see above, prose preface to I, n7). “Legitimacy” – that is, power established by primogeniture and precedent – was one of the cant words favoured by the Alliance and its supporters. See BLJ IV 323 for Castlereagh on *the lawfulness of legitimacy*. There is no doubt as to Alexander's personal legitimacy: but, his grandfather, Peter III, being either impotent, sterile or just uninterested (he too was assassinated) Tzar Paul's father had been Catherine's earliest lover, Sergei Saltykov. For more Byronic thoughts about Alexander, see *The Age of Bronze, X*:

*Resplendent Sight! behold the Coxcomb Czar,
 The Autocrat of Waltzes and of War!
 As eager for a plaudit as a realm,
 And just as fit for flirting as the helm;
 A Calmuck Beauty with a Cossack wit,
 And generous Spirit, when 'tis not frost-bit;
 Now half dissolving to a liberal thaw,
 But hardened back whene'er the morning's raw;
 With no objection to true Liberty,
 Except that it would make the Nations free.*

144: *now rhymes wander / Almost as far as Petersburgh:* B.'s earlier poetry – inoffensive politically – was already well-known in Russia: Pushkin's *A Prisoner in the Caucasus* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* are written under its influence. However, the John Murray 1849 *Handbook for Northern Europe* (Volume II, *Finland and Russia*) warns the traveller to Russia that *If a stranger should have any objectionable work with him, for instance, Byron's Don Juan, it will be retained.*

145: *Timon, / That Hater of Mankind:* Timon of Athens, a byword for misanthropy. See Shakespeare's play.

146: *I should like to know / What pedigree the best would have to show:* the second Sir John Byron – who succeeded to Newstead Abbey in 1576 – was illegitimate.

95.

Had Catherine and the Sultan understood
 Their own true interests, which kings rarely know
 Until 'tis taught by lessons rather rude, 755
 There was one way to end their strife, although
 Perhaps precarious, had they but thought good,
 Without the aid of Prince or Plenipo:¹⁴⁷
 She to dismiss her Guards, and He his Haram,¹⁴⁸
 And for their other matters, meet and share 'em. – 760

96.

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
 His daily council upon ways and means –
 How to encounter with this Martial Scold,
 This modern Amazon, and Queen of Queans¹⁴⁹ –
 And the perplexity could not be told 765
 Of all the pillars of the State, which leans
 Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
 Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

97.

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her King was gone,
 Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place 770
 For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
 And rich with all contrivances which grace
 Those gay recesses; many a precious stone
 Sparkled along its roof, and many a Vase
 Of Porcelain held in the fettered flowers, 775
 Those captive soothers of a Captive's hours.¹⁵⁰

147: *Plenipo*: a plenipotentiary ambassador.

148: *She to dismiss her Guards, and He his Haram*: implies that both bodies had the same function relative to the sovereign.

149: *Quean of Queans*: supreme trollop.

150: *Those captive soothers of a Captive's hours*: implies very clearly what we might have seen from early on in Canto V: namely, that Gulbeyaz is as much a captive as Juan. Catherine the Great, just introduced for the first time, is her antithesis in this respect, and a fantasy-projection of her desires (see above, V 1.1008 and n).

98.

Mother of Pearl, and Porphyry and marble
Vied with each other on this costly spot,
And singing birds without were heard to warble,
And the stained Glass which lighted this fair grot 780
Varied each ray – – but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not¹⁵¹
Be too minute, an outline is the best;
A lively reader's fancy does the rest. –

99.

And here she summoned Baba, and required 785
Don Juan at his hands, and information
Of what had past since all the Slaves retired,
And whether he had occupied their station,
If matters had been managed as desired,
And his disguise with due consideration 790
Kept up, and above all the where and how
He had past the night, were what she wished to know.

100.

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
To this long catechism of questions asked
More easily than answered, that he had tried 795
His best to obey in what he had been tasked,
But there seemed something that he wished to hide,
Which hesitation more betrayed, than masqued;
He scratched his Ear, the infallible resource
To which embarrassed people have recourse. 800

101.

Gulbeyaz was no Model of true patience,
Nor much disposed to wait in word or deed;
She liked quick answers in all conversations,
And when she saw him stumbling like a Steed
In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh ones, 805
And as his Speech grew still more broken-kneed,
Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,
And her proud brow's blue veins to swell and darkle. –

151: *all descriptions garble / The true effect:* neither B. nor any other westerner (and precious few easterners) had ever seen *the true effect* of the Sultana's boudoir. Here he continues the bluff begun above at V 1.409. John Wright, the 1832 editor, quotes here the passage from Aubrey de la Mottraye already printed above at V ll.738-41.

102.

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he knew
To bode him no great good, he deprecated 810
Her anger, and beseeched she'd hear him through –
He could not help the thing which he related –
Then out it came at length, that to Dudù
Juan was given in charge, as hath been stated,
But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore on 815
The holy Camel's hump, besides the Koran.¹⁵²

103.

The Chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
The discipline of the whole Haram bore,
As soon as they re-entered their own room –
For Baba's function stopped short at the door – 820
Had settled all, nor could he then presume
(The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
Without exciting such suspicion as
Might make the matter still worse than it was. –

104.

He hoped – indeed he thought – he could be sure – 825
Juan had not betrayed himself – in fact
'Twas certain that his conduct had been pure,
Because a foolish or imprudent act
Would not alone have made him insecure
But ended in his being found out and *sacked*,¹⁵³ 830
And thrown into the Sea – – thus Baba spoke
Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.

105.

This he discreetly kept in the back ground,
And talked away, and might have talked till now,
For any further answer that he found, 835
So deep an Anguish rung Gulbeyaz' brow;
Her cheek turned ashes, ears rung, brain whirled round
As if she had received a sudden blow,
And heart's dew of pain sprung fast and chilly
O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a Lily. 840

152: *he ... swore on / The holy Camel's hump, besides the Koran:* DJP and CPW refer solemnly to the Koran vii 73, xxii 36, xxvi 155-8, and liv 27-31; all passages in which Allah gives benediction to camels. The *holy Camel* as such appears at vii 73; but B. is principally interested in creating a comic effect from Baba's terror. There is in fact no "holy camel" as such in Islam.

153: *sacked:* drowned in a sack. See above, V ll.734-6 and n.

106.

Although She was not of the fainting sort,
Baba thought She would faint, but there he erred;
It was but a Convulsion, which though short,
Can never be described; we all have heard,
And some of us have felt,¹⁵⁴ thus “*all Amort*,”¹⁵⁵ 845
When things beyond the common have occurred;
Gulbeyaz proved it in that brief agony –
What she could ne’er express, then how should I?

107.¹⁵⁶

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
Stands on her tripod, agonized, and full¹⁵⁷ 850
Of inspiration gathered from Distress,
When all the heart strings, like wild horses,¹⁵⁸ pull
The heart asunder; then, as more or less
Their speed abated, or their strength grew dull,
She sank down on her seat by slow degrees, 855
And bowed her throbbing head o’er trembling knees. –

108.

Her face declined, and was unseen; her hair
Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow
Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow, 860
A low, soft Ottoman) and black Despair
Stirred up and down her bosom like a billow,
Which rushes to some shore whose Shingles check
Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

154: *we all have heard, / And some of us have felt, thus “all Amort”*: B. seems to intend an autobiographical reference. Compare his own note above to IV st.60.

155: “*All amort*”: profoundly dejected. Readers are conventionally directed to Petruchio’s words to Kate at *The Taming of the Shrew* IV iii 36 (*What, sweeting? All amort?*). None mention Keats’ description of Madeline at *The Eve of St. Agnes*, 70-2:

... *all amort,*
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

156: Stanzas 107 and 108: CPW is reminded of the grief of Dido in *Aeneid*, IV: the loss of the Queen there is of course much more tragic than the temporary frustration of Gulbeyaz here; but B. certainly wishes to convey a dignity on his heroine, prior to dismissing her from the poem altogether.

157: *as a Pythoness / Stands on her tripod*: an emblem of dignity in enraptured possession. The Pythian priestess at the Delphic oracle is the original, named from the serpent called Python, which was slain by Apollo.

158: *all the heart strings, like wild horses*: recalls the ordeal of Mazeppa, whose horse is used by B. as a metaphor for sexual passion.

109.

Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping 865
 Concealed her features better than a veil,
And one hand o'er the Ottoman lay drooping,
 White, waxen, and as Alabaster pale;
Would that I were a painter!¹⁵⁹ to be grouping
 All that a poet drags into detail; 870
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints. –

110.

Baba, who knew by experience when to talk
 And when to hold its tongue, now held it till
This passion might blow o'er, nor dared to balk 875
 Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will;
At length she rose up, and began to walk
 Slowly along the room, but silent still,
And her brow cleared, but not her troubled eye;
The Winds were down, but still the Sea ran high. 880

111.

She stopped, and raised her head to speak, but paused,
 And then moved on again with rapid pace –
Then slackened it, which is the March most caused
 By deep emotion; you may sometimes trace
A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed 885
 By Sallust in his *Catiline*,¹⁶⁰ who, chaced
By all the Demons of all passions, showed
Their work even by the way in which he trode.

159: *Would that I were a painter! to be grouping / All that a poet drags into detail:* not a typical Byronic thought. He frequently wrote of the visual arts with affected disdain, as in this, from a letter to Murray of April 14 1817: “**You must recollect however – that I know nothing of painting – & that I detest it – unless it reminds me of something I have seen or think it possible to see – for which [reason] I spit upon & abhor all the saints & subjects of one half the impostures I see in the churches & palaces ... Depend upon it of all arts it is the most artificial & unnatural – & that by which the nonsense of mankind is the most imposed upon**” (BLJ V 213).

160: *Sallust in his Catiline, who, chaced / By all the Demons of all passions, showed / Their work ...:* a good example of B.'s sloppy grammar, for *who* logically refers to the historian Sallust, whereas it in fact refers to his subject, Catiline. Lucius Sergius Catilina (110-62 B.C.) was a turbulent Roman patrician who, twice defeated by Cicero for the consulship, agitated among the disaffected and finally plotted to overthrow the state. He was expelled and defeated, and is a byword for raging and conflicting Macbeth-type passions, particularly ambition and guilt. B. refers to description of him by the Roman historian Sallust in the fifteenth section of his *Catilina*.

112.

Gulbeyaz stopped and beckoned Baba; “Slave!
“Bring the two Slaves!” she said in a low tone, 890
But one which Baba did not like to brave;
And yet he shuddered, and seemed rather prone
To prove reluctant, and begged leave to Crave
(Though he well knew her meaning) to be shown
What Slaves her Highness wished to indicate – 895
For fear of any error – like the late.

113.

“The Georgian and her paramour,” replied
The Imperial Bride; and added, “Let the boat
Be ready by the secret portal’s side –
“You know the rest”¹⁶¹ – the words stuck in her throat 900
Despite her injured love and fiery pride,
And of this Baba willingly took note,
And begged, by every hair of Mahomet’s beard,¹⁶²
She would revoke the order he had heard.

114.

“To hear is to obey,” he said, “but still 905
“Sultana – think upon the Consequence –
“It is not that I shall not all fulfill
“Your orders even in their Severest Sense,
“But such precipitation may end ill –
“Even at your own Imperative expence; 910
“I do not mean destruction and exposure
“In case of any premature disclosure,

115.

“But your own feelings – even should all the rest
“Be hidden by the rolling Waves, which hide
“Already many a once love-beaten breast 915
“Deep in the Caverns of the deadly tide;
“You love this boyish new Seraglio Guest –
“And if this violent remedy be tried,
“Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you
“That killing him is not the way to cure you. 920

161: *You know the rest:* echoes the second line of the Canto, as if a watery grave in the Bosphorus were the *Tide in the affairs of Men* to which B. there refers.

162: *Mahomet’s* is a bisyllable.

116.

“What dost thou know of love – or feeling? – Wretch!
“Begone!” she cried with kindling eyes, “And do
My bidding!” Baba vanished, for to stretch
His own remonstrance further, he well knew,
Might end in acting as his own “Jack Ketch;”¹⁶³ 925
And though he wished extremely to get through
This awkward business without harm to others,
He still preferred his own neck to another’s.

117.

Away he went then upon his commission,
Growling, and Grumbling in good Turkish phrase 930
Against all women of whate’er Condition –
Especially Sultanas and their ways –
Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision –
Their never knowing their own mind two days –
The trouble that they gave – their Immorality – 935
Which made him daily bless his own Neutrality.

118.

And then he called his Brethren to his Aid,
And sent one on a Summons to the pair,
That they must instantly be well arrayed,
And above all be combed even to a hair, 940
And brought before the Empress, who had made
Enquiries after them with kindest care;
At which Dudù looked strange, and Juan silly,
But go they must at once, and Will I Nill I.

119.

And here I leave them at their preparation 945
For the imperial presence, wherein whether
Gulbeyaz showed them both commiseration,
Or got rid of the parties altogether,
Like other angry Ladies of her nation,
Are things the turning of a hair or feather 950
May settle; but far be’t from me to anticipate
In what Way feminine Caprice may dissipate. –

163: *Jack Ketch*: he was the public executioner at the end of the seventeenth century, and terminated the life of, among others, the Duke of Monmouth. At BLJ VII 217 B. uses his name as a comical synonym for that of Keats.

120.

I leave them for the present, with good wishes,
 Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange
Another part of History; for the dishes 955
 Of this our banquet we must sometimes change;
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes –
 Although his situation now seems strange,
And scarce secure – as such digressions *are* fair,
The Muse will take a little touch at Warfare. 960

End of Canto 6th.

April 3rd 1822