An analysis of the narrative voices and of the process of constitution of one or more subjects in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* should necessarily take into consideration the whole poem, and my survey of Cantos I and II should therefore be considered as a premise to further enquiry. My aim is to raise some questions and formulate some hypotheses on the Author/Hero relationship.

*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* tells the journey of two personae which at the beginning are separated and carefully distinguished from one another and which, through the journey, lose their identity and character to merge into one another. Through the journey, in fact qualifiers which are originally used to characterise Harold are transferred to the poet and we witness the constitution of a stronger narrating “I” which becomes the subject of the story.

The question of Byron’s biography has been raised many times in reference to *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, but it seems to me that both the Narrating Poet and Harold—though using Byron’s life as a draft—have a more important artistic function than that of a biographic “I”. The poet and Harold are two heroes who are continually struggling for authorship. The journey, the discovery of oneself as Subject, are both Harold’s and the poet’s.

This process of constitution as “Subject of the story” is set by Harold and then reported by the poet who, while relating Harold’s adventures, also reports on his responses and development. The stages of Harold’s process are then filtered through the sensibility of the poet who seems to divine the future:

28
To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
Onward he flies, nor fix’d as yet the goal.
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;  
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll  
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,  
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

29
Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,  
Where dwelt of yore the Lusian's luckless queen;  
And church and court did mingle their anay,  
And mirth and revel were alternate seen;  
Lording and frires - ill sorted fry I ween!  
But here the Babylonian whore hath built  
A dome where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,  
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,  
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to varnish guilt.

Events are taking place in the present, but the poet sees them  
from both a temporal and a spatial distance even though his perspective  
somehow seems to be Harold's.

According to Mikhail Bakhtin:

The consciousness of the hero, his sentiments and his wishes [...] are surrounded as  
if in a ring by the creative consciousness that the author has of the hero and his  
world: the hero's utterances about himself are surrounded and comprehended by  
the Author's utterances about the hero.

As the Author refuses to be dominated by his hero, he has to  
create a device, a Narrating Poet who emphasises the disjunction,  
mediates the relationships and can eventually be dominated by the Author.

In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage the operation of separation is  
realized through a creative activity that Bakhtin calls "venenachodimoost"  
and Tzvetan Todorov translates as exotopy:

Bakhtin asserts the necessity of distinguishing between two stages in every creative act:  
first, the stage of empathy or identification (the novelist puts himself in the  
place of his character), then a reverse movement whereby the novelist returns to his  
own position. This second aspect of creative activity is named by Bakhtin with a  
new Russian coinage: "venenachodimoost", literally "finding oneself outside", which I  
shall translate again literally, but with a greek root, as exotopy [...] the author can  
accomplish, achieve, and close-off his character only if he is external to him.

According to Bakhtin there are "events that, in principle, cannot  
unfold on the plane of a single and unified consciousness, but presuppose two consciousnesses that do not fuse; they are events whose essential and constitutive element is the relation of a consciousness to another consciousness, precisely because it is other (Bakhtin's emphasis)".

It is, however, possible for the Author to lose this position, and in  
this case

The exotopy becomes morbid and ethical (the humiliated and the offended become,  
in this capacity of theirs, the characters of a vision, that is no longer purely artistic,  
of course). The assured, calm, unshakable, and rich position of exotopy is no more.

But even in this case the Author's function - "bearer of the vital content" - should be carefully distinguished from the hero's - "bearer of the aesthetic end".

The idea of the other is then "necessary to accomplish, even if  
temporally, a perception of the self that the individual can achieve  
only partially with respect to himself". According to Bakhtin in fact  
"It is only in another human being that I find an aesthetically (and ethically)  
convincing experience of human finitude, of a marched-off empirical objectivity".

The two heroes of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, fighting each other  
for the space in the text and the time of the story, are also fighting  
against the Author and "at times they are close, at times they are far  
from each other, but the plenitude of the work needs a definite  
divergence and the victory of the Author". In order to maintain his position the Author can in fact

1. **AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE**

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2. **AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE**

2. MIKHAIL BAKHTIN, L'autore e l'eroe, translated and edited by Clara Strada Janovich, introduction by Vittorio Strada (Torino: Einaudi 1988) "La coscienza dell'eroe, il suo sentimento e il suo desiderio del mondo [...] sono circondati da ogni parte, come in un anello, dalla coscienza compiuta che l'autore ha dell'eroe e del suo mondo; le dichiarazioni dell'eroe su se stesso sono circondate e compenetrate dalle dichiarazioni dell'autore sull'eroe." pp. 12-13. My translation from Italian here and below.

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3. **AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE**


5. Ibid. 101.


7. TODOROV p. 95.

8. M. BAKHTIN "Avtor i geroj..." ibid., p. 96.

9. M. BAKHTIN, L'autore e l'eroe p. 168. "ora si avvicinano, ora si separano decisamente; ma la pienesse del compimento dell'opera presupponne una decisa divergenza e la vittoria dell'autore."
use the discourse of the other toward his own ends, in such a way that he imprints on this discourse, that already has, and keeps, its own orientation, a new semantic orientation. Such a discourse must, in principle, be perceived as being another's. A single discourse winds up having two semantic orientations, two voices.

As the study of the alternation of narrative voices is fundamental for a thorough analysis of the Author/Hero relationship in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* it becomes necessary to investigate those instances in which the overlapping is more marked.

The shift from one voice to another, rather than being characterised by an abrupt break, is – in most instances – characterised by a gradual passage, a fading of Harold's personality into the Poet's. The difficulty in isolating the two narrative voices leads to the formulation of a single figure which springs from the growing awareness of both Harold and the Poet.

According to Jerome J. McGann, “in most cases it is possible to distinguish them [the two voices] quite clearly at any particular time”, and twice is there “a blurring in the distinction [...] in the poem; first, in stanzas 14-26 of Canto I, and second, in stanzas 47-55 of Canto III”. Although substantially accepting McGann’s division, the blurings seem to be more than two and the distinction not quite so clear “at any particular time”.


\[\text{McCann p. 69.}\]

Stanza 14 is said to be uttered by the poet because “its narrative/descriptive style differs markedly from the burst of direct address with which 15 opens. In 14 [...] the speaker’s tone is noticeably objective, as if he considered himself primarily an observer on the trip”. The construction of the last stanza of the Lyric, however, has 14 as its natural follow-up. In stanza 10 of the Lyric, Harold bids his native land farewell, the tone is gay, full of expectation, as it happens in 14 where “every bosom [is] gay”, “Cintra’s mountain greets them” and Tagus “his tribute bent to pay”. In 14 Harold is still on board, hence the tone is an “objective” one; only in 15 is the “delicious land” to be seen by Harold (15, 1-2):

10

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Adwent the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine,
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My native Land — Good Night!

14

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And woods are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap. [my emphases]

The lines of the Lyric and the lines of 14 offer an interesting interplay of metaphorical and metonymic images patterned as a chiasmic structure. Stanza 14 looks like the rephrasing of 10: the thought-pattern is the same, just as the words and the syntactic structure are. Words and images are repeated either through direct calque or through relations of reciprocity. Even substituting some words from one line of 10 with the corresponding line of 14 and viceversa, the general structure would not change. The chiasmic structure of the two stanzas, intersecting one another might also be read on both a horizontal and crossed axes. This, combined with the use of similes, emphasises the interdependence of 10 and 14 and suggests a common narrative voice.
Stanza 73, Canto II, gives further evidence that the division is not as clear as McGann affirms. The narrating voice is apparently the poet's, who resumes his narrative after the Sulliote Song. There is, however, an abrupt change from 72, where the speaker is the poet, and the tone is quiet and idyllic, to 73, where a fiery speech and tone are the main features and the words reveal a deep emotion:

72
Childe Harold at a little distance stood
And view'd, but not displeas'd, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was no vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee,
And, as the flames along their faces gleam'd,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd,
While thus in concert they this lay half sang, half scream'd
[...]

73
Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more! though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,
And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await
the hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait—
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Leap from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

Moreover, the tone of 73 and 74 refers us to Canto I, stanzas 16 and 17 where Harold described Lisboa's degradation ("though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwashed, unhurt", I, 17; "From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed unmanned", II, 74). The similar rhetorical construction, their place in the structure of the poem — after a Lyric and after a song — suggest, again, a common narrative voice.

I do not intend to deny McGann's division altogether, but I would like to point out that the poem is full of "blurrings" and that these "blurrings" are further evidence of the struggle between Harold and the poet for power over the text.

As for the suggestion that the poem is fully autobiographical and that either the poet or Harold must be seen as specular images of Byron, McGann writes of the last part of Canto II, that "the external evidence is clear [that] Byron intended the stanzas as his own reflections". To confirm this statement he quotes a few letters to Dallas. In letter 206, Byron actually writes:

Dear Sir, — I have already taken up so much of your time that there needs no excuse on your part, but a great many on mine, for the present interruption. I have altered the passages according to your wish. With this note I send a few stanzas on a subject which has lately occupied much of my thoughts. They refer to the death of one to whose name you are a stranger, and, consequently, cannot be interested. I mean them to complete the present volume. They relate to the same person whom I have mentioned in Canto 2nd, and at the conclusion of the poem.

In the same letter, however, he refuses any attempt at identification with Harold (just as in the "Preface", p. 19):

I by no means intend to identify myself with Harold, but to deny all connection with him. If in parts I may be thought to have drawn from myself, believe me it is but in parts, and I shall not own even to that. (my emphasis) As to the Monastic dome, etc., I thought those circumstances would suit him as well as any other, and I could describe what I had seen better than I could invent. I would not be such a fellow as I have made my hero for all the world ".

We do not question Byron's widely drawing on his biography, but rather a reading of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage as "confessional poetry". In his essay on Cantos I-II, Marchand, although stating that "in refusing to identify himself with his hero [...] Byron did not wholly falsify, for in one sense Harold is not Byron, he is the child of Byron's imagination", concludes that Byron created Harold as an alter-ego "which was only a part of himself and gave expression to aspects of his nature of which his common sense could not quite approve", thus emphasizing his definition of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.


17 MCGANN p. 302.
18 MCGANN p. 302, n. 3. Only letter 206 could be traced since the page reference (J.C.: 66, 161, 162) in McGann's book refers to letter number 206 (p. 66) to Dallas and letter 236 (pp. 161, 162) to Bankes (with no mention of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage).
20 MARCHAND p. 38.
21 MARCHAND p. 44.
22 MARCHAND p. 45.
An Analysis of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage

The two heroes are then mainly responsible for the “content” of the poem, while Byron/Author/Scriptor is responsible for the “form” of this content. According to Oswald Ducrot, in order to distinguish between the Narrator’s responsibility and the hero’s, one must distinguish between “discours rapporté” and “interprétation polyphonique”. Applying Ducrot’s terminology to Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage there are instances of discours rapporté when the poet’s function is to make Harold’s thought or speech known. Harold then becomes the “thème” of the poet’s utterance: Harold is characterised by his idiolect. These utterances, Harold’s words, are indicated by the poet as characterising Harold, the enunciation of these utterances is presented as a statement on Harold and consequently the poet/enunciator is to be identified as responsible for the entire enunciation (i.e. Canto, 27 and 28). There are instances of interprétation polyphonique when the illocutionary act through which the enunciation is characterised is to be ascribed to a voice which is not that of the “locuteur”. In this case the enunciation is presented as an affirmation of Harold/enunciator, while the poet hides himself behind Harold (i.e. Canto I “To Inez, stanza 9; Canto I, 20). In the first case the interpretation and the responsibility of the utterance are the poet’s just as is the conclusion that “as he [Harold] gazed on truth his aching eyes grew dim”; the listener/reader’s understanding of Harold’s character is filtered by the poet. In the second case it is Harold who speaks of “solitude” and takes on the responsibility of the illocutionary act. This differentiation will be fundamental for the analysis of Canto III and IV where Harold’s constitution/destruction is realized only through the poet’s interpretation. In Canto IV, in fact, we witness the apparently complete disappearance of Harold as Subject of the enunciation and to the increasing appearance of the poet as Subject of both enunciation and utterance.

* * *

44
As for the problem of voice identification at the end of Canto II, a good example is offered by stanza 95:

95
Thou too art gone, thou lov'd and lovelv one!
Whom youth and youth's affection bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
No shrank from one albeit unworthy thee.
What is my being? thou hast cease'd to be!
Nor stayed to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see.
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er return'd to find fresh cause to roam!

A Mcgann points out, "on a proof marked 'fourth revise' bound up with MS.D, Byron wrote to Dallas: 'the he refers to 'wanderer' and anything is better than I I I always I". If we accept this letter as a piece of evidence – as it is the Author/reader who provides an interpretation – and read "he" as the "Wanderer", we have three hypotheses:
(a) The poet [he] is both the subject of the enunciation and the subject of the utterance.
(b) The poet is subject of the enunciation and Harold [he] is subject of the utterance.
(c) Harold [he] is both subject of the enunciation and of the utterance.

(a) This solution is a contradiction as the "subject" of the journey, that is of the "pilgrimage", is Harold and therefore why, in fact, should the poet use a term which belongs to Harold, "Wanderer", to describe himself? There are no artistic reasons for this usurpation.

(b) In this case who are "me" (11.2-3) and "my" (1.5) referred to? If the subject of the enunciation is the poet, they must refer to him, then "wanderer and "he" must refer to the poet as well, since "wanderer" is linked to "my" through "thou" and "thy", but this has been proved contradictory (a), and therefore we cannot accept (b) either.

(c) The stanza acquires a syntactical and logical meaning only if Harold is seen as subject of both enunciation and utterance and if "wanderer" and "he" are considered as substitutes for "I": Harold who talks of himself in the third person through a discours rapporté.

The apparent distance between "I" and "he" can be bridged by a further interpretation which would also make (a) and (b) possible. The hypothesis is that Childe Harold's Pilgrimage is a poetical metaphor of a historical metonymy, and that the blurring of voices is the artistic solution to a conflict which is rendered through the historical evolution, structured as a narrative diachrony. That is the confusion that hides the passage from Young Harold to Mature Harold, and the creation of a fictitious poet are necessary for him so as not to be disjoined from Young Harold and to continue to exist, if not on the historical level, at least on the aesthetic one. The adult does not want to be Young Harold any longer without, however, disowning him but, on the contrary, intruding into and dissolving him. The two terms of the parable, young and mature Harold, in their position of /beginning/ and /end/, can be brought together into an ideal archon in the figure of the poet, who can explicitly present himself and then merge with that same Young Harold – he originally opposed himself to – through an operation of "déravage/embravage".

Beyond the fact that this operation is put forward as implicit in the manifest dissolution of the two roles, only a global analysis conducted both on the superficial and the deep structural level of the entire text would confirm this hypothesis. On the other hand, a partial confirmation is seen in the gradual passage of the qualifiers and turns of phrase which identify Harold. An interesting instance of this passage is given in the development of the use of the adjectives 'young' and 'solitary' with all their variants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canto I</th>
<th>Lyric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 27</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanza 45</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38 A. J. Greimas and J. Courtês Semiotics and language An Analytical Dictionary translated by Larry Crist, Daniel Patte et al (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1979): "Déravage (déravage) [...] the operation by which the domain of the enunciation disjuncts and projects forth from itself, at the moment of the language act and in view of manifestation, certain terms bound to its base structure, so as thereby to constitute the foundational elements of the discourse-utterance" (p. 87). "Engagement (embravage) 1. Engagement is the inverse of disengagement. The latter is the effect of the expulsion from the domain of the enunciation of the category terms which serve as support for the utterance, whereas engagement designates the effect of a return to the enunciation" (p. 100).
39 The sign ‘→’ means 'speaks of.'
Childe Harold, the solitary youth, has vanished, but he hardly disappears since, with the transmission of his own defining elements and his mood to the poet, he takes possession of the means/poet to re-appear at least in the text if not in the ‘story’. 