

portance of this book to specialists of long Romanticism is obvious. Batchelor also offers valuable insights to Victorianists (who will identify with the considerations on scribal communities in Chapter 6), to scholars of the early eighteenth century (represented mainly, but not exclusively, in Chapter 1) as well as to those of us who are concerned with the history of reading and media studies in the present, who will find original insights into the prehistory of intermediality.

This is an outstanding work of literary history. It is also a masterful example of archival research that significantly advances our understanding of the British press as a whole. It is truly welcome news that this exemplary study, so enriching and indeed unique, is available in open access and thus accessible irrespective of individual financial means. Batchelor has found a way to revive the cultural currency of this once astonishingly popular magazine, sadly written off by generations of literary historians, to strengthen and extend to the present day the vibrant community of reading, mental cultivation and readerly engagement with a periodical that for many decades championed active and democratic reading practices.



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Geoffrey Bond and Christine Kenyon Jones, *Dangerous to Show: Byron and His Portraits* (London: Unicorn Press, 2020), 160 pp. ISBN 978-1-9126-9071-8; £25.00 (hb).

IN *DANGEROUS TO SHOW: Byron and His Portraits*, Geoffrey Bond OBE FSA and Dr Christine Kenyon Jones FKC have crafted both a delightfully absorbing work and a deeply useful addition to the field. Their book explores the chasm between Byron the myth and Byron the man.

19 April 2024 marked the bicentennial of the death of Lord Byron, the British Romantic poet and satirist. Fiona McCarthy's highly detailed *Byron: Life and Legend* was a departure from previous biographies because it thoroughly examined Byron's relationships with adolescent boys at Harrow and in later life. *Dangerous to Show* is likewise a remarkable contribution to the study of Byron. The sheer number of Byron's portraits in this book, the proliferation of his countless selves, testifies to the inherent slipperiness of pinning down a figure with a cult following.

Bond and Kenyon Jones's detailed inspection of Byron's foibles renders him less mysterious. While they dispel the myth that Byron slept with curlers in his hair, for instance, the authors seem to confirm more recent scholarship that

reframes his extreme exercise and eating regime as a sign of anorexia (p. 25). Bond and Kenyon Jones include a description of Byron as a 'restless and difficult sitter', recounting an incident in which Byron rose in the middle of a session and began to fence (p. 42). 'Will you not sit still ... You need not assume that look', the Danish neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen told him. 'This is my expression', Byron replied (p. 80).

Dangerous to Show is chronological, with each chapter detailing a discrete period in Byron's life. Chapter 1, entitled 'Childhood and Youth', encompasses 1795–1809. Even his first known portrait is doctored: a watercolour by William Kay of the 6-year-old George Gordon Byron that cleverly disguises the 'right foot, ankle and lower leg [that] were deformed and twisted inwards from birth' (p. 18). This affliction would go on to 'sour his life and contribute in incalculable ways to forming his character, temperament and outlook' (p. 18). The chapter also includes images of a young Byron taken from Elizabeth Pigot's 1807 handmade book, a sketch likely drawn by Scrope Berdmore Davies in 1808 during Byron's time at Cambridge, and Byron's first professional portrait painted by George Sanders between 1807 and 1809.

Chapters 2 and 3, 'First years of fame' and 'Establishing 'brand' Byron', cover 1812–13 and 1813–16 respectively, detailing the mass reproduction of Byron's image as it became a 'valuable commodity for his publisher' (p. 33). It's common knowledge that Byron's publisher John Murray used 'his Lordship's handsome face' to sell copies of Byron's work, but Bond and Kenyon Jones supply compelling examples of the ways in which Byron contributed to 'the creation of his own legend' (pp. 13, 15). This period marked the advent of the iconic 'white open collar' that comprised the Byronic 'uniform' (p. 36). Byron's image was often 'softened and feminized' in engravings to 'suit the new audience of young, female, middle-class readers' who would purchase his books and prints (p. 31). Chapter 2 includes an 1812 miniature by Saunders, perhaps commissioned to commemorate the success of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Chapter 3 includes the contemplative portrait of Byron painted by Richard Westall in 1813, which can now be found in the National Portrait Gallery.

Chapter 4, 'Citizen of the World', details the years between 1816 and 1821. Byron's final departure from England in 1816 meant that his likeness was represented by artists and sculptors who were 'Italian, French, Danish, and American', who each took 'approaches varying from neoclassical to Romantic, and from the most formal to the highly personal' (p. 78). It was during this period that Byron began to harbour disdain for pieces that indicated "a hankering for *public* fame rather than private remembrance" (p. 80).

Chapter 5, 'From Italy to Greece', focuses primarily on 1822–1824, with some reflections from 1938. This chapter describes Byron's death on 19 April 1824 in a house in Missolonghi owing to complications from malaria he contracted during the Greek War of Independence. It concludes more than one hundred years later, when Byron's coffin was opened and his embalmed body compared to the likeness of the medallion made by John Adams-Aceton, which was placed

on the chancel wall of the Parish Church of Hucknall Tokard where Byron was interred. The chapter contains Louis Fournier's 1889 depiction of Byron in *The Funeral of Shelley* and drawings by Count Alfred d'Orsay in 1823, as well as flakes of sunburned skin that his lover Teresa saved when they peeled from his back and shoulders after a sunburn in 1822.

Chapter 6, 'Imagining Byron', catalogues Byron's posthumous depictions in a magnificently broad array of media. His face is painted on porcelain smoking pipes and carved into cravat pins. He's depicted heroically in an imagined scene at Missolonghi by Theodoros Vryzaki in 1824, and his romantic exploits are lampooned by the cartoonists Isaac Robert and George Cruikshank. Byron's death at a young age on a foreign shore suits his flair for the theatrical—there is little doubt that his legacy as a rake or a writer will ever be forgotten.

It would be easy for a book like *Dangerous to Show* to feel like a routine teleological display of Byron's portraiture. Instead, it thoughtfully explores the avaricious, sometimes embarrassing, reasons that his portraits were devised and received. It recontextualises them within the confines of Byron's written work as well as his fraught relationship with his mother, his close ties with his friends and servants, his companionship with his devoted Newfoundlanders and his dalliances with an untold score of lovers.

Most compellingly, Bond and Kenyon Jones outline the way that nineteenth century engravers reproduced and sometimes entirely reinterpreted Byron's image. Some portraits that had originally been deeply personal objects 'became public property, to be shared with thousands of viewers', so grossly misrendered that they ceased to resemble him (p. 35). Byron's right and left eye were of such disparate sizes that he was nicknamed 'eighteenpence' at Harrow. This physical asymmetry is used to identify authentic and inauthentic portraits, as is the connection of Byron's ear lobes to his jaw (p. 22). If Byron had survived a few decades longer, he might have been photographed. Instead, he has no truly definitive likeness. But perhaps this suited him. Like Shelley or Keats, Byron was a self-described 'chameleon poet', deeply intrigued by the notion of *mobilité* for both his protagonists and himself (p. 106).

Two hundred years after Byron's death, Bond and Kenyon Jones have created a work that speaks to the contemporary relevance of the modified celebrity likeness. Bond and Kenyon Jones' account of Byron's vanity, whims and neuroses render him a figure full of inherent contradiction, infinitely more fallible and but perhaps no less dangerous.



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Michael Bradshaw has published extensively on late Romantic writing, including Beddoes, Darley, Hood and the Shelleys. He is the co-editor, with Ute Berns, of *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Lovell Beddoes* (2007), editor of *Disabling Romanticism: Body, Mind, and Text* (2016), and co-editor, with Gioia Angeletti of "Travel, Migration, Exile, a special issue of the journal *La questione Romantica* (2024). His research interests include literatures of the body, critical disability studies, textual fragmentation and modern allusion to Romantic poetry. Michael is Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Winchester.

Anjeli Chapman Wolf studied *Punch Magazine* around the *fin de siècle* through a postcolonial lens at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge. Her undergraduate degree is from Vanderbilt University, where she completed an Honours Dissertation on postpartum depression in women of colour. Her invited talks include Cambridge's History of Memory & Emotion and Modern British History workshops as well as the 2023 Winter School in Saas-Fee, jointly run by Cambridge and the Adolphe Merkle Institute. Her postcolonial play *Siege*, which illustrates the horror of British imperial rule in twentieth-century India, was chosen to be workshopped with the Royal Court. Her anthology of short fiction, *Spite*, was published in 2024 by Wrong Publishing.

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