

SCORED DISCUSSIONS (ONLINE EDITION)

Instead of doing live scored discussions, we will complete online scored discussions via Blackboard. To accomplish this, I have broken you down into two groups: critics (writers) and observers (lurkers). Writers for both discussions will have to participate in the discussion while the observers will listen in and respond to their own set of questions in a separate board. Then, we'll switch up the sides and each group will then assume the opposite from which they started. Pretty simple.

Rules for Board #2

The teams are below. You may access the board anytime after 3:00pm today. You will have until the dates listed to complete the board. The specifics are below:

To earn 50 points as a **critic**, you must:

- ✂ Respond with at least three original posts;
- ✂ Respond to someone else's post in a thoughtful manner at least two times; and
- ✂ Raise at least one question for the group to answer.

To earn 50 points as an **observer**, you must:

- ✂ Respond by analyzing at least two critics' responses;
- ✂ Critically evaluate the effectiveness of the two critics' responses;
- ✂ Suggest how a third critic could refine his or her argument for better effectiveness; and
- ✂ Declare, in your opinion, which critic you felt was the most effective.

(You will have a total of at least six responses for each role)

CRITICS <i>writers</i>		OBSERVERS <i>lurkers</i>	
Clara	Fried	Kristen	Lysenko
Abigail	Belasen	Michael	Kelley
Tara	Feeney	Chantal	Little
Dana	Lenseth	Allie	Funk
Ryan	Allison	Seth	Beresford
Kevin	Klembczyk	Brianna	Bissell
Lizzie	Dawson	Katie	Pofit
Noah	Gorka	Anthony	Loccisano
Michelle	Cavanagh	Jason	Freeman
Simone	Yingling	Christine	Abelseth
Chris	Hammer	Josh	Glover
Katrina	Nakao	Hannah	Gibson
Tom	Cardinal	Geoff	Roest
Hilary	Edmunds	Suzanne	Thorman

Scored Discussion #2: Byron (50 points)

Text: "She Walks in Beauty"

Read the poem and the following excerpt from Herbert Read's article and respond to the following in your discussion board:

Read seems to believe that Byron's poetry lacked the essential poetic nature necessary to be a great poetry (he even quotes Byron's own lack of self-confidence as proof). The article also continues to look at Byron's philosophy of poetry, one that consisted of a *getting rid of*, rather than a building up. Do you agree that Byron is a lesser poet? If so, why? Look specifically at the poem "She Walks in Beauty," as well as the other assigned Byron poems, and begin the discussion.

Suggestions for your consideration:

Do you agree? Disagree? Is there evidence within this poem of a deeper, philosophical mind at work? Is there evidence of an intellectual presence in the poem, or is it simply fluff?

All of the Writer Discussion Board #2 posts are due by Tuesday, 01/15/08

All of the Critic Discussion Board #2 posts are due by Friday, 01/18/08

THE TRUE VOICE OF FEELING Studies in English Romantic Poetry

by HERBERT READ

In his *Journal* of 1813 Byron drew 'a triangular *Gradus ad Parnassum*'. At the summit, 'undoubtedly the Monarch of Parnassus, and the most *English* of bards', he placed Walter Scott. Next, as 'the last of the *best* school', Rogers; Moore and Campbell both third, followed, a grade lower, by Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge; and, below them, 'the Many'. It is true that he adds, as an afterthought: 'I have ranked the names upon my triangle more upon what I believe popular opinion, than any decided opinion of my own', but his own gloss does not make any substantial difference to what we should now regard as a strange lack of discernment--'For, to me, some of Moore last *Erin* sparks-- "*As a beam o'er the face of the waters*"-- "*When he who adores thee*"-- "*Oh blame not*"--and "*Oh breathe not his name*"--are worth all the Epics that ever were composed.' All contemporary judgment is liable to aberration, and a critic of today has no grounds for feeling superior to Byron; but we have only to contrast his opinions with those of Shelley or Keats to see how much more sensitive they were to the enduring values in poetry.

This is perhaps to adopt a theory of poetry that Byron himself would not have admitted, and it is the theory upon which we must find Byron's own poetry lacking in certain essential qualities. These qualities may be specifically 'romantic', and my criticism of Byron's poetry must be expressed from within the romantic tradition. This tradition requires, in the highest type of poetry, two qualities which Byron despised--*curiosa felicitas* and ideal beauty. By the former phrase we mean, not merely apt words to express a thought (Byron had them in plenty) but words which by the originality of their application, or the originality of their collocation, produce an essentially somatic thrill of appreciation. The difference is easier to illustrate than to describe. Byron's felicity is at its best in lines such as:

*She walks in beauty like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.*

It is an explicit felicity; no image, no word, is far-fetched; that climes should be cloudless and skies starry is in each case the obvious cliché. But take two comparable lines from Donne:

*No Spring, nor Summer Beauty hath such grace,
As I have seen in one Autumnal face.*

Byron was utterly incapable of using an epithet with such a wealth of implied imagery as 'Autumnal' has in this context.

One might say that his mind did not work in that way, and then one has said that his mind was not in the most fundamental sense poetic. He had other qualities, as I shall presently readily admit; but it is useless to pretend that he possessed that absolute grace which we find, not only in major poets like Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth; but also in a Wyatt, a Herrick, a Burns, a Hopkins.

As for ideal beauty, by this we mean, in Landor's words, 'the sublimer emanation, I will not say of the real, for this is the more real of the two, but of that which is ordinarily subject to the senses'. Great poets have believed that they were in some way giving expression to something greater than themselves. Wordsworth, for example, believed

*That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each for his peculiar dower, a sense
By which he is enabled to perceive
Something unseen before*

and on the basis of this belief, he hoped that a work of his

*Proceeding from the depth of untaught things,
Enduring and creative, might become
A power like one of Nature's.*

To such a claim Byron would have answered with a hoot of derision. Reality, and any thought about reality, was precisely what he wished to avoid. 'I began a comedy, and burnt it because the scene ran into reality--a novel, for the same reason. In rhyme, I can keep more away from the facts; but the thought always runs through, through . . . yes, yes, through.' And, from the same 'log-book' (1813): 'I envy no one the certainty of his self-approved wisdom.' It was not merely that Byron had no ambition to give expression to a philosophical faith in his verse--as we have seen, he had none that was worth the trouble; rather, he regarded the practice of verse-writing as a means of 'getting rid of thinking'. This attitude is not to be confused with superficiality, or shallowness of thought. It is a consciously adopted sophistication; a positive belief in making life an amusement and verse-writing a playful artifice. In self-criticism he found himself failing to live up to this ideal.