HARRIET LEE'S *THE GERMAN'S TALE, THE HUNGARIAN*, BY GEORGIANA, DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE, AND BYRON'S *WERNER*

Peter Cochran

(First published as *Harriet Lee's* The German's Tale, The Hungarian *by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and Byron's* Werner, *Keats-Shelley Review*, 2004, pp. 175-87. Reproduced with permission.)

Byron and fathers.

The significance of *Werner* in Byron's life has not been sufficiently examined. Byron never knew his father, but must have gathered, from Mrs Byron, enough about his father's extravagance, moral incontinence and unreliability, to have grown up in fear of following the paternal example. He didn't succeed, and followed it along many paths – though he contributed to the world in a way his father, being no genius, never could. The fear of turning into his own father led to his creation of a strange sequence of men, all of whom, with greater or lesser degrees of facetiousness (read insecurity), he cast in the role of father-substitute. Named as his "pastor and master" in the letters and poems are William Bankes, the gay rake from Kings College Cambridge;[1] Father Pascal Aucher, the tutor in Armenian at San Lazzaro ("My spiritual … pastor and master");[2] and Gentleman John Jackson, the heavyweight champion of England ("my … corporeal pastor and master").[3] In the second canto of *Don Juan*, Juan is saved from the fate of his shipwrecked companions when he refuses to eat the flesh of his own "pastor and … master."[4]

More serious were his real-life fixations on a number of bizarre male authority figures in whom his faith persisted despite every evidence to their worthlessness that his friends and his own observation supplied. First was John Hanson, the family solicitor, who failed him at every turn with a dilatoriness which drove everyone mad except Byron. Hobhouse, Kinnaird and all his friends warned him against Hanson, but never to any effect. Next was William Gifford, the dull Tory pedant who edited the *Quarterly* and was John Murray's main literary adviser. Gifford's narrow mind, poor poetry, blind establishment leanings and mean critical

1: BLJ VII 230-1.
2: BLJ V 152.
3: Byron, *Don Juan*, XI, 19, Byron's note.
4: Byron, *Don Juan*, II, 78, 8.

style should have made him into everything Byron hated – instead, we find Byron, even late in his brief life, referring to Gifford as "my literary father."[5]

Most grotesque of all is the case of Ali Pasha, the Saddam Hussein of the early nineteenth century. In October 1821, Teresa Guiccioli, on hearing a false rumour that Ali was dead, wrote playfully to her lover, "Ali – Pasha – that Friend – Father of yours – that tender heart – liberal – perhaps he is dead – – it is a loss to the World – to good patriots – and to the finances of his domains (because the population will increase), irreparably. – But in truth, my Love, if it causes you sorrow, his death will be a cause of sorrow to me also …"[6] Such evidence of Byron's continued adulation of the mass-murderer who twelve years previously had "looked a little leeringly at him" and complimented him on his small hands, ears, and curling hair, and told him (and Hobhouse) that he considered them his children, gives us food for thought.

Fathers and sons do not loom large in Byron's poems. We know nothing of Don José's relationship with Juan; Childe Harold has no father of whom we hear – what we would give to know something about the father of Manfred! – and Adam seems less important to Cain than does Eve. There are two exceptions: the little-explored dramas of *The Two Foscari*, and *Werner*. In the former, father and son would be on good terms, were their political situation not so tragic.

In *Werner, or the Inheritance*, it is quite different. The father is a weak, half-hearted transgressor who steals money from his mortal enemy rather than commit the "manly crime" and kill the enemy as he lies before him, ill and asleep (Macbeth would have done it!). The son commits the deed in his father's stead. As the enemy stands between both the father and his inheritance and the son and *his* inheritance, the enemy is as a kind of father-figure, and killing him is a sort of transposed parricide – the bold son compensates for the feeble father's weakness by doing the deed the father has not courage to do, and thus peripheralises the father of whom he is ashamed. However, he also fills the father with horror at the new "inheritance" his unmanliness has created, and which his son has so confidently taken over. But the son is defiant, and contemptuous:

> *Who* deprived me of
> All power to vindicate myself and race
> In open day? By his disgrace which stamped
> (It might be) bastardy on me, and on
> Himself – a *felon's* brand! The man who is
> At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
> He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
> That I should act what you could think? We have done
> With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
> Upon effects, not causes.[7]

Thus the father is made by the son to feel of no further account – neutralised, annihilated in terms of morality and emotion, without the final resolution (or release) of being murdered too. The son has become the man the father never could be.

Byron found this thesis interesting. He wrote to Augusta on December 12th 1822:

> I am glad that *you* like "Werner" and care very little who may or may not like it – I know nothing yet of opinions about it – except your own. – The story "the German's Tale" from which I took it [ha]d a strange effect upon me when I read it as a boy – and it has haunted me ever since – from some singular conformity between it & my ideas.[8]

5: BLJ XI 117.
6: *Shelley and his Circle* X (ed Reiman and Fischer) Harvard 2002, p. 942.
7: Byron, *Werner*, V, i, 456-55 (CPW VI 506).
8: BLJ X 55.

Werner and the Georgiana controversy.

Here is a version of the confrontation of half-hearted father and sinful son with more waffle – and therefore less conviction – than Byron's:

> Who was it told me there were venial crimes
> The occasion justified? Who warmly painted
> The excesses of those passions that transgress
> E'en on humanity? Who held the balance
> Suspended to my gaze, between the goods
> Of fortune and of honor? and who aroused
> The mischief-stirring spirit dormant in me
> By shewing me a specious nobility
> Secured alone by feebleness and of nerves?
> Or was it strange that I should dare to act
> The bloody deed on which thy mind has pondered?[9]

Byron's version – "Is it strange / That I should act what you could think?" – is more economical and powerful than the last two lines here (Lee's version, in *The German's Tale*, is "Was it wonderful than that *I* should dare to act what *you* dared to meditate?"). The second text is by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire. Georgiana, though a Wild Child in many ways, was conscious that her lifestyle was contrary to the way she had been brought up, and there was no way in which she could argue that she was living what her parents had only dreamed. Byron had the advantage over her in this respect.

In his influential study *The Dramas of Lord Byron*, Samuel Claggart Chew dismisses *Werner* in three pages, ending with a wish that it could be proved that the play had been written by Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire; but conceding that "Mr. Coleridge's reply to this contention … is convincing."[10]

The argument – that *Werner* was written by the Duchess of Devonshire – is even less well-known than *Werner* itself, which is a creek up which few Byron scholars have ever cared to paddle. The argument was started by the Hon. Frederick Leveson-Gower[11] in an article in *The Nineteenth Century* of August 1899, and was answered by the great Byron scholar and editor E.H.Coleridge, firstly in later numbers of the journal, and later in the fifth volume, published in 1901, of his John Murray Byron edition[12] – hence Chew's joke. Unfortunately, no substantive discussion could take place, because, though it was reported that the famous Georgiana had written a play based on Harriet Lee's *The German's Tale*, no text of her drama was known to exist. However, thanks to the researches of Professor Don Bewley of Massey University, New Zealand, a text has recently turned up – in the Huntington Library, California; and Professor Bewley has kindly sent me a copy. The volume also contains *The Hebrew Mother*, another play by Georgiana based on the incident (II Kings 4, 8-37) between Elisha and the Shunamite woman whose son is mortally ill; and three English versions of sacred dramas by Metastasio: *Joseph and his Brethren*; *The Death of Abel*; and *Abraham*.

Reading *The Hungarian*, along with *Werner*, and Harriet Lee's *The German's Tale*, on which, as Byron admits in the first sentence of his preface, *Werner* is based, has convinced me that Byron *did* know the Duchess' script; that there *is* plagiarism, in two vital factors and several details; and, moreover, that *Werner* is a much better play than its neglect would indicate. As is the case with *The Siege of Corinth*, nobody looks at it, because … well, nobody looks at it, do they? Chew, certainly, should have looked at it again.[13]

In her biography, Amanda Foreman quotes Georgiana's sister Harriet as writing in 1802 to her lover Leveson Gower, Lord Granville, that they have been collaborating at a tragedy:

9: Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, *The Hungarian*, f 119.
10: Samuel Claggart Chew, *The Dramas of Lord Byron*, (1915, rptd. Russel & Russel 1964) p.145.
11: Pronounced "Lewson-Gore."
12: *Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. Coleridge, V, 329-33.
13: "I have read *Werner* several times …" Chew, op. cit., p. 144.

> My sister work'd very hard at it at Hardwick, and now we are going on again, and it is almost done … But hers is much the most considerable part. I suppose you will think it vanité d'auteur or sisterly partiality if I tell you I really do not think it very bad … it is the story of Siegendorf in the Canterbury Tales.[14]

Professor Bewley believes that Georgiana wrote the play for private and family edification only, as a didactic text, and that her elaborate stage-directions were intended "to prompt the mind, and not the eye and ear." He points to the centrality of powerful female figures in all the plays Georgiana wrote or translated. There are, however, precedents for aristocratic ladies trying their hands at playwriting. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote a comedy, *Simplicity*, which was, in 2003, staged with success.[15]

The Hungarian.

As only two people currently on earth – so far as I know – have read Georgiana's *The Hungarian*, a plot-summary is in order.

The play's action takes up eighteen hours, and has no subplot, but does move location from act to act. Act I is taken up with exposition and setting-up the situations and conflicts to come. We are in the grounds of the Palace of the Governor of Prague (a spot where, it seems, all kinds of convenient people meet at dawn). Herman, beloved of Emma, daughter of Count Unna,[16] the play's equivalent to Lee's and Byron's murder-victim Stralenheim, awaits her – why, aside from dramatic convenience, is unclear. As he stands there apprehensively, the nameless Hungarian (in *Werner* he has a name, Gabor) vaults the wall, and, with various associates, reveals, not seeing the hidden Herman, that the Governor, Siegendorf (that's Werner, or Kruetzner, as was) is holding a procession next morning, at the climax of which he will announce the end of the recent domestic conflict. Byron makes this the end of the Thirty Years War, a historically specific occasion for the celebration which is neither in Lee, nor Georgiana.[17] Siegendorf's past cowardice and debauchery are planted by the Hungarian in the audience's mind. The Hungarian, however, plans a surprise for Siegendorf, the nature of which he does not reveal. His friends are members of a gang of *banditti* led by a man called The Iron Visor, from the anonymity he derives from his mask. The Hungarian and his friends leave, whereupon Emma enters, and is followed by Conrad (Byron's Ulric) who also vaults the wall, and tells her and Herman, with much mystery, that he too associates with a gang of Robin-Hood-type outlaws, led by The Iron Visor. Herman and Emma leave, and in a soliloquy Conrad expresses his distaste for peace, his love of warfare, and his complacency at the idea of Emma marrying Herman (though Siegendorf, his father, wants him to marry her).

Act II is set in the Gothic Hall of Governor Siegendorf's Palace. Leonora, Siegendorf's wife, reveals that Siegendorf has had a bad night, and is resting prior to the procession. It is reported that the *banditti* are now threatening the borders, and that Conrad and Herman may be sent to fight them. Leonora expresses her pride in the valour of her son, and Emma agrees – though it's still Herman that she loves. Leonora explains that Siegendorf is anxious to unite their two families, after the death of Unna, Emma's father. Unna is, in Lee and Byron, Stralenheim. Emma is grateful – she has known only Leonora and Siegendorf as parent-figures. Leonora expatiates for the audience's benefit upon her love for her husband, and how it grew. Herman, Conrad, and Conrad's little brother Casimir enter. Conrad says that he is ready to meet the Iron Chief, and try his strength. Little Casimir is anxious to come too. On the sounding of a bugle, Herman, Emma and Casimir leave. A massive scene of exposition ensues between Leonora and Conrad, in which most of the events of the night in the empty castle, narrated by Lee and dramatised by Byron, are related, including the shame of Siegendorf – though the cause of this is not clarified – and the mysterious murder of Unna /

14: Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire*, Harper/Collins 1998, p. 331.
15: See TLS 5247 (October 24th, 2003), p. 22.
16: Could be "Umma."
17: See *Werner*, V, i, 95. As Barry Weller points out (CPW VI 720), this is thirteen years too early.

Stralenheim. It is clumsy play-writing, for we do not as yet understand Siegendorf to have stolen any gold from Unna / Stralenheim, and of course, having no idea of the circumstances, or of the involvement of the Hungarian, cannot tell that Conrad is lying his head off, for he was the murderer. Siegendorf enters, with more bad news of the *banditti*: and all exit.

Act III scene i involves still more exposition. Siegendorf, in a "Dost thou remember" section, tells Leonora what undoubtedly she does remember, namely the night of Unna / Stralenheim's death, and his own mean theft of the gold. He wishes Emma and Conrad to marry, as he seems to think this will constitute an act of atonement for his own shame at not confronting Unna himself, and, instead, stealing from him basely. Conrad enters, and Leonora leaves. A short speech from Conrad may have given Byron the cue for the last scene of his own fourth act:

> … the reverend priests no doubt
> To whom thou'st tenfold paid the mighty debt
> Would easily absolve thee.[18]

… except that Byron's confessor is not mercenary. Conrad assures his father that the killer must have been the Hungarian. A long scene of mutual recrimination between father and son follows, reminiscent of those between Henry IV and Hal (except, again, that Conrad is lying).[19] Siegendorf accuses Conrad of dissipation and lawless conduct amidst mysterious followers, and Conrad counter-asserts that his friends are noble, like Herman, and his actions good. The two are reconciled, and leave for the pageant

Act III scene ii is set in the square before the Cathedral, magnificently decorated. The Hungarian chooses a place from which to announce his presence to Siegendorf. In a spectacular scene which Georgiana's stage-directions describe in detail, two armies march on, one led by Herman and the other by Conrad. There is martial music, silence, then an organ peals from inside the cathedral. The people rush out, and Siegendorf gives his proclamation. But he has just uttered the word "Peace," when he sees the Hungarian. He staggers into the crowd – cannot find the Hungarian – restarts his happy oration – and the Hungarian approaches him again (like Banquo, except that he's not a ghost) and addresses him with "Kreutzner! Kreutzner!" In a daze, Siegendorf is led off, his great moment ruined.

Act IV is set in the Gothic Hall again. Siegendorf prowls, restless and miserable, missing both Leonora and Conrad. The Hungarian cannot be found. Some nobles enter and tell him that the *banditti* are now threatening to take advantage of the festivities and to attack Prague itself. Siegendorf allows Herman command of the troops going out to prevent them, indifferent as to whether he is killed or not, but not wishing Conrad to go. Leonora and Conrad enter, and, shortly after them, the Hungarian himself! He names Conrad as the murderer of Unna, to Siegendorf's outrage: though Conrad, in a gesture borrowed from Lee and in turn borrowed by Byron, leans against a pillar casually and draws patterns on the floor with his sheathed sabre.[20] In a series of long speeches with occasional interjections from father and son, the Hungarian tells how he tracked Conrad across half Europe, and finally, via a secret spring which he discovered himself (Byron has Werner show it to Gabor)[21] was witness to Conrad's murder of Stralenheim. With this memorable speech, Siegendorf shows him out:

> This secret door does conduct thee
> By yonder winding staircase to the tunnel –
> It has no other entrance to the palace
> And joins the garden by a door, of which
> I only have the key.[22]

18: *The Hungarian*, f.66.
19: Hal, like Malcolm with Macduff, may be working up a rhetorical or aesthetic effect: but *lying* is not his final aim.
20: *The Hungarian*, ff. 99-100. Compare *Werner*, V, i, 384. The detail is from Lee, p. 329.
21: In *Werner* (III, i, 83), the protagonist shows Gabor the secret passage which leads him to the sleeping Siegendorf – in Lee (341) and *The Hungarian* (f. 109), the Hungarian finds it unassisted.
22: *The Hungarian*, f. 116.

Upon the Hungarian's exit, Conrad amazes his father by confirming the tale. He *was* the murderer of Unna – and is disgusted that the blinkered Siegendorf could ever have thought otherwise. He exits, leaving Siegendorf confounded; the father proposes feebly to bribe the Hungarian into silence.

Act V is set in an antechamber to the Gothic Hall. Emma asks if it true that Siegendorf has been attacked, and is told that he has indeed been set upon, and robbed but not wounded (no further use is made of this episode: it is from Lee, 362-3). After two innocent, childlike interludes – one involving an orphans' choir, the other little Casimir – Leonora wonders at Conrad's absence. Emma confirms that Herman has also not come back. Emma and Casimir exit, and Siegendorf enters and is supported by Leonora to a couch. She tries to calm him by picturing a peaceful retirement for them both, but he raves of Unna and of the absent Conrad. Emma enters in a fright and says that Herman has been wounded. She upbraids Siegendorf for letting him go to fight the *banditti*. Another messenger enters to relate that Conrad saved Herman's life at the last moment. Various lords enter and announce that Herman's troop has captured The Iron Visor – "Conrad 'tis said was nobly present too …" Herman enters – he is not wounded, but deeply troubled by news which he is too shocked to relate. Leonora assumes that Conrad is dead, but Herman assures her that he is not – though he is wounded. Leonora and Emma leave. The antechamber opens up to reveal the great hall, and Conrad is indeed brought in wounded – but bound, too. Without saying as much, he makes it clear that he is and has always been the leader of the *banditti* – the Iron Visor. We gather that the Hungarian is dead, but how is unclear. Conrad does *not* confess to the murder of Unna. Leonora enters, just in time for Conrad to die in her arms (in *Werner*, Ulric, the son, is not injured, not bound, and does not die). The stage is reduced again to the antechamber, and now Siegendorf / Werner breathes his last, blessing Herman and Emma, and prophesying a virtuous future when little Casimir comes of age. Herman is given the curtain speech.

The Unities.

The Hungarian dramatises the events of the last seventy of the 370 pages of *The German's Tale*. These are the events of *Werner's* final act only. By making an attempt to preserve the Unity of Time, Georgiana creates serious exposition problems for herself, as I hope I've shown. If Byron did read *The Hungarian*, he would have seen how much the audience would have to be told in a play with an almost seamless time-frame, and have decided, both that the problem was insoluble, and that, as the night of Stralenheim's murder was one of the most dramatic episodes in the story, it would be more exciting to put it on the stage – indeed, to put the entire story on the stage, and dispense with the Unities of Time and Place altogether. Thus his last play is closer to Shakespeare, in its obliviousness to Aristotle and Alfieri, than are others of his plays that he said he valued highly. The decision is made from theatrical judgement, not from blind adherence to precedent and theory.

The Humour.

Also un-Alfierian is the comedy which Byron gets from his strictly non-comic source, mixing comedy and tragedy as Aristotle implied they should never be mixed. The following shows Byron's instinct for serio-comic drama, far superior in its detail and humour to either Georgiana or to Lee. Siegendorf, unable to bribe the greedy Idenstein with the stolen gold (for that would give the game away), decides to offer him a family ring. Here is Lee:

> While he continued, therefore, to pause with apparent complacency upon the arguments presented to him, the Count watched the critical moment; and, sensible that he had himself advanced too far now to recede, he produced the jewel. Idenstein started with astonishment! Chance, and some commercial connexions, made him a judge of its value. He looked earnestly at it, and considered long. The Count had also considered well before he offered it: although to him it would have been known from amidst ten thousand others, it bore, as he believed, no family distinction, no appropriate mark, that could ever ascertain its original owner to an indifferent person: nor had he, in

fact, an intention to part with it, except on such terms as should render all that might follow immaterial to him.

The hitherto wavering fidelity of Idenstein seemed on the point of being finally shaken: the Count pursued the advantage.[23]

From this sketch, which is the paraphrase of a fiction rather than a properly-imagined fiction, Byron constructs the following:

Werner [*showing the ring*:] Would this assist your knowledge?
Idenstein: How – What? – Eh? A jewel!
Werner: 'Tis your own on one condition.
Idnestein: Mine – Name it!
Werner: That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it; 'tis
A family ring.
Idenstein: A family! *Yours*! a gem!
I'm breathless!
Werner: You must also furnish me
An hour ere daybreak with all means to quit
This place.
Idenstein: But is it real? let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that's glorious!
Werner: Come, I'll trust you;
You have guessed, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.
Idenstein: I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it; this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!
Werner: I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.
Idenstein: So then you *are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of?
Werner: I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter – 'tis
To spare both, that I would avoid all bustle.
Idenstein: Be you the man or no, 'tis not my business;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward –
But this! another look!
Werner: Gaze on it freely;
At day-dawn it is yours.
Idenstein: Oh, thou sweet sparkler!
Thou more than stone of the philosopher!
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself!
… *and so on*.[24]

The New Character, and the Catastrophe.

Byron would also have seen – what Georgiana had proved – that the effect of the murder by Conrad / Ulric of Unna / Stralenheim would be given much greater focus by the invention of a female character not in Lee, namely the murdered man's daughter. However, he also decided

23: Lee, pp. 206-8.
24: *Werner* III i 302-330. See for another example Lee 250-5 and *Werner* III iv 28-end.

that it would be given still more dramatic focus if she were in love with her father's killer: and so dispenses with the amiable Herman, and makes Ida (his Emma-figure), and Ulric / Conrad, a potential couple. This makes for a sensational finale to *Werner*. Sensational, but over-economical and unconvincing, as if Byron were in a hurry to get the job of writing over: Ida's instant willingness to believe, unsupported by any explanation, the idea that the blood on Ulric's hand is that of her father, is a mite hard to take:

Enter Josephine and Ida.

Josephine: What is't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!
Siegendorf: Safe!
Ida: Yes, dear father!
Siegendorf: No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.
Josephine: What
Means my good Lord?
Siegendorf: That you have given birth
To a demon!
Ida [*taking Ulric's hand*:] Who shall dare say this of Ulric?
Siegendorf: Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.
Ida [*stooping to kiss it*:] I'd kiss it off, though it were mine!
Siegendorf: It is so!
Ulric: Away! It is your father's!
[*Exit Ulric*.
Ida: Oh, great God!
And I have loved this man!

Ida falls senseless – Josephine stands speechless with horror.

Siegendorf: The wretch hath slain
Them both – My Josephine! we are now alone!
Would we had ever been so! – All is over
For me! – Now open wide, my sire, thy grave –
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine! – The race of Siegendorf is past!

THE END.

This climax – in the versions either by Georgiana or by Byron – has no precedent in Lee, where Conrad dies, undistinguished, in battle:

> Conrad, whose savage and ferocious pleasures had led him again to join his former associates, had been cut down in a skirmish, together with many others, amidst the recesses of the forest, by the sabre of an Austrian hussar. He fell indeed undistinguished; but living or dead there was no form like his, and it was recognised, as soon as seen, by the commanding officer.[25]

Here is further evidence of plagiarism on Byron's part. He too insists on Ulric (Conrad) confessing to his bandit-existence before his father, as being more damaging to Siegendorf than having it reported by third parties. But where Georgiana has the son die, followed by the father, Byron has the son escape, and the father survive. Professor Bewley writes that the ending is part of Georgiana's didactic intention. "Leonora, Emma, Casimir and Herman can be seen as significant role models and their future prospects a suitable moral outcome of the tragedy that touches them but engulfs Siegendorf, Conrad and his associates and the Hungarian."

25: Lee, 637.

Public spectacle.

On the other hand, Georgiana takes one opportunity which the *Tale* affords, for public spectacle, and a private drama going counter to that public spectacle, which is quite Shakespearean. This is the huge (in design and crowd-management terms) second scene of Act III, described above, in which Siegendorf tries to mount a display of good news, confidence, joy, and social cohesion, but is thwarted by a living spectre from his own past.[26] The precedents from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are obvious. But Byron rejects such an opportunity, and has the event narrated,[27] either as if his Aristotelian conscience, obsessed with the need for messengers, had forced him to ignore what Georgiana had shown to work so well, or as if he knew that if he did stage the scene, there were no ways in which he could do it differently, and so his plagiarism would be much more obvious than it is.

Werner is not a great play; it is true that, as Chew, echoing Coleridge, says, that much of its blank verse is "nerveless" and "pointless"[28] (pointless in that it isn't clear why Byron didn't write it in prose). But it had an active history in the professional theatre in the nineteenth century,[29] and could profitably be revived. It seems to me far more "crowded with incident"[30] than the more-highly regarded *Marino Faliero*, and part of its stage-worthiness depends, as I hope I've shown, on the lessons Byron learned from a look at Georgiana's *The Hungarian*.

26: *The Hungarian*, f. 79; Lee pp. 312-7.
27: *Werner* V, I, 128-35.
28: Chew, op. cit., 144.
29: See Coleridge, V, 324; Barry Weller, CPW, VI 586-9; and Taborski, *Byron and the Theatre* (Salzburg 1972) 264-74.
30: See Sheridan, *The Critic*, I i, 250-260 (dialogue between Mr Sneer and Sir Fretful).