

## Byron

Life →page 314

He was an unconventional aristocrat with a scandalous life →first people were attracted by this

Then he was surrounded by scandals and debts →so he leaves

He made negative comments of romantic poetry →he defined it unelegant and boring, using even swear words (like against Keats)

He believed in individual freedom and freedom of nations from empires

## Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

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A childe = a young man waiting for knighthood (minor british aristocracy, not the major one, like barons, earls and dukes)

Semi-autobiographical →the adventures of Harold replicate the ones of Byron

Childe Harold is a sort of the representation of the byronic hero

There is a red thread in Byron's works →it is the importance of fighting against political oppression

Main themes:

- journey
- nature →picturesque and exotic, but also sublime →often it mirrors the character's mind and feelings
- freedom →individual, or the one of whole populations from tyrants

## P. B. Shelley

Was member of the second generation of the british romantics, along with Byron, Mary Shelley and John Keats

He died really young →he was 30 years old

He belonged to a rich and aristocratic background →just like Byron

He could have a great education →he attended Eton (not a university, but a prestigious highschool, a prep school for university)

Shelley hated his experience there →he did not enjoy his time there →his classmates tended to be posh kids and they were also obsessed with sports

The whole institution was obsessed with sports →but he hated sports, for this reason

he was bullied

He was not into sports, but also had strong political ideas →this being radical clashed against his aristocratic background

Then he enrolled to Cambridge university →he liked the experience from an academic point of view, but in 1812 he published a controversial pamphlet

Its title was: "The necessity of Atheism" →pamphlet = essay (work in prose) about a social/political topic →a specific political idea is argued by the author

It was controversial because this essay was in favor of atheism, which was illegal in those years →he published the pamphlet anonymously →but his identity was uncovered

He wasn't arrested thanks to the connections of his family →but got expelled from the university

His parents were disappointed and cut off their financial support

But Shelley was supported by his two elder sisters, who were close to him

In the pamphlet he claims that atheism is necessary to achieve democracy in society  
To him there is no rational proof of the existence of god →so he doesn't believe in god

He also doesn't understand how god can be described as both the god of love (in the gospels) and a punisher god (in the bible) →for him this is contradictory

This theological view became political

European monarchies are based on the "divine rights of kings" →according to which a rightful monarch is one of god's representatives on earth

Monarchy has to exist, according to this →but if the existence of god is denied, then also the existence of monarchy is unjustified