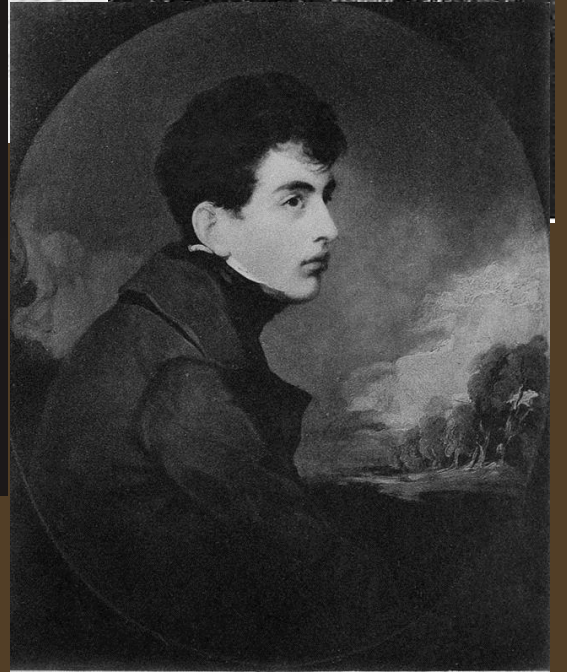
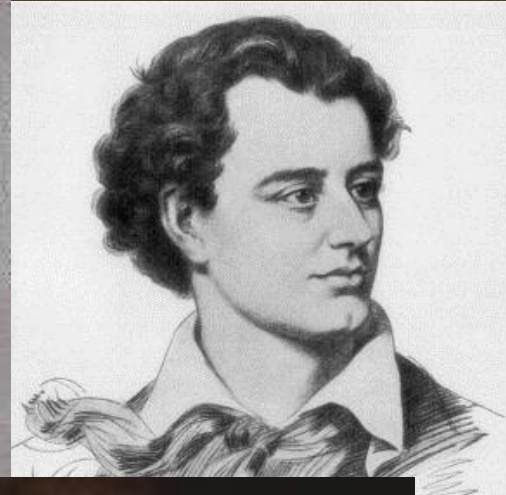


George Gordon Byron,
George Gordon, George
Noel, Noel Byron, Lord
Byron, *Le Diable
Boiteux*, etc.

“Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to
Know.”



Byron's Pedigree

- He was born **George Noel Gordon** in London in 1788.
- His father was Captain John 'Mad Jack' Byron.
- His mother, Catherine Gordon, was an heiress.
- Mad Jack took "Gordon" as his surname in order to inherit Catherine's money.



- Little George was christened **George Gordon Byron**; at school he was registered as **George Byron Gordon**. It's all very confusing.
- Then, when he was ten, his great uncle died, who was William Byron, the 5th Baron Byron (known as the “Wicked Lord” and “Devil Byron”). When he died, George became the **6th Baron Byron**, which is how he ended up **Lord Byron**.
- Later in life, he'd add the “Noel” back on in order to inherit his ex-mother-in-law's estate.

The Young Poet

- He first published a collection of poems called ***Hours of Idleness*** in 1807. It was savaged in the *Edinburgh Review*.
- In 1809, Byron had his revenge by writing something called ***English Bards and Scotch Reviewers***, which is like a satire. Some were so offended that they actually challenged Byron to a duel.
- Byron's first in a long line of satirical works that target enemies or people who have made fun of him.

- In 1809, he toured Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey. These travels inspired his first big hit poem, which is *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.
- It follows a hero a lot like Byron, who travelled far abroad, and who also felt disillusioned by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.
- The title character of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* would come to be recognized as the first **Byronic Hero**, which is a major Romantic archetype.



Byron's Sexuality

- Had many, many lovers of both genders.
- Left England in part because open bisexuality was so unacceptable, particularly because of his *peerage*.

"Ah! Sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one, who thus for kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad, the love denied at home."

The Player

- After Byron published *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he became a star. People loved it.
 - Good looking
 - Club foot
- Began first scandalous, public affair with a woman named **Lady Caroline Lamb.**





- Then Lady Oxford (Jane Elizabeth), also married.
- Then there was Augusta Leigh, who was Byron's half-sister with whom he was alleged to have an affair.
 - In 1814, she gave birth to a child. Byron went to visit the daughter and made a comment in a letter that the child “wasn't an ape.”





- Then, in a dumb move, he married Anne Isabella “Annabella” Millbanke in 1815.
 - They had a daughter, Ada Lovelace
 - They separated for obvious reasons— infidelity, alleged incest, sodomy rumors.
- Annabella coined the term 'Byronmania' to describe Byron's celebrity.
- In 1816, he left England for good.



Byron's Travels



- He wandered around in Europe, hanging out with Percy Shelley and his wife, Mary Shelley.
 - Impregnated Claire Clairmont.
- He had more affairs with married women in Venice.
 - Countess Guccioli let him move into her house and they had loud, public fights. She often made him sleep in the gondola.
 - She threw herself into a canal over him.



He wrote a ton in Italy.

–fourth *Childe Harold* canto.

–supernatural poem called ***Manfred***

–closet drama called ***Cain***

–A poem called ***Beppo***, which is a satire. It's kind of the story of *The Princess Bride*. The message of the poem is that adultery shouldn't be a big deal.

- After *Beppo*, he pretty much exclusively worked on what's widely regarded to be his masterpiece, ***Don Juan***. It's an epic satire. It was so long that it wasn't even done when he died.

The Revolutionary

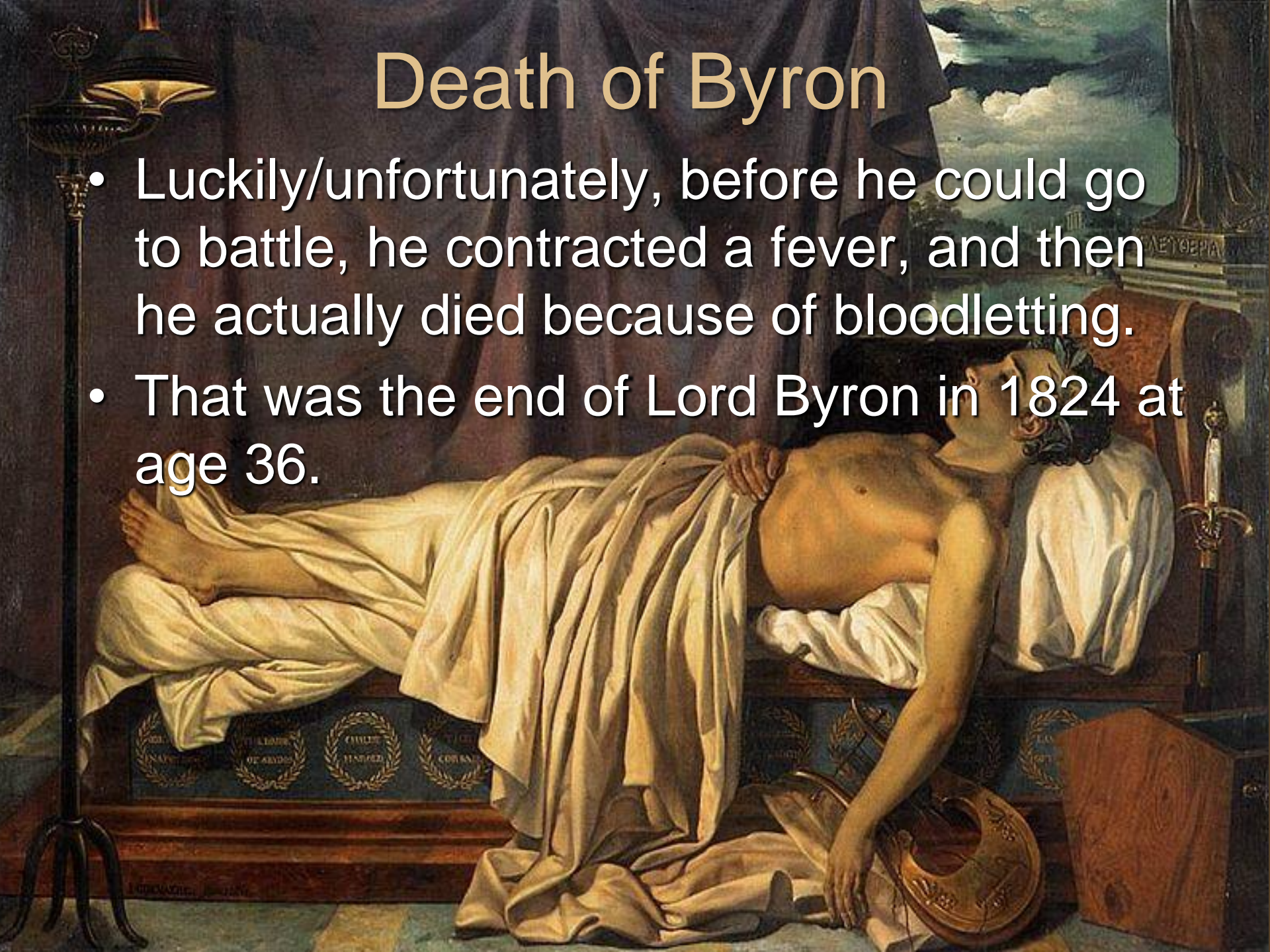
- He had a seat in the House of Lords because he was a lord (Byron). He only spoke in Parliament three times, but each time he did, he was being deliberately ornery.
 - Defended the Luddites
- He hated Robert Southey, who he perceived as a lesser Romantic poet, and attacked him satirically.

- His politics eventually led him to Greece, where he was involved in the independence movement from the Ottoman Empire.
- He decided he was going to attack a Turkish fortress even though he did not know what he was doing.



Death of Byron

- Luckily/unfortunately, before he could go to battle, he contracted a fever, and then he actually died because of bloodletting.
- That was the end of Lord Byron in 1824 at age 36.





Traits of the Byronic Hero

- Arrogant
- Cunning/Crafty
- Cynical
- Disrespectful of rank/privilege
- Emotionally conflicted / bipolar / moody
- Hates social institutions / norms
- Has a troubled past or is suffering from an unnamed crime

- Intelligent and perceptive
- Jaded, world-weary
- Mysterious, magnetic, charismatic
- Seductive and sexually attractive
- Self-critical and introspective
- Self-destructive
- Socially and sexually dominant
- Sophisticated and educated
- Struggling with integrity
- Treated like an outcast or outlaw

Who else do we know in
movies, books, or TV who is like
this?