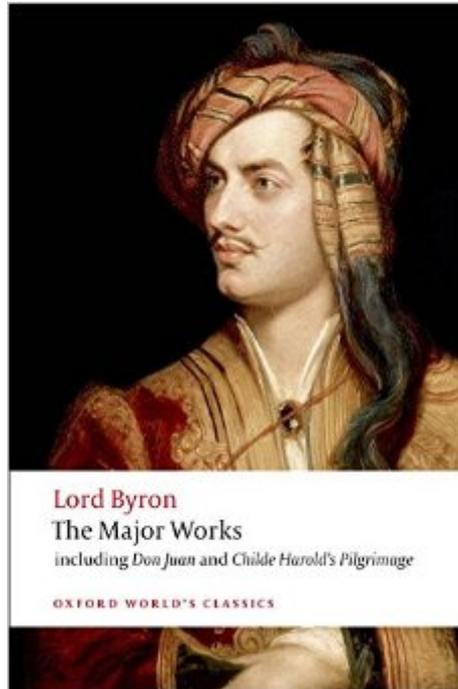


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Lord Byron: The Major Works (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

This authoritative edition brings together the complete collection of Byron's poetry and prose - all the major poems, complemented by important letters, journals, and conversations - to give the essence of his work and thinking. Byron is regarded today as the ultimate Romantic, whose name has entered the language to describe a man of brooding passion. Although his private life shocked his contemporaries his poetry was immensely popular and influential, especially in Europe. This comprehensive edition includes the complete texts of his two poetic masterpieces Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and Don Juan, as well as the dramatic poems Manfred and Cain. There are many other shorter poems and part of the satire English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. In addition there is a selection from Byron's inimitable letters, extracts from his journals and conversations, as well as more formal writings. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I generally prefer the Oxford World's Classics series to Penguin's editions of the same works and authors. Why? Because Oxford boasts better (thicker) paper, better fonts, better printing, better covers, usually better notes and better introductions... Oxford just seems to present an overall better

product at roughly equivalent prices. But Oxford made a crucial mistake in their edition of Lord Byron: The Major Works--they didn't give Don Juan a separate volume. The effect of stuffing Don Juan into this volume means that the book is conflated to an unwieldy 1100+ pages, and several of Byron's key poems are either omitted or severely abridged (like Lara and The Corsair). Here, they really should've followed Penguin's lead in creating separate volumes for Don Juan and another for Byron's other poetry. But it's even worse when one considers that the Oxford contains a sampling of Byron's prose. So after you subtract the pages for Don Juan and the prose, you're left with only about 470 pages of Byron's other poetry in compared to Penguin's 780. Now, granted, perhaps what's available here in the Oxford Edition will be enough for many readers, and it does still provide its usual advantages in paper, printing, font, notes, and intros. Byron was incredibly prolific, but like most prolific poets he tended to produce more bad poetry than good/great poetry. It's just a numbers thing; writing great poetry takes time and attention to small details. It's why it took Milton years to write Paradise Lost at a rate of 40-or-so lines a day. Every detail had to be worked out. At Byron's best he was as good as anybody, and his skill combined with his unique philosophical worldview makes him endlessly provocative, compelling, and readable, even at his worst.

All passion, intensity and fire, Byron cuts a swathe through the Regency era's lights, literature and ladies. He does so in a style that is the most beautiful and high prose you will ever read; magnificent curving arcs of words that could have come straight from the proud mouth of an archangel (or Lucifer himself). Of course, he occasionally descends into petty back-stabbing, misogyny and generally seems to be a bit of a spoilt child with too much time on his hands, but you can forgive him that just for Childe Harold's Pilgrimage alone. This book claims to contain most of Lord Byron's major works and it certainly is a full volume, weighing in at over 1000 pages in paperback format. The larger works include the above-mentioned Pilgrimage and Don Juan. These take up at least 700 pages themselves. The remaining space is occupied by Manfred - a rather Nietzschean work about a magician; the Giaour - a tale of unrepentant love and loss; Mazeppa - a story of a man whose fortunes fall and rise dramatically; Beppo - a Venetian affaire de cour; Cain - an intense retelling of the biblical tale with Manichean overtones, and assorted shorter poems. There are also fifty pages of assorted correspondence with various individuals. The book comes equipped with a very short introduction (for a book of 1000 pages), a chronology of Byron's life, an index and end notes. There is very little in the way of explanation of why pieces are included and the end notes are mostly helpful but often explain the obvious while leaving the obscure, obscure. If you like books that contain no analysis, this is for you, but if you want things explained you will do better with something

else.

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