

1. Introduction

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Era were periods of rapid political and social changes and France stood in the centre of course of events in Europe. The French Revolution and the subsequent era of Napoleonic Wars brought about profound changes that shaped new Europe. The French Revolution abolished privileges of the noble class and separated the church from the state and in 1793 the French Republic was established. These changes necessarily provoked reaction from old European monarchies. European monarchs were particularly afraid that revolutionary ideas would be “exported” from France. In spite of political and military interventions, the ideas of the Revolution were spread across Europe and they attracted numerous supporters among intellectuals and artists. Very much the same kind of reactions also provoked the person of Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799 he became the First Consul in France and announced the end of the Revolution and chaos. Although Napoleon was a child of the Revolution, he made certain changes that surprised many of his supporters. In 1801 he negotiated the concordat with the Catholic Church and in 1804 he made himself the Emperor, what shocked many of his contemporaries as he seemingly denied the ideas of the Revolution. The regime in France was not democratic at all (on the other hand it was not democratic even during the revolutionary years) as Napoleon acted as an autocrat and he was strictly against any possible opposition¹. He swept away the Holy Roman Empire and he created numerous satellite states. Numerous contemporaries admired Napoleon not only for his military achievements, but also the fact that “Bonaparte was founding new Italian republics in which the ideals of the Revolution would be put into

¹ On the other hand Napoleon instituted lasting reforms, including centralised administration of the departments, higher education, tax code etc. In 1801 he negotiated Concordat with the Catholic Church, which sought to reconcile the mostly Catholic population to his regime. His powers were increased by the Constitution of the Year X (in 1802) due to which he was made the First Consul for life. Napoleon faced several Jacobin and royalist plots during his life. In January 1804, his police uncovered an assassination plot against him and Napoleon used this plot to justify the recreation of hereditary monarchy in France (Englund 227) with himself as an Emperor.

practise” (Hoffmeister 211). Although he seemingly “exported” the Revolution, his rule was strongly centralized and he would never permit any resistance. What is more, the annexed states served him mostly as sources of supplies of any kind for his military campaigns. France had to face several anti-Napoleonic coalitions and Bonaparte was the main threat for European monarchies.

The main ideas of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity were not a novelty. On the contrary, they were deeply rooted in intellectual traditions of European antiquity and the ideas of freedom and equality were also one of the central concepts of 18th century Enlightenment philosophy, most notably in Jean Jacques Rousseau's and Voltaire's (François-Marie Arouet) works. These ideas were discussed by intellectuals and even absolutist monarchs such as Frederick the Great², the King of Prussia or the Russian Empress Catherine the Great³ (Outram 73), nevertheless they remained mere concepts for the most of the 18th century. It was only in the summer of the year 1789 when in France the so called Third Estate formed the National Assembly and named themselves the tribune of people's will. On the 14th July the people of Paris stormed the fortress of Bastille and the French Revolution began. As was already stated, the concepts of liberty and equality were not the inventions of the Revolution; on the other hand, it was during this period when they were first put into practice. In the late 18th century, in the connection with the French Revolution, emerged modern nation states and the idea of people's participation on power. The Revolution also marks the beginning of civic society and the French Constitution of 1791 (following the United States of America) declared equality of all citizens and their inalienable rights.

² Frederick II. of Prussia (24 January 1712-17 August 1786), also known as Frederick the Great. He was a proponent of “enlightened absolutism”. He was a correspondent to Voltaire and he greatly admired him, although there were periods of hostility on both sides. In the end Frederick “resumed their correspondence with repeated expressions of admiration for Voltaire's genius” (Ritter 42).

³ Catherine II. of Russia (2 May 1729-17 November 1796) was a correspondent to Voltaire as well as Diderot (Rousseau 47). In spite of this she was not able to improve the conditions of millions of her subjects.

The spontaneous outburst of the Revolution and its seemingly fresh and novel ideas were much appealing to young artists and intellectuals of the period. The English poet William Wordsworth, at that time a Cambridge student in his early twenties, was one of those who saw in the Revolution a new beginning for the mankind. Wordsworth visited France for the first time in 1790 and he was enchanted by the enthusiastic spirit of period. In the 1805 version of his autobiographical poem *The Prelude* he exclaimed “France was standing on the top of golden hours/ And human nature seeming born again” (*The Prelude* VI, 352-354). This excited support to the Revolution was conditioned by his inexperience and lack of knowledge of the actual political situation in France and also by the fact that the prospects of the Revolution in 1790 were still rather optimistic. During his second visit in 1791 – 1792 he experienced the horrors of Jacobin terror⁴ and his attitude to the Revolution began to change. He witnessed the process when the “revolutionary action betrayed otherwise humane motives” (Cambridge Companion 198). He was particularly shocked with the violence of the September Massacres⁵, which took place in the late summer of 1790, when the fanatical mob brutally killed numerous prisoners as well as supposed enemies of the Revolution. Wordsworth expresses his fright when he thinks “Of massacre, in which a senseless sword/ Was prayed to as a judge” (*The Prelude*, X. 31-34). He remained a supporter of revolutionary ideals as he saw in them “a vision of something finer in the possibilities of human society” (Gill 61), nevertheless he became disillusioned by the actual political

⁴ The Reign of Terror (1793-1794) is commonly associated with the Jacobin political club and Maximilien Robespierre. He was the head of the Committee of Public Safety which began to manage country’s internal police. Robespierre believed that the Terror was a time of discovering and revealing the enemy within Paris, within France, the enemy that hid in the safety of apparent patriotism (Doyle 143). Robespierre saw no room for mercy in his Terror. Robespierre believed that it was his duty as a public servant to push the Revolution forward, and that the only rational way to do that was to defend it on all fronts. The Terror is associated with mass execution and extermination of any possible opposition. Robespierre was overthrown and executed in July 1794.

⁵ September Massacres took place during September 1792. No political party could claim sovereignty and France was in chaos. The Prussian army invaded France and fanatical mob began to attack supposed traitors and supporters of monarchy – most notably prisoners, out of which some 1200 were killed. September 1792 also saw numerous attacks and assassinations of Catholic priests.

situation in France. In spite of his disillusionment, Wordsworth never lost his interest in France as he met there with Annette Vallon, a young lady from an aristocratic family, who would later become a mother of his first child. Wordsworth had no chance to see his daughter as war between France and Britain broke out in 1792, but he was observing the situation in France very carefully.

When Wordsworth met his daughter for the first time in 1802, France was still in very centre of European affairs. So when in his poem “October 1803” Wordsworth looked on the “present state of things”, he saw a single person that dominated the age – Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte had become the first consul of France and he made himself the most powerful person in France. In 1804 he crowned himself as the Emperor of the French and in the first years of the 19th century he became the most powerful person in Europe and he was not concealing his European ambitions. Wordsworth saw in the act of coronation a confirmation of what he saw as the “twin tyrannies of papacy and monarchy” (Bainbrige 105). Wordsworth was fascinated with the figure of Napoleon, although in the early 19th century he was a bit more experienced than during his visits to France in the 1790s. Wordsworth was reacting to Napoleon in his writings roughly from 1801 when he wrote his sonnet “I grieved for Buonaparte” to 1816, after Napoleon had been defeated at Waterloo in 1815, when he wrote his “Thanksgiving Ode”. Wordsworth, after experiencing the horrors of the French Republic in 1792, expressed his disillusionment with Bonaparte, he “frankly states that Bonaparte does not possess the virtues of a republican-minded politician” (Hoffmeister 212). Wordsworth was strongly convinced that Bonaparte was not the liberator of Europe who would spread the ideals of the French Revolution, on the other hand, he believed that the liberator image was just a mask “behind which the man with the Ambitions of the Caesar was operating” (Hoffmeister 212). It was not only Wordsworth

who was interested and fascinated by Napoleon as the whole generation of English romantics was expressed their admiration or refusal of Napoleon.

Another notable English poet William Blake was 42 years old in 1789 and he also welcomed the French Revolution with great expectations. He saw in the Revolution a new chance for the whole mankind – he interpreted the Revolution as an event in which human spirit and creativity will be recreated after the period of darkness and oppression. He expressed his views of the Revolution in his poetical work titled “The French Revolution”. Blake felt that there was a strong connection between the American Revolution and French Revolutions and that these events had a strong historical and spiritual impact (Altizer 184). Blake was not listed in any radical organisation in Britain, though it can be said that his political views were largely republican. Blake was an engraver – a skilled craftsman, a member of a new urban class which emerged during the 18th century in Britain. These people shared a sense of self-dependence and need for political and social independence. The “republicanism” of these people was in fact apolitical as these people were rather suspicious of the Crown which represented the establishment and control. Nevertheless, Blake welcomed the French Revolution with a great enthusiasm as in 1803 one his friends remarked “I knew our friend’s eccentricity, and understood, that, during the crisis of the French Revolution, he had been one of its greatest partisans” (cited in Bentley 35). Blake strongly opposed any kind of oppression and tyranny and he felt that due to the French Revolution the European culture was on trial (Hamblen 183). The Revolution meant a new chance for France and Europe which was stuck in feudal system and old monarchies, the French one most notably, were in decay. In his “French Revolution” Blake mixes mythology and biblical allusions with history and he creates an apocalyptic vision of the Revolution. Unlike Wordsworth, he was not a witness to the revolutionary

processes (however brief and inexperienced Wordsworth's encounter with the French Revolution was) and he in fact does not describe historical events, but he creates mythology. Blake claimed that although the Revolution was based on right ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, it betrayed these ideals and this was the reason why the Revolution failed. Blake makes a moral claim as he believes that the French Revolution was not fully based on the noble ideals of freedom and justice and the main motives behind the Revolution were purely material.

The aim of the thesis is to analyze William Wordsworth's, William Blake's and also George Gordon Byron's reactions to Napoleon Bonaparte and his era. These writers related to the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte in different ways, so that each of them constructed a "different Napoleon". It is necessary to mention that these "different Napoleons" were mere abstract figures that were shaped according to each writer's preferences, so that Napoleon became "imaginary' figure for them, a 'fabrication' created to embody their political and personal hopes and fears" (Bainbridge 1). Napoleon became crucial to their conceptions of politics (at least in case of Wordsworth and Byron) as each of these authors indentified the imagined figure of Napoleon as either a liberator or an oppressor. Napoleon Bonaparte was a figure that dominated the era, who made the thrones of European monarchies shake and he was praised by romantics as a strong individuality so that he was "the supreme embodiment of a hero in an age in which the artist was increasingly seen as heroic" (Bainbridge 2). The thesis does not examine Blake's, Byron's and Wordsworth's reactions to Napoleon in their whole complexity. Blake and Wordsworth, representing the older generation of romantics, reacted to Napoleon in different ways since his roughly 1802-1803 until his final defeat in 1815. Byron as a representative of the second generation saw Napoleon as an idol of his youth a reacted to him poetically only later, most notably in the last

years of Napoleonic period. In the case of each poet the thesis predominantly focuses on a short period of their lives, during which Napoleon was most “topical” for a given writer. In the case of William Blake the thesis mostly focuses on the first years of the 19th century, when Blake wrote and published his work *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* in which Blake indirectly relates to Napoleon and his military successes and the threat of Napoleon’s invasion to Britain. William Wordsworth’s reactions to Napoleon are most intensive between the years 1802-1806. Wordsworth wrote numerous shorter poems and sonnets in which he reacts to Napoleon’s autocratic regime and his invasive plans. The thesis also examines the 1805 version of Wordsworth’s poetical autobiography *The Prelude* in which he mixes his revolutionary past and with his “Napoleonic present”. Byron was most concerned with Napoleon during the final years of Napoleon’s career – between the years 1814-1916. During this period he wrote the *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte* in which he reacted to Napoleon’s first defeat 1814 and also a series “Napoleon’s farewells” in which he celebrates Napoleon’s heroic return and defeat in 1815 and he also bids farewell to his departing fallen idol.

Wordsworth, as one of the focus figures of the thesis, was in the early 19th century still rather young. In the year of Napoleon's coronation in 1804 he was 34 and he had, at least partly, experienced the French Revolution. Between the years 1802 and 1804 Wordsworth became truly obsessed with Napoleon Bonaparte. The “outcrop” of this obsession was a number of political sonnets that were written a year before he finished the 1805 version of his *Prelude* where he frequently relates to Bonaparte. Between the years 1805 and 1808 Napoleon spectacularly defeated Austria, Russia and Prussia and he became, in Southey’s phrase, “master of the Continent”. As was already stated, Wordsworth saw in Bonaparte an oppressor who betrayed the revolutionary ideals and did not hide his expansive ambitions. On the other hand, it cannot be said that

Wordsworth in the first decade of the 19th century supported old European monarchies, or *ancien regime* powers. He still praised the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity and he did not lose his faith in them even after experiencing the horrors of Jacobin Terror. In 1806, when the Prussian army was defeated in the battle of Jena (October 14 1806), Wordsworth described the defeat as “Another mighty Empire overthrown”. At that time Napoleon was at the peak of his fame and although for Wordsworth he was an oppressor, he “clearly felt no enthusiasm for the cause of 'Empires'” (Bainbridge 103). Similarly equivocal was Wordsworth’s attitude to Spanish resistance against Napoleon between the years 1808 - 1814. It can be stated that French invasion to Spain was of great concern to Wordsworth and other Lake poets. Spanish resistance against the French was keenly appreciated by the Lakers and they interpreted this war as a battle for liberty and freedom and against tyranny and oppression. Moreover Great Britain supported Spanish resistance so that the Lake poets could “realign themselves with their countrymen, their government and 'Liberty'” (Bainbridge 97) to speak in favour of the war against France. Until 1805 Wordsworth could not find any contemporary political event or a cause which he could unite against Napoleon. Wordsworth appreciated the resistance against Napoleon-tyrant, on the other hand he “was resisted by forces who fought under the same detested banners of monarchy and papacy” (Bainbridge 105). Even in 1811 he represents the series of French victories in the years 1805-1807 as a victory of one tyranny over another, so that Napoleon “though a tyrant, was no worse than tyrannies he had shattered and replaced” (Bainbridge 103). Wordsworth’s views of Napoleon were more or less sceptical and Wordsworth saw Napoleon mostly as a tyrant and oppressor. In 1803 Wordsworth asked himself in “October 1803” what he was supposed to do as a poet when facing “one Man, of the Men the meanest too!/ Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo” (October 1803, 2-3).

In the eyes of Wordsworth, Napoleon abused the revolutionary rhetoric for all nations. In Wordsworth's opposition to Napoleon can be also seen rather strong patriotic tone. In *Poems*, 1807, Wordsworth offers the war against Napoleon as a kind of "public event" that would reunite the nation and would allow it to "discover once again the virtues on which its greatness was founded" (Cronin 126) so it can be said that Wordsworth saw in the war against Napoleon a certain purifying effect. Wordsworth's Napoleonic experience can be also seen as a kind of transition point in his thinking and writing as during the Napoleonic period he crossed "from defence of revolution to support of reaction" (Cambridge Companion 60). It can be stated that the figure of Napoleon and his rise to power was one of reasons that stopped Wordsworth's view on liberalism and why he began to identify himself as a conservative. The basic primary sources in the case of William Wordsworth will be the 1805 version of his poetical autobiography *The Prelude*⁶ and also a series of political sonnets in which Wordsworth reacted to the figure of Napoleon. Wordsworth's Napoleon is an antithesis of his political and social views and a betrayer of the French Revolution. It can be stated that Napoleon was one the reasons that caused Wordsworth to depart from republicanism and finally turn to political conservatism and support of the Crown.

George Gordon Byron's attitudes to the figure of Napoleon were very different. Byron was obsessed with Napoleon as well, but, contrary to Wordsworth, he did not necessarily see Napoleon as a tyrant and oppressor. Byron identified himself with Napoleon, he was for Byron a tragic figure "an historical embodiment of contradictions" (Cambridge Companion 63). Napoleon embodied for Byron the

⁶ *The Prelude* exists in several versions, the most prominent being the 1805 and 1850 versions. The 1805 version serves as a more appropriate source of Wordsworth's views of the French Revolution and Napoleon. Although Wordsworth was disillusioned with the French Revolution and Napoleon in 1805, this version clearly reveals Wordsworth's enthusiasm that felt for the Revolution in the early 1790s. In 1850 Wordsworth was an old conservative man and a respectable Poet Laureate and he intentionally toned down some of his earlier radical statements and generally polished the poetical style of his poetical autobiography.

possibilities of human and utmost individualism. There can even drawn parallels between their lives. Napoleon's invincibility was not only his military genius and but also propaganda and his public self-image. Napoleon himself intentionally participated in creating a myth that would make his victories and successes even more impressive. He made himself almost a mythical figure, a colossus that would overstep the limits of human abilities. The Napoleon that saw his contemporaries was not "an actual Napoleon" a real figure, but rather an iconic and unique character, an embodiment of individualism and will. Byron and his self-presentation can be seen in much the same way. Byron also laboriously worked on his image, so that he is not just a poet, but *the* Byron, a symbol with the entire mystique that surrounds him. Napoleon and Byron nowadays are not only praised as a superb military figure and a great poet, they have truly become symbols and cultural phenomena. Napoleon embodied the possibilities of human spirit and for Byron, as a man of action, Napoleon confirmed his belief that his ambition need not be bounded and he also represented "the capacity of genius to rise magnificently from nothing to the heights of power" (Clubbe). Byron saw in Bonaparte a liberator that would spread the ideals of the French Revolution across Europe. Byron stood always on the side the oppressed and he was much concerned about nationalist movement in Europe. Byron and Shelley hated the European monarchies and later the Holly Alliance that suppressed these movements. Byron was especially concerned about Italy as he was strongly against the existence of Italian puppet states that were under the control of Austria. Italy was one of the cradles of European culture and medieval Italian republics were models to follow. When Napoleon created his vassal states in Italy Byron saw in the act a renewal of the old order as he did not realize that these states would again only puppets in the hand of another foreign ruler.

The main primary sources, from which Byron's reactions to Napoleon will be examined, will be his "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte" and a series of Byron's "Napoleon's farewell" poems in which he identified himself with the fallen Emperor. Apart from the fact that Byron celebrates Napoleon as a titan and liberator, he also expressed his disillusionment with him. Byron's conception of Napoleon was that of a mythological hero, a titan, who reaches almost divine dimensions. Byron was shocked by the fact that after Napoleon was defeated in the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 he resigned and this act in Byron's view made Napoleon lose his mythical and divine status. Byron's disillusionment stems from the fact that he realizes that there is no "immortal" dimension of Napoleon and that he is an ordinary human figure. It is necessary to mention that Byron's historical and "mythical" Napoleons merge together in the poem. Byron compares Napoleon to great historical and mythological figures and he chooses the fallen angel Lucifer as a character that suits Napoleon most. Lucifer does not have a devilish and evil dimension in Byron's view; on the contrary, he is the symbol of light and change. Byron creates Napoleonic myth again and he looks up to his idol. Napoleon in Byron's view is an embodiment of unbounded ambitions and individualism and even his fall was spectacular. The actual historical Napoleon appears again when Byron claims that it was the fact that Napoleon survived his defeat and the resignation that greatly spoiled his self-image. In Byron's view it would be better if Napoleon had died on a battlefield or committed a suicide after his defeat, because his decision to live meant that he became an empty symbol and a sad reminder of his fallen fame. Byron claims that Napoleon's main fault was that he was not able to leave, or even die, in the right moment. He also accuses Napoleon that he had soon lost his liberator image and became a monarch – Napoleon was occupied with fighting for his empire rather than fighting for freedom and justice. It can be said that the depth of Byron's disillusionment

with Napoleon also matches the depth of his obsession with this figure. Although Byron scorned Napoleon, he was still obsessed with him because he strongly identified himself with Napoleon, he could not live without him. Byron's loss of an idol and symbol also meant a personal crisis for him.

Another poem that clearly reflects Byron's attachment to Napoleon are his shorter poems titled "Napoleon's Farewell" and "From the French". Byron forgets historical Napoleon and his faults and he praises his idol again. Byron here focuses on the ideals of freedom and justice that stood behind his expansion. He claims that the ideals of the French Revolution are right, as they found an enthusiastic support among numerous Europeans, Byron being one of them. Napoleon leaves into exile but the ideals he symbolizes are immortal and Byron remains optimistic and believes that their time will come some time in the future. In Byron's view Napoleon was not fully comprehended by his contemporaries and he was one of those geniuses who outdistanced his age and become symbols of future changes. Napoleon in this poem leaves his physical body and becomes an image and symbol again. Byron treated Napoleon similarly in his poem "Ode on the Star of 'The Legion of Honour'" and also in "Ode (From The French)". Byron ignores the political situation in Europe after Napoleon's defeat and he again sees Napoleon as the ultimate liberator of Europe. He turns to the world of natural phenomena and he associates Napoleon with a meteor that would sweep away tyranny from the European continent. Although he is disappointed with current politics, he believes that revolutionary ideals will find a wide appeal in the future. He sees Napoleon as a titan again and he believes that he was the first in the line of liberators who would make the ideals of the French Revolution true. In "Ode (From The French)" Byron becomes critical again and he blames Napoleon that he partly

betrayed the ideals of the Revolution and by becoming an Emperor he has cut himself from the masses of his supporters and this was the reason why he was finally defeated.

William Blake and the concept of revolution have long been linked. It can be said that his attitude to the French Revolution and the figure of Napoleon is a very ambivalent one. Blake himself can be called a revolutionary figure for his innovative approach to literature and visual arts. Blake firmly refused any form of political, social or artistic tyranny or religious dogmatism. The outburst of the French Revolution in 1789 was greeted by radicals or nonconformists in Britain, Blake being one of them, although during the 1790 he was not even a listed member of any of the radical societies of the 1790s. On the other hand, it has to be stated that Blake's attitude to the Revolution was rather philosophical and abstract as he was not so much concerned about actual political processes and "his emphasis consistently stays on the universal questions of humanity, even while directly critiquing the society he lived in" (Plummer Crafton 41). Blake's reflection of the Revolution is best accounted on in his work "The French Revolution" from 1791. Most contemporary romantic poets treated the Revolution as the greatest event of their life, for example Wordsworth with his "human nature born again" while William Blake represents the Revolution in moral, ethic and spiritual terms. Blake does not reflect the Revolution, Napoleon and other political events of his period as actual historical phenomena; he reflects these events in the light of his own vision so that the Revolution becomes a sacred event. Blake's tone is prophetic and history becomes mythology in his thought so that the French Revolution is "a revolution in the largest sense of the word – a natural cycle or rotation that will restore France (and the world) to its original liberty" (Plummer Crafton 42). In Blake's view the Revolution is not a coincidental event as it a part of the "cycle" and it is not a direct development forward, it is rather a return to the "original" ancient state of liberty

and purity. It can be said then, that Blake's attitude to the revolutionary ideas was positive, but, similarly to Wordsworth, he became disillusioned with actual outcomes of the Revolution. This disillusionment with the actual state of politics also affected Blake's attitude to Napoleon. On the other hand, it cannot be said that Blake was an enthusiastic supporter of the British monarchy and its military actions against France. In August 1803 he was accused by local dragon troop that "on the twelfth day [...] of August [...] Blake a Miniature painter [...] did utter [...] seditious expressions" (Philp 113). Although he was not arrested as the accusation was not proved, the trial with Blake served as a forbidding example for local citizens. One can then observe that Blake's attitude to Napoleon as well as Britain was rather ambivalent. Nevertheless, in Blake's view Napoleon was a usurper and tyrant who was hiding his autocratic aspirations behind the mask of hollow revolutionary ideals. Napoleon's elevating to Emperor, his concordat with the Catholic Church and military expansion erased any remaining hope in the minds of republicans such as Blake or Wordsworth.

The primary sources in the case of William Blake will be his *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, "The French Revolution" and also passages from his *Songs of Experience* and *Songs of Innocence*. One of the recurrent motives in these works is that of a predator or a tyrant and it is easy to associate these with the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. Blake declares that Napoleon is an embodiment of tyranny and by removing the rights of people he disturbs the divine order of things. As was already stated, Blake believed that the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity were right, on the other hand the French Revolution did not really follow these ideals and that was the reason why it failed. The main motif behind the Revolution was not the desire to gain freedom but only material ambitions. Napoleon Bonaparte did inherit the original fresh ideals but only their degenerated form which he even misused. He used the ideals of the

Revolution only as a noble motto under which were hidden his expansive plans. In Blake's view Napoleon not only conquered Europe, he even brought it back into pre-revolutionary times. Blake stresses the fact that Napoleon is full of antithesis – he is dangerous, horrific and beautiful and attractive at the same time – Blake's conception of Napoleon then involves both beauty and horror. Blake's image of Napoleon is highly mythological, as he associates Napoleon with a mighty monster which acts against the divine order of things. Napoleon-monster then challenges the nature of creative power of God, as Blake asks what kind of God or power could have created such ominous and yet attractive being. Blake then associates Napoleon with oppression and darkness and the ideals of the French Revolution represent purity and light. On the other hand, Blake believed that even such a strong being as Napoleon was predestined to be defeated, as he argued that Napoleon's expansive plans were in fact ideologically and spiritually empty and this was the main reason for his failure. Blake claimed that partly due to Napoleon (whom he associated with a predator, oppressor, barbarian...) Britain was degrading to similar level of barbarism. Blake insisted that Britain had become spiritually empty and needed to recreate spiritually. These ideas resonated most strongly in his prophetic work *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. Blake also asserted that the military machinery related to the wars with Napoleon and the growth of industry had a devastating effect on human spirituality, imagination and creativity and the monster-Napoleon then overshadows the entire epoch. Liberty in Blake's view is truly divine and it should not be treated as privilege, on the contrary, it should be seen as a prerequisite for the whole society. Blake also filled his *Jerusalem* with numerous apocalyptic images which clearly associate the horrors of Napoleonic wars. Blake uses various biblical and mythological allusions and symbols and also his own imagery – most notably the struggle between Albion and Luvah. He associates the character of

Luvah with passion for liberty and this character stands for revolutionary France and the struggle between Albion and Luvah represents the fight between France and other European states. Albion then condemns Luvah, what symbolizes the failure of the French Revolution. Although Blake became soon disillusioned with the actual political situation in France, he never lost his faith in the ideals of the Revolution. France had never really followed the ideals of the Revolution; on the other hand he accuses Britain and Europe for refusing them completely and the Revolution soon degenerated into Terror and later into Napoleonic conquest. Blake states that there is no good and evil side in the struggle with Napoleon, as France is led by tyrant and Britain is unfortunately degrading on a similar level.

2. “Fearful Symmetry” in William Blake’s Napoleonic and pre-Napoleonic Poems

William Blake lived in an age of wars and revolutions – military or political, intellectual and industrial. On the other hand, he spent his whole life in Britain, which was relatively safe from the rapid changes that struck the European continent. Britain was not plundered by the wars that stormed in Europe from 1792 until 1815 so that Blake could feel that “England was a green and pleasant land, potentially the mart of peaceful nations” (Erdman 3). Blake is often referred to as “Britain’s greatest revolutionary artist” and as a visionary who is mostly concerned with spirituality than politics (Eaves 133). On the other hand, Blake *was* a political writer who reacted to topical events and personae that defined the period – the American Revolution and War of Independence, the French Revolution and the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. It can be stated that Blake’s reactions to contemporary politics were in many respects indirect. Blake was deeply interested in current political issues; on the other hand, unlike Wordsworth or Byron, he has never left Britain so that he was not an eye-witness to political processes of the period (however inexperienced and naïve Wordsworth was during his visits to revolutionary France). Blake was influenced by Tomas Paine’s book *Rights of Man* which became a “bible” of British radicals and republicans in Britain in the 1790s. Although Blake was not a member of any radical society, he shared with Paineite republicans a hatred of the institutions of arbitrary power (Eaves 134). It is necessary to add that Blake’s republicanism was no means extreme. Blake was an engraver, a craftsman, a member of a new urban culture which emerged during the 18th century and this newly emergent class prized independence, on the other hand their “republicanism” was not coherent or fixed and by no means ideological. It took the form of a suspicion against the Crown and its possible actions against the rights of the people. Blake was a

“republican” long time before the outburst of the French Revolution and he reflected his views in numerous works.

One of the recurrent topics in his earlier works is that of a tyrant who is overthrown by his subjects, most notably in his historical poem “Gwin, King of Norway”. Even in this earlier work, Blake expresses his aversion to any form of tyranny. Blake creates a picture of oppressed people dominated by a cruel king who “drive[s] the needy from their door” (Gwin, King of Norway 7-8). In Blake’s imagery appears the motive of a tyrant who acts against the ancient order of things, that even divines and giants are forced to act against him. This image also recurs in Blake’s later reactions to Napoleon Bonaparte who is, in Blake’s imagery, truly the oppressor who not only removes the rights of people, but he also acts against the “divine” order of things. A similar motif appears in Blake’s unfinished dramatic fragment *King Edward the Third*, in which Blake interprets the Hundred Years War against France as a disastrous attempt driven by immoderate ambition and pride (Eaves 135). A similar situation appears in his poem titled “The French Revolution”, where he describes peoples’ storming of Bastille and overthrowing the feudal system in France. Blake claims that although the main motto of the French Revolution was “liberty, equality and fraternity”, it did not really achieve its goals. Although Blake enthusiastically supported the Revolution, he soon lost his optimistic view of it. In his view the ideals of the Revolution were right, but the French people did not really follow them. The main reason for the failure of the Revolution was that the actual motive behind the Revolution was not the desire to gain freedom. In Blake’s view the Revolution was in fact based on material ideas and it reduced the “human being to socioeconomic units” (Eaves 134). This “reduction” also continued in the Napoleonic period as Napoleon presented himself as a great liberator but in Blake’s view he was a monster who in fact brought

France and Europe back to the pre-revolutionary times. It can be said that Blake in these earlier works unconsciously mirrored Napoleon's later career, or rather the way Blake interpreted it.

There is a certain prophetic quality in Blake's works as he constructed the "predator" image which mirrors Napoleon's career long before Napoleon became really prominent and influential. The predator image is very distinct in Blake's works *Songs of Experience* and *Songs of Innocence* which were published in the mid-1790s. In this context it is necessary to mention William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* from 1805 in which he summarizes his visit to revolutionary France in the early 1790s. Wordsworth mixes his 1805 present with his revolutionary experience and he contrasts the predator Napoleon (identified with a lion, eagle and other beasts of prey) with rural paradise of the Swiss Republic. William Blake used these motives in much the same fashion in his parts of *Songs of Experience* and *Songs of Innocence* in "The Tyger" and "The Lamb". Blake asks the tiger "What immortal hand or eye/ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" (The Tyger, *Songs of Experience*). Although Blake created these passages some ten years before Napoleon's coronation in 1804, when he virtually became the most powerful person in Europe, it purely reflects Blake's approach to tyrants and oppressors. The tiger is, in its essence, strikingly beautiful and, on the other hand, also horrific because of its capacity for violence. Blake foretold here the kind of fascination and enthusiasm for Napoleon that shared many of his contemporaries. Napoleon was fascinating in the same way as the tiger because the romantic image of Napoleon contained both beauty and horror. Blake raises the question what kind of "art/ Could twist the sinews of thy heart?" (The Tyger, *Songs of Experience*). He asks whether it is possible to create a being which is horrific and violent and at the same time beautiful and fascinating. This kind of perfectly beautiful and yet destructive creature, be it the

tiger, or the figure of Napoleon is a central point for investigation of evil in the world. In Blake's view Napoleon will become similarly fearfully fascinating being in a few years and Blake is fascinated by the fact that it is possible that beautiful and yet evil and good were created by the same God. When Blake exclaims "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" (*The Tyger, Songs of Experience*), he asks what kind of God or power could have this creative responsibility and will. Blake's tiger/Napoleon becomes here a mythological being which in its essence and existence challenges and questions the nature of God's creative act. Blake also poses similar questions in "The Lamb" when he asks "who made thee/ Gave thee life, and bid thee feed" (*The Lamb, Songs of Innocence*). The creator of the lamb is the same as in the case of the tiger, evil is then inseparable from the good. In this poem also appears the rural setting as in Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, which can be contrasted with "the forests of the night" (*The Lamb, Songs of Innocence*) with the exotic and dangerous – which can be embodied by the tiger or the figure of Napoleon. These two contrasting images represent the ideological shift that Blake made during the 1790s. The lamb in its rural and idyllic setting clearly symbolizes innocence and purity what metaphorically expresses the purity and cleanness of the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. As was already stated, these ideals were perfectly right in Blake's view, nevertheless these were not the real ideals of the Revolution. The actual motives behind the Revolution were material and they were reduced to the "heartless calculations of "Politicians"" and were degraded to a level of "dismal science" (Eaves 134). This was, in Blake's view, the reason why the Revolution failed to fulfil its ideals, because it was driven by desires for influence and material profits (Damon 36). The situation was then ready for the tiger-Napoleon. Although the "The Tyger" was written in the mid 1790s, the main motive of it can easily embody the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon cleverly used the actual

emptiness of revolutionary ideals and “burning bright” he threw Europe “In the forests of the night” (The Tyger, *Songs of Experience*). Napoleon’s actions and campaigns were ideologically empty in Blake’s view and that was the reason why he was doomed to fail. Although the tiger/Napoleon is a powerful being which is fascinating in its horrific beauty, he also bespeaks of the figure of creator himself. Only a very strong and powerful being could be capable of creating such monster and thus it also must have the capacity to overthrow it. In Blake’s view even the biggest monsters of creation cannot resist and act against its faith which was predestined by the Creator.

When Napoleon rose to power after 1799⁷, Blake was far from idealizing him, unlike many of his contemporaries. As was already stated, Blake stood against any form of tyranny and was highly suspicious of the Crown due to his “apolitical” republican views. Napoleon’s actions were pure barbarism, because of Napoleon’s imperial aspirations. On the other hand Britain itself was degrading into a similar barbaric state not so much because it is at war as because it was also an empire. In the early 1800s, during the Napoleonic Wars, Britain reached a historical crisis as Blake felt that it needed to revive spiritually. In accordance with one of his masterpieces *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* he demanded that his country should achieve an imaginative recreation of itself (Frye 406). England needed to reach the spiritual England, or Albion⁸, in the same way as the Hebrew prophets spiritually achieved the Holy Land. Blake used the motive of Albion from classical sources, where it is identified with ancient Trojans (Eaves 9) and Blake’s vision of Albion, of spiritually

⁷ In the late 1790s Napoleon led several successful military campaigns (Italy, Egypt). The French Republic was bankrupt, however, and the ineffective Directory was unpopular with the French population. By clever political manoeuvres he secured his own election as First Consul and this made him the most powerful person in France.

⁸ In Blake’s imagery Albion is the primeval man whose fall and division fall into Four Zoas – Urizen, Tharmas, Luvah/Orc and Urthona/Los. The name is derived from an ancient mythological name for Britain – Albion. In the mythical story of founding Britain, Albion was a Giant son of Poseidon, the god of seas. Albion founded a country on a island (Britain) and he was the king there. Albion was killed by the mythical here Heracles.

and creatively awakened England became the leitmotiv of his poetic works in the 1800s. Blake thought that the development of industry had a devastating effect on the state of human mind and imagination. In Blake's view the doctrines of external nature and external experience spread over the arts. The English still had their poets, but they were becoming unable to understand them and how to use their imagination (Frye 406) and along with these developments, Britain was at war with Napoleon. Together with the monster of the loss of spiritual identity there appears the monster of Napoleon Bonaparte who, in Blake's view, greatly contributed to Britain's degradation into barbarism.

William Blake reacted to the topical problems of his period (lack of creative power and spirituality, industrialization and rationalization and war with Napoleon) in his work *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. It is obvious that throughout his life Blake was treating "contemporary politics in terms of biblical precedents" (Eaves 138). The metaphor of Jerusalem is very complex in Blake's imagination. Jerusalem is an inspiration for the whole mankind, or a Holy City of peace which is the symbol of perfect society. Blake here also plays with the meaning of the word Jerusalem – "City of Peace" (Damon 206). What is more, Jerusalem in Blake's view stands for liberty, which is a gift from God. Blake further defines liberty not as a privilege; on the contrary, as a requisite of all society, liberty then is not only a freedom of creation and imagination, but also a freedom from any kind spiritual as well as physical oppression. Although Blake does not relate to Napoleon directly in this work, one of the main topics is liberty and freedom from oppression and these questions were becoming topical in 1804 when this poem was published and when Napoleon reached one of the peaks of his fame.

Blake filled his *Jerusalem* with numerous allusions to the Bible and ancient mythology. Jesus Christ represents humanity in its divine form, Albion stands for

universal humanity and as was already stated, the metaphor of Jerusalem stands for liberty and freedom. The characters (Jesus, Albion, Jerusalem) of the poem take human forms in certain passages, but in different parts they change into formless beings “of psychic or cosmic categories resisting both stability and definition” (Eaves 251). Blake opens the poem with an exclamation about arts and creation – “We who dwell on Earth can do nothing of ourselves, every/ thing is conducted by Spirits, no less than digestion and sleep” (*Jerusalem*). Every living creature is fully in the hands of its creator and cannot resist him any way. Even the seemingly most powerful and frightening creatures (tiger/Napoleon) cannot resist their faith. If one looks on historical circumstances of the early 1800s, it is clearly visible that the predator who wanted to equate himself with gods was Napoleon. During his act of coronation in 1804 he took the Emperor’s crown from Pope’s hands and he placed it on his head. He refused the authority of Pope and thus made himself equal to god and seen from the perspective of *Jerusalem*, no being can equate himself to god.

Blake creates in his *Jerusalem* numerous gloomy images which correspond with his disillusionment with contemporary politics, wars with Napoleon and the resulting decline of creativity and imagination. Blake exclaims:

The banks of the Thames are clouded! the ancient porches of Albion are
Darken’d! They are thrown thro’ unbounded space, scatter’d upon
The Void of incoherent despair! Cambridge, Oxford and London,
Are driven among the starry Wheels, rent away and dissipated,
In Chasms & Abysses of sorrow, enlarg’d without dimension, terrible
(*Jerusalem*)

As was already stated, in Blake’s interpretation, Albion stood for the “politically awakened England” (Damon 9), on the other hand in these passages he shows the decline of once spiritually and creatively strong England. It is interesting to compare these passages with those of Blake’s “French Revolution”, as Blake uses very similar imagery – “The nerves of six thousand years' ancestry tremble, shaking the heavens of

France” (The French Revolution). In both passages appears the notion of tradition – “six thousand years tradition” (the biblical notion that world is about 6000 years old) and in Jerusalem the national symbols of Cambridge, Oxford and London. Cambridge and Oxford represent a strong intellectual tradition which is in decline and when intellectual traditions of a country decline, the country than degenerates into barbarism. In the “French Revolution” Blake describes the situation before the Revolution, which he identifies with barbarism, which is in fact masked by a sensuous pomp – “Shall this marble-built heaven become a clay cottage, this earth an oak stool” (The French Revolution). Blake identifies pre-revolutionary France with ignorance in which masses of people are intentionally kept so that they do not realize that they live in a state of oppression. Blake uses the image of Bastille which stands for the whole regime, in which a prisoner is “Bound to the impregnable wall” (The French Revolution). This impregnable wall is the social barrier and ignorance of common people to realize the fact they are oppressed. Blake’s “dark ages” of feudal pre-revolutionary France in “The French Revolution” are reflected in the opening scene of *Jerusalem*, where he describes the decline of intellectual authorities and spiritual traditions in England. A nation which neglects its intellectual and spiritual traditions degenerates into ignorance and it is much easier to be manipulated with. In Blake’s view England was becoming much the same country as France before 1789, and as Napoleon’s France in 1800s when *Jerusalem* was written and when Napoleon became the most powerful person in Europe.

Blake further focuses on intellectual traditions, their importance and their gradual degradation and decline. The centres of learning are seen as continuous centres of consciousness which govern human thought.

I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities of Europe
And there behold the Loom of Locke whose Woof rages dire
Washd by the Water-wheels of Newton. Black the cloth
In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation; cruel Works

Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
Wheel within wheel in freedom revolve in harmony and peace.
(*Jerusalem*)

Blake argues that materialist philosophy which he associates with John Locke and Isaac Newton has caused the spiritual and creative crisis in England. Blake claims that imagination and creativity decline because even the existence of God is explained by scientific rationalization. This focus on sensuality and an implementation of strict moral conduct distances an individual from creative process, imagination and spiritual reward. Blake also makes allusion to industrialization and machinery which is also responsible for human degradation into a state of barbarism as he makes repeated allusions to weaving – raging woof and loom, cogs and water wheels. In these lines again appears the image of a predator with its fearful symmetry who leads into tyranny and enslavement and the wheels and looms “weave a funeral cloth to cover the death it conceals” (Whitmarsh-Knight 103). In Blake’s view England straggled from its intellectual and visionary tradition⁹ (such as John Milton) and what is more, it is in war with a tyrant-barbarian who in fact degrades it into a similar state of barbarism. This loss of the line is tragic, on the other hand “Blake will of course be told that England is at war with Napoleon and is too busy for extra things” (Frye 406). The thread of tyranny, if it is in form of oppressor Napoleon, machinery, loss of imagination, is contrasted with freedom and biblical allusions. Blake uses the allusion to Ezekiel’s account to the Holy Chariot¹⁰, which is considered to be the highest level of mystical teaching in Judaism, which “Wheel within wheel in freedom revolve in harmony and

⁹ William Blake considered John Milton the major English poet and he saw himself as Milton’s poetical son (Makdisi 145). In response to Milton’s *Paradise Lost* Blake composed his own epic entitled *Milton: A Poem*. It is Blake’s longest poetic work, and features Milton himself as its hero.

¹⁰ Ezekiel’s chariot, or in Hebrew Merkabah is used in Ezekiel to refer to the throne-chariot of God, the four-wheeled vehicle driven by Four “chayot” (in Hebrew living creatures) each of which has four wings and the four faces of a man, lion, ox, and eagle. The prophet Ezekiel was given a view into the heavenly realms which is disclosed in the first and tenth chapters of the Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel’s account of the Holy Chariot is considered to be the highest level of mystical teaching in Judaism (Ezekiel’s “Chariot”).

peace". Blake here again associates freedom and harmony with biblical contexts, indirectly with the image of Jerusalem which stands for liberty. The divine wheels revolve in harmony and peace while Newton's wheels are associated with imbalance and tyranny.

William Blake filled his Jerusalem with numerous apocalyptic visions which reflect his state of mind and also the situation in Europe in the early 1800s. It can be said that Blake creates his apocalyptic visions in a pleasing way, so that "much of Jerusalem is an excursion into the horrific sublime" (Eaves 261). Blake describes human soul without creativity and imagination as "Horrible ghastr & deadly! nought shalt thou find in it/ But dark despair & everlasting brooding melancholy!" (*Jerusalem*). Although these images refer to the abstract, they can clearly refer to war or tyranny when Blake exclaims

My morn & evening food were prepar'd in Battles of Men
Great is the cry of the Hounds of Nimrod along the Valley
Of Vision, they scent the odor of War in the Valley of Vision
All love is lost! Terror succeeds & Hatred instead of Love
And stern demands of Right & Duty instead of liberty
(*Jerusalem*)

In these lines Blake reacts to the degradation and loss of imagination again. The scientific approach to reality and focus on senses ruins human emotions and imagination/creativity. This lack of emotions and imagination has a devastating effect on liberty and freedom as such. Liberty in Blake's view is the most important aspect of human existence and it is inseparable from emotions, creativity and imagination. Blake claims that the "stern demands of Right & Duty" lead into oppression and tyranny and they "adopt the hypocrisies and cruelties of moral law and, judgment for sin and punishment in states of righteousness" (Whitmarsh-Knight 61).

Blake describes in the poem a struggle between Albion, the personification of England, and Luvah¹¹. In an abstract sense, this struggle is a tension between man and his passion. Both characters are both males and females and their struggle can be interpreted in historical circumstances as a struggle between England and France. Luvah/France takes the form of passion for liberty in the French Revolution. As was already stated, Blake supported the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity; on the other hand he believed that the real motives behind the Revolution were material. The reason why the Revolution failed was similar to the situation in England – degradation of ideals and spirituality and decline of imagination. Seen from purely historical perspective, the struggle between Albion and Luvah can be interpreted as the wars between revolutionary France and its opponents. In Blake's visions Albion limits Luvah and he condemns Luvah to death. According to Blake, revolutionary France did not really follow its primary ideals, on the other hand he also blames England for refusing them completely, so when Albion condemns Luvah to death “England rejects and condemns liberty in France” (Doskow 97). Further, when “Luvah tore forth from Albion's lions, in fibrous veins, in rives/ Of blood over Europe” (*Jerusalem*), repressed liberty causes repressive European wars. The repressed and condemned liberty degenerates and it “turns chaotic and serpentine as the French Revolution turns into terror and Napoleonic conquest” (Doskow 97). From Blake's perspective, the war between Albion/England and Luvah/France is a struggle in which there is no good side and evil side. Napoleon's France is led by tyrant and conqueror and England is degrading to a similar level. On the other hand, Blake believes that

¹¹ Luvah is a character that reappears in Blake's poems – it is first mention in the *Four Zoas*, in *Milton a Poem* and finally in *Jerusalem*. Luvah was created when Albion, the primordial man, was divided into fourths. Luvah represents love, passion and rebellious energy and also a generative act that is connected to experience (Bloom 160). Luvah is also connected to Jesus who takes upon his form as the being of love after Luvah falls and turns into the being of hate. Luvah dwells in the East and rules the human heart (Wright).

spiritually “awakened England would make short work of Napoleon” (Frye 407), but at this moment it not capable of this act.

3. Napoleonic Usurpation in William Wordsworth's Poetry

William Wordsworth reacted to the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte in numerous poems, letters or sonnets. As was already stated, each romantic poet that reacted to Napoleon created his own vision of this figure. These “Napoleons” were truly imagined characters that in many cases did not have much in common with the actual person, and that reflected writers’ thinking, political preferences, experience etc. It can be said that each imagined Napoleon was in certain respects a reflection or a projection of the author himself. In the case of George Gordon Byron Napoleon was a character that represented the triumph of human will and possibilities of an individual so that “Napoleon and Byron together dominate nineteenth-century conceptions of hero” (Clubbe). William Wordsworth’s Napoleon, on the other hand, was not the projection of Wordsworth’s personal aspirations but rather an antithesis of Wordsworth’s political and social views, a figure which Wordsworth objected to. Wordsworth’s imaginary Napoleon is a usurper, autocrat and oppressor, a person that betrayed ideas of the French Revolution. It can be also said that Napoleon is the reason or a figure that is responsible for Wordsworth’s final departure from republicanism and his support to revolutionary ideas, to conservative views and monarchism.

This chapter deals with the part Napoleon Bonaparte plays in Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* and his sonnets that were written in the first years of the 19th century. Wordsworth’s autobiographical poem *The Prelude* exists in several versions as Wordsworth had worked on the poem for 35 years and this is the reason why various versions of the poem differ rather markedly. The two major versions are the 1805 and 1850 versions which differ from each other quite considerably. William Wordsworth, by the end of his life, was already a respectable poet and also the Poet Laureate so he polished the style of *The Prelude* and he toned down some of its radical statements

concerning the French Revolution. On the other hand the 1805 version serves as a more appropriate source about Wordsworth's attitudes to the French Revolution and Napoleon. The 1805 version is greatly influenced by Wordsworth's post-revolutionary experience and it does not reflect the French Revolution directly. Wordsworth expresses his views of Napoleon most directly in the Book VI. of *The Prelude* where he describes his journey through France, Switzerland and Italy in the summer of 1790. Although the trip was a spontaneous arrangement of young people, it can be seen in a wider cultural context. This experience played a vital role in Wordsworth's life as it was an important episode in his poetical growth and it also influenced his political and social views. Wordsworth reflected on this even in numerous poems and it can be stated the importance and meaning of the tour grew year by year. In many respects it was a parallel to the grand tours of 18th century and it is "as important in the development of European Romantic culture as [...] as Byron's and Shelley's summer on the Lake of Geneva in 1816" (Johnston 203). Although Wordsworth describes the period of the French Revolution; he makes allusion to his "Napoleonic" present of 1804/1805. He describes his impressions of the Alps of the 1790s; on the other hand he projects the figure of Napoleon, his presence, into these impressions. Wordsworth then uses his autobiographical experiences as opportunities to "respond to contemporary history and particularly to 'the Usurper' Napoleon Bonaparte" (Bainbridge 54). The act of usurpation is central to Wordsworth's description of the Alps. The first of Napoleon's usurpations is his coup d'état of Brumaire 1799¹² and the second usurpation is represented by Wordsworth's switch to the present of 1804 (VI. 525-48).

As was already stated, William Wordsworth and his friend Robert Jones took a walking tour through France, Switzerland and Italy in 1790. They took part in the

¹² The coup of 18 Brumaire (9 November 1799) was Napoleon's unconstitutional deposition of government, when he replaced the French Directory with the French Consulate.

celebrations of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille and they were impressed by the festivities of a “whole nation...mad with joy”. On the other hand they were not so much interested in the political development in revolutionary France as they wanted to “experience for themselves what they had only read about, the sublimity of the Alps” (Gill 45). In this very aim of their walking tour it is possible to observe an aspect of the “third usurpation”, the frustrating desire to experience the sublime. Wordsworth in his descriptions of the alpine scenery makes numerous allusions to his “military” presence of 1804 when Napoleon was on peak of his fame, as describes their tour as a “march [...] of military speed” (*The Prelude*, VI. 429) and Wordsworth and his companion are “keen hunters” and “eager as birds of prey”. In these descriptions of their trips Wordsworth prefigures the march of French army and Switzerland’s loss of liberty. The descriptions of “usurpations” mingle in these passages, as Wordsworth expresses their personal desire to see the Alps and these lines also serve as a metaphor for French subjugation of Switzerland. Wordsworth plays with numerous opposites in order to contrast Switzerland before and after the French subjugation. He uses words such as “small birds” (462), “The maiden” (465) and he sets them beside carnivores such as “lion” (466) and “eagle” (463). It can be stated, that both animals stand for strength and aggression. What is even more striking in this symbolism is the fact that the symbol of eagle was adopted by Napoleon after his coronation as Emperor, so that both symbols “denote victory and imperialism” (Johnston 204).

Wordsworth even uses the images of changing landscape in order to predict the changes in Switzerland when he mentions that “earth did change her images and forms/ Before us” (*The Prelude*, VI. 429-30). As Bainbridge states, this description anticipated “the change to come in the governmental form of Switzerland, from independent

republic to French satellite” (64). It is necessary to point out that their “desire for usurpation” turned out to be a great disappointment:

That day we first
Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved
To have a soulless image on the eye
Which had usurped upon a living thought
That never more could be...
(*The Prelude*, VI. 452-6)

The mountain has no aesthetic or visual interest for Wordsworth and the prevailing emotion in these lines is grief and mourning so that this passage is written in an elegiac tone. This disappointing experience is largely conditioned by the fact that the primary idea of sublimity of the mountain was “replaced by the dead materialist world of the 'soulless image', its life with its soul departed” (Bainbridge 59).

As was already mentioned, the concept of usurpation and the word “to usurp” plays an important role in the Book VI. of *The Prelude*. Nevertheless, as Simon Bainbridge states, it is a word rarely used by Wordsworth (59) and the word has clear political resonance. It is necessary to remember that in the time of Wordsworth’s trip to Switzerland and also when he was writing the first version of *The Prelude*; usurpations were going on all around. In the year 1799 Napoleon overthrew the Directorate and Legislative Assemblies (9-10th November/ 18-19th Brumaire) and he reached control as the First Consul. After seizing the control in France, Napoleon Bonaparte was often called “the usurper” in British parliamentary speeches and newspapers and this word became a technical term or even a synonym for him. When Wordsworth was writing *The Prelude*, Napoleon had already reached his decisive victories and that made him the most powerful figure in Europe and “in the context of the years immediately preceding 1804 “usurper” cannot refer to anyone other than Napoleon” (Liu 26). Seen from this perspective, the “usurpation” of the Alps and the subsequent disappointment can be also interpreted as a metaphor in which the “soulless image” usurps like Napoleon and then

destroys the “living thought”. Wordsworth then uses political terminology to describe his own biographical experiences and also through this terminology he refers to contemporary career of Napoleon.

Wordsworth often uses in *The Prelude* pastoral imagery and sublimity of the landscape in order to contrast it with actual political processes of the period. As was already said, the primary motivation of the tour was to see the Alps:

Nature, then, was sovereign in my heart,
And mighty forms seizing a youthful fancy
Had given charter to irregular hopes”
(*The Prelude*, VI. 346-8).

Although he describes nature, the diction of these lines (sovereign, charter) is clearly political. Wordsworth here again draws parallels between his personal life, between a declaration of his personal independence and liberty, and a larger public sphere. These words clearly indicate contrast with actual political events of the period when *The Prelude* was written – Napoleon’s invasion of Switzerland and his military campaigns of the early 19th century. Wordsworth uses the description of Switzerland – its landscape and its republican political status as a metaphor “to envisage his hopes for the rebirth of the signalled by the French Revolution” (Bainbridge 61). Although *The Prelude* describes the era the French Revolution, Wordsworth projects his 1804 present into the poem. On the one hand he exclaims very enthusiastically about the Revolution and the fall of Bastille:

But ’twas a time when Europe was rejoiced,
France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.
(*The Prelude*, VI. 352-4)

In these lines one can clearly observe young, and in many respects naïve, Wordsworth of 1790, expressing his support to the Revolution. On the other hand into this “revolutionary” atmosphere also enters a bit more experienced and disillusioned

Wordsworth of 1804, expressing his grief about Napoleon's subjugation of Switzerland and his betrayal of Revolutionary ideals. The Swiss symbolized freedom and independence for Wordsworth also in his *Descriptive Sketches* of 1793 and in his poem "Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland" (1806/1807). In "Thought..." Wordsworth also contrasts liberty and usurpation and he uses even more explicit vocabulary, when he refers to Napoleon as "tyrant" who came to Switzerland "with holy glee/ Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven" (Thought..., 5-6).

The pastoral diction is most evident when Wordsworth describes the life of the "peace-loving Swiss":

when first I did look down
On that which was first seen of those deep haunts,
A green recess, an aboriginal vale,
Quiet, and lorded over and possessed
By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents
Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns
And by the river-side.
That day
(*The Prelude*, VI. 446-52)

Wordsworth here present almost a Rousseauian vision of innocence and purity which is indicated by the vocabulary – first, green, aboriginal, naked, fresh etc. In this edenic scene the mankind and its nature is "born again" and in political terms man has returned to innocence and independence. As was already said, "Napoleonic" Wordsworth often enters this Eden of Swiss Republic in order to express his grief and disillusionment. Wordsworth "mixes" his personal experience with the public sphere, or more general historical circumstances when he informs the reader of what happened years after his visit:

...become oppressors in their turn,
Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
For one of conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for...
(*The Prelude*, X. 791- 4)

In these lines it is possible to observe, that in the course of a single literary piece the author expresses contradictory opinions from two different periods. On the other hand it is necessary to keep in mind that Wordsworth “never went back on his sympathy for the early stages of the Revolution” (Purkis 31). Even after the defeat of Napoleon, when Wordsworth finally turned to Toryism he argued that he lost his trust in France only “when they abandoned Liberty, gave themselves to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world”. It can be said that that Napoleon and his invasions to Switzerland was the major reason that cause Wordsworth and also other Lake Poets lose their trust in France and the Revolution. France in fact invaded Switzerland twice, first without Napoleon’s involvement in 1798 and then in 1802 during the Peace of Amiens and “this act of French aggression towards Switzerland [...] turned many of the Whigs against Bonaparte in a manner similar to that later expressed by Wordsworth” (Bainbridge 63). In the light of these facts it is not surprising that Wordsworth includes his 1804 impressions into his recollection of Switzerland and the Revolution.

It was not only Napoleon’s invasion to Switzerland that was responsible for Wordsworth’s refusal of the French Revolution. In the Book X of *The Prelude*, which describes his residence in France in 1791-92, he describes Napoleon’s coronation ceremony in 1804. In these passages it is also important to note that Wordsworth again enters his text and he reprints wider historical circumstances - Napoleon’s coronation - into his personal recollections of France of the 1790s. He describes the contemporary historical developments as “...steps of our degeneracy/ all degradation of this age...” (*The Prelude*, X. 934-935), that is a complete departure from the grand ideals of the Revolution and an inevitable decline. Wordsworth’s disillusionment with the figure of Napoleon is such that he even calls the coronation “the catastrophe” (937) and Wordsworth again employs the images of beasts of prey when he associates Napoleon

and France with “the dog/ Returning to his vomit” (*The Prelude*, X. 941-2). In these lines again appears the image of Napoleon as a usurper and “for Wordsworth in 1804 'usurpation' was a word capable of standing for the general decline of 1790-1804” (Bainbridge 69). One of the most important features of *The Prelude* is the fact that numerous episodes are shuffled and they are not ordered chronologically. In 1804/1805 Wordsworth looks back and he chooses the most important events of his life and his period so that he does not recreate direct “uncontaminated” memories, but rather his current look on revolutionary events. It is necessary to note that Wordsworth greatly simplifies the whole situation and he inevitably constructs his “own Napoleon” a vicious figure, that does not have much in common with the actual person. Wordsworth then chooses a particular historical figure which he interprets in his own way, he chooses several iconic events and he makes them stand for the whole period. When Wordsworth expresses his grief in *The Prelude*, be it in case of Mont Blank incident, or his disillusionment with France and Napoleon, his grief has a clear political meaning. Wordsworth concludes his visits to France by a message to Coleridge:

If for France I have grieved
Who in the judgement of no few, hath been
A trifler only, in her proudest day,
Have been distressed to think of what she once
Promised...
(*The Prelude*, X. 954-8)

These lines express Wordsworth disillusionment with the overall situation in France; nevertheless, these words represent “Napoleonic” Wordsworth and not his immediate response to the situation in France in 1790. This disillusionment stands for the unfulfilled expectations Wordsworth had about the Revolution. He expresses the discrepancy between the things “once promised” and the present-day situation. Seen from the 1804 perspective it is quite clear that the person that is responsible for the unfulfilled expectations and wishes is Napoleon. In much the same way when

Wordsworth in his sonnet titled “I grieved for Buonaparte” grieves “for Buonaparte, with a vain/ And unthinking grief” (1-2) he grieves for him because he Napoleon failed to embody the promises of the Revolution.

Wordsworth visited France again in 1802 in order to meet Annette Vallon and their child Caroline¹³. Although he was already disappointed with the situation in France, he still felt a deep emotional attachment to the country due to his revolutionary experience. Wordsworth perceives Napoleon as a real usurper – not only in political and military sense of the word, he even usurps human senses. In one of his sonnets titled “October 1803” Wordsworth describes Napoleon as a person who truly dominates the era:

When looking on the present face of things
I see one Man, of men the meanest too
Raised up to sway the world, to undo
(October 1803, 1-3)

Wordsworth registers Napoleon through the eyes and other senses and Napoleon’s domination over Europe is in many respects reflected in his tyranny over human senses. Wordsworth finds out that there is a great gap between his expectation and reality. Napoleon changes reality in way that Wordsworth disapproves of – Wordsworth supported the ideals of the French Revolution as he saw them as a great chance for mankind. Napoleon also challenged old orders in Europe, but as a general he “swayed the world” and brought Europe into a period of chaos and tyranny. Unlike Blake, Wordsworth does not see Napoleon as a beast at this moment; he only expresses his grief over the situation in France and whole Europe. In Wordsworth’s view the ominous and degenerated is Napoleon and not really revolutionary France and his grief has

¹³ Wordsworth met with Annette (Marie Anne) Vallon in Orleans in 1791 during his second visit to France. Their baby, a daughter Anne Caroline was born on December 15 1792 and it was in Paris when Wordsworth learned this news. He soon had to leave England because he stayed in France to the limit of his financial resource (Legouis 43). Wordsworth planned to come back to France as soon as possible, nevertheless a war between Britain and France soon broke out and it was not until the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 that he could visit France again.

clearly a political dimension. Napoleon in Wordsworth's eyes stands as an example of "peculiar harsh and unregenerate reality in tension with Wordsworth's hopes for France" (Bainbridge 73). Wordsworth similarly grieves for Napoleon one of his mature sonnets titled "I Grieved for Buonaparte" where he exclaims "I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain/ And unthinking grief" (1-2). Wordsworth's grief is not sympathetic one – Napoleon is not a politician an intellectual, he has been trained as a military figure most of his life and Wordsworth believes that such person can have only expansive and oppressive aims.

Wordsworth often turns inwards when he is confronted with Napoleon. In his sonnet "Calais, August 15, 1802" he contrasts the situation in France with his still rather idealized vision of France during the Revolution.

Festivals have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparte's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway--
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far other show
My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.
(Calais..., 1-15)

Wordsworth faces the reality that contemporary France does not resemble the France he remembers from revolutionary times. This short sonnet evokes his images of revolutionary France from *The Prelude* where he describes festivities celebrating the 1st anniversary of the Revolution. Wordsworth is shocked that the same nation celebrated the end of oppression and now, some ten years later; it celebrates a person in which Wordsworth sees an oppressor. Wordsworth distances himself from this situation and he

turns into his mind for a solution and he “sounds” himself. He universalizes and also impersonalizes his message when he uses the third person – “happy is he...”, but by using this device he shows that he is not happy or satisfied. It can be said that this retreat from current affairs is in many respects forced, or not willed. Wordsworth understands that Napoleon represents a considerable threat for Britain and that he has to be fought with poetically as well as physically. The threat of Napoleon’s invasion to Britain was really topical, as from May 1803 until July 1805 Napoleon’s army was camped at Boulogne ready to cross to English Channel. In his short poem “Lines on the expected Invasion” Wordsworth calls to unite the whole nation and all political factions in order to fight Napoleon.

To have one Soul, and perish to a man,
Or save this honoured Land from every Lord
But British reason and the British sword.
(Lines..., 18-20)

Wordsworth turns away from his idealized France of the past and his poem acquires a really patriotic tone. It can be said that by 1803 Wordsworth finally enclosed his revolutionary past and he expressed keenest support to his homeland. Napoleon was no longer any abstract threat hidden behind poetical metaphors as in *The Prelude* where Wordsworth identifies him with an eagle or a lion, but does not address him directly. Wordsworth does not look “on the present state of things” from distance, as the threat of invasion becomes really topical and Napoleon acquires physical dimension in Wordsworth’s thinking. Because Napoleon is a man action, it is necessary to become active as well – and even Wordsworth is activated – he becomes the member of Grasmere Volunteers during the campaign of home defence. Wordsworth tends to see Napoleon as a personal enemy, as if he should encounter and fight him in person. Wordsworth’s attitude to Napoleon is no longer impersonal, Wordsworth begins to see Napoleon as a rival as Napoleon embodies what Wordsworth failed to achieve. Since

his visit to France in 1790s Wordsworth had nurtured “a vision of himself as fulfilling the role of statesman” (Bainbridge 85) and as Napoleon is a statesman-general that dominates the period, Wordsworth’s hostility towards him really reaches personal dimensions. Wordsworth claims that Napoleon’s actions cannot be really successful – although he has reached numerous victories, his successes are only short-lived and will not have a lasting effect. Napoleon is a general and not a real politician or statesman and this disqualify him from a really successful career, as he is a man of action and he is not “wise”:

Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True Power doth grow on; and her rights are these.
(I Grieved for Buonaparte, 9-14)

Napoleon cannot reach wisdom because he was trained in military drill and not in “perfect freedom” and this makes him unsuitable for the position of a real politician and statesman. Although Wordsworth scorned Napoleon, he, maybe unknowingly, wanted to reach his height and fame. Wordsworth expressed his political aspirations in his short poem titled “It is no Spirit who from Heaven Hath Flown”:

And, while I gazed, there came to me a thought
That I might step beyond my natural race
As thou seem'st now to do; might one day trace
Some ground not mine; and, strong her strength above,
My Soul, an Apparition in the place,
Tread there with steps that no one shall reprove!
(It is no Spirit..., 12-17)

Wordsworth here strangely identifies himself with Napoleon – although he uses the first person he in fact describes Napoleon’s rise to power and his fame. Wordsworth here describes his desire to overstep the possibilities of human and even to reach a titanic

status – “to step beyond one’s natural race”. Wordsworth becomes truly “Napoleonic”, nevertheless it is Napoleon who reaches these titanic dimensions.

4. “Buonaparte’s” Farewells in George Gordon Byron’s Poetry

George Gordon Byron and Napoleon Bonaparte both became mythical figures which dominate the 19th century. Napoleon Bonaparte was appreciated by numerous contemporaries as the greatest European, a titan that would spread the ideas of the French Revolution across Europe. Napoleon became an embodiment of unbounded individualism, truly a cultural and social symbol which lived independently from the “actual” Napoleon Bonaparte with his undoubted genius, brilliant victories and also propaganda. George Gordon Byron became a similar colossus which dominates the 19th century European literature. Contrary to Wordsworth and Blake, Napoleon in Byron’s view was a liberator and a fighter against tyranny. Wordsworth and Blake saw Napoleon as an antithesis of their ideals and political views, Byron, on the other hand, strongly identified with Napoleon and he saw Napoleon as an embodiment of his aspirations. In Byron’s eyes Napoleon was a man of action and a symbol of uttermost individualism “shaming the more finely-tuned introvert of intellectual abilities” (Knight 94). Apart from their individualism and egoism, there are also numerous biographical similarities that bound these two personalities together. They both began their lives as relative outsiders¹⁴ and later on they became symbols that stood for the whole period. They had to face defeats and finally they were forced to spend the rest of their lives in exile.

Byron’s poetic fascination with Napoleon was most intensive during 1814-1816, when he “found himself obsessed with the huge shadow cast by the twice-fallen Emperor” (Clubbe), on the other hand, Napoleon had been Byron’s idol and hero since

¹⁴ Byron was born in 1788 in London. He spent his early life in Aberdeen, Scotland, in a relative destitution. His father, Jack Byron, died in France, probably from suicide. In 1794 after his great uncle died he became a heir to the title Baron Byron of Rochdale.

Napoleon was born in Corsica in 1769; only a year after the island was transferred to France by the Republic of Genoa. The Corsican Bonapartes originated from minor Italian nobility. Napoleon attended military academy at Brienne-le-Château. He was teased by other students for his marked Corsican accent (he never learned to spell properly), his lower social status and also for his short, non-military appearance.

his boyhood. Napoleon's military genius did not begin to fade until his 1812 Russian campaign, during which he experienced his first devastating defeats. A year later in 1813 he was defeated in the "Battle of Nations" at Leipzig and he was forced to resign and he was moved to the island of Elba. Byron showed his strong emotional attachment towards Napoleon in his journal shortly before Leipzig when he wrote "Napoleon!--this week will decide his fate. All seems against him; but I believe and hope he will win" (cited in Clubbe). Byron felt desperate after Napoleon's defeat as "his overthrow, from the beginning was a blow on the head to me". It was after Napoleon's first defeat that Byron wrote most of his Napoleon-related material – "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte", "Napoleon's Farewell", "From the French" and other poems there are also passages in *Childe Harold* which relate to Napoleon. In February 1815 Napoleon landed in France with his men and in a few weeks he regained control over France and he "completed the most spectacular feat of a spectacular career" (Clubbe). Nevertheless, he was defeated in June at Waterloo and sent to live on the island of Saint Helena. Byron was stunned and shocked with both Napoleon's abdications in 1814 and a year later as "immortal" idol had fallen among mortals as "Napoleon would have ranked higher in future history... had he fallen on his sword, and finished his mortal career at Waterloo" (cited in Clubbe). It can be said that Napoleon's will to resist any enemy and ability to recover and fight again after serious defeats was the aspect that greatly attracted Byron. Byron's reflections of Napoleon are partly reflections of Byron himself as he depicted the Emperor as a colossus or a giant, what was also Byron's poetic self-image. Contrary to Blake's and Wordsworth's predator image, Byron's poetic version of Napoleon is that of the "greatest man" and he acquires divine or sacred forms. On the other hand, it is necessary to point out that Napoleon repeatedly "failed" to fulfil the expectations Byron

had about him and Napoleon's "successive falls from power only tightened the bond between them" (Clubbe).

The poem "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte" was written immediately after Byron learned about Napoleon's abdication. Byron expressed his detestation with any form of tyranny and oppression in the poem, and there is also a strong pro-republican tone in the poem, as Byron desired a kind of "universal republic". At Napoleon's abdication, Byron was in a great distresses because in Byron's views Napoleon "abdicated the throne of the world", because for Byron Napoleon was a guarantee of freedom in Europe, because he "stood for action against moribund dynasties" (Knight 94). Napoleon's defeat and his subsequent abdication meant an end of his hopes for freedom in Europe and what is more, Napoleon in Byron's eyes had lost his pedestal of "divinity" and fell back among humans. What is interesting about the title of poem is the fact, that Byron uses already obsolete way of spelling of Napoleon's name – Buonaparte¹⁵. Napoleon stopped using this spelling after his first Italian campaign¹⁶ of 1796-1796, during which thought that this "Italian-sounding" surname would help him to attract Italians under his banner. British conservatives or orthodox Tories would use this version of Napoleon's surname during his whole life in order to stress his "usurper" nature and also by stressing his Italian origin, they would point to the fact that Napoleon was outsider even in France (Clubbe). "Buonaparte" was in conservative view a monster which was responsible for ruining whole Europe and caused enormous loss of lives. On the other hand, for Byron "Buonaparte" represented the true Napoleon, not a usurper and self-appointed Emperor,

¹⁵ Napoleon was initially named *Napoleone di Buonaparte*, ironically enough, acquiring his first name from an uncle who had been killed fighting the French. It was only later that he adopted the more French-sounding *Napoleon Bonaparte*.

¹⁶ The Italian campaign was one the greatest successes of Napoleon's early career. He managed to defeat Austrian forces in several battles. The Treaty of Leoben gave France control over most of northern Italy. Napoleon acted against the wishes of atheist members of the Directory to dethrone the Pope. Napoleon acted as a liberator as he claimed that he would free Italy from Habsburg tyranny, in fact the Italian provinces he gained became France's satellite states.

but Napoleon the liberator filled with republican and revolutionary ideals, who had liberated Italian states.

The poem “Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte” opens with Napoleon losing his titanic status and becoming a “mortal” human – “and now thou art a nameless thing/ So abject, yet alive” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte, 3-4). Byron shows his views of Napoleon from the very beginning of the poem – Napoleon was a promethean giant above all humans, the ultimate master of his own destiny. By resigning and losing his fame, Napoleon is losing his name and he loses his charm for Byron, and he does not use the name Napoleon at all in his poem. Napoleon has taught Byron a moral lesson and a partial disillusionment with Napoleon appears, because Byron had lost his ultimate idol that embodied his ideals and aspirations. Byron associates his belief in Napoleon and his mighty power with religious symbols “Those Pagod things of sabre-sway/ With fronts of brass and feet of clay” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte, 20-21). Byron finds out that his “religion” in which Napoleon was the God, was naïve and shallow in the same way as was the anti-Napoleonic tensions of Tories. Although Napoleon was dethroned and does not deserve the name any longer, Byron believes that he has played an important part in human history and he should be placed to a wider historical context and Byron places him next to other historical and mythological figures. Byron begins with Lucifer, the fallen angel, because he believes that Lucifer is the only “character” that Napoleon deserves comparison with. Byron claims that Napoleon’s fall was in fact spectacular, similarly to that of Lucifer, because he had reached so far as “one who would soar the solar height” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte, 52). Byron here creates a myth and the symbolic Napoleon overshadowed the actual one, who had disappointed Byron so much, and who does not deserve to be named. In spite of Byron’s disillusionment with Napoleon’s resignation, he looks up to his idol again; he looks to his “Pagod”. The

actual Napoleon resigned without any pomp and pathos that would suit a resigning Emperor and he is forced to live in exile. On the other hand, Byron's mythical Napoleon still lives his fame and even his fall is spectacular. The fact that Byron compares Napoleon to a mythical and not historical figure even intensifies his divinity which Byron reveals in Napoleon again. In Byron's view Lucifer is not satanic, he does not represent evil and darkness, Byron stresses the original role of Lucifer – the Morning Star, that of the bearer of light. It can be said that Byron plays with names and their "original" meanings as Lucifer is not associated with devil in certain parts of Bible, but with light, while later the word Lucifer is used for devil. In a similar way Byron intentionally uses the "Italian" Buonaparte to stress the fact that he speaks about the "old and original" Napoleon, the light-bearer who had spread the ideas of the French Revolution across Europe. The notions of getting too far/high and the subsequent spectacular fall of a hero underline the titanic dimension of Napoleon, as apart from the comparison with Lucifer, this image also associates parallels with ancient heroes such as Prometheus or Icarus. Byron creates the image of an individual who dared to resist his fate, revolted against divines or wanted to reach their height and his actions became icons and myths. Napoleon dared to spread the ideas of the Revolution and to fight monarchies of Europe in a similar way as Prometheus, who brought fire to mankind and by doing so, he rebelled against gods. Byron's "mythological" Napoleon then disappears and Byron focuses on the actual Napoleon Bonaparte who did not fall spectacularly and who simply resigned. There is a certain tension in Byron's views of Napoleon as there is a wide gap between "what Byron wants Napoleon to be" (the "mythological" Napoleon) and the actual historical figure. Byron is disillusioned because the actual Napoleon suddenly does not behave according to Byron's expectations – he does not acknowledge his supposed divinity. Byron realizes that

Napoleon has lost his divine status due to the simple fact that he did not die in battle, what would greatly contribute to his legendary status. Byron finds out that “thine only gift hath been the grave / To those that worshipp'd thee” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 45-46), but Napoleon “unfortunately” did not die as hero on a battlefield, or he did not commit a suicide to escape the shame of defeat. Napoleon chose the dishonour of exile and this breaks the charm he placed “upon the minds of men/ Breaks never to unite again” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 78-79), as Byron never forgave Napoleon his decision to live because his death would greatly contribute to his heroic myth. Due to his decision to live in exile, Napoleon had become an empty symbol and by resigning he also discredited the revolutionary ideals: “If thou hadst died as honour dies, / Some new Napoleon might arise” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 255-256) – as long as Napoleon lives in a dishonourable exile, he serves as a reminder of his fallen fame and no one is able to build on the ideals of the French Revolution. Byron then measures Napoleon against other historical characters and he compares Napoleon to Milo, ancient Greek wrestler, Roman general and politician Sulla and Habsburg Emperor Charles V¹⁷. Byron addresses Napoleon and asks him why he was not able to commit a suicide such a Sulla¹⁸ who “dared depart in utter scorn” (Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte 154) or why he was not able to die like a warrior like Milo¹⁹, the wrestler. Byron claims that all these historical personae had one thing in common – they were able to “leave the stage” in the right moment, at the height of their fame and strength, what greatly contributed to their

¹⁷ Charles V., Holy Roman Emperor (1500-1558) was the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, Spain and its realms. His empire “on which the sun never sets” spanned across Europe, the Far East and the Americas. Charles V. resigned at the age of 58, leaving the throne to his son Philip II. of Spain, what was very unusual at this time.

¹⁸ Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix (c. 138 BC – 78 BC) was a Roman general and politician. He held the office of consul as well as dictatorship. He restored the balance of power between the Senate and the Tribunes. He resigned from dictatorship and restored constitutional government.

¹⁹ Milo of Croton was a 6th century athlete and wrestler. He was celebrated for his strength and heroic deeds, although most of the stories about him are purely fantastic tales. Byron comments on his death when he was trying to rend a tree and his hands were trapped in the cleft and he was devoured by a pack of wolves.

reputation. Napoleon, on the other hand, was forced to resign after he had been defeated in a decisive battle in which he did not die and he did not commit a suicide like a hero, although he was behind his zenith.

As was already stated, there are “two Napoleons” in Byron’s Ode – the historical Napoleon that has greatly disappointed Byron and also the “mythical” or symbolical Napoleon who embodies Byron’s hopes and aspirations and who, in many respects” serves as Byron’s alter-ego and who is other referred to in promethean terms. Byron invites Napoleon to be Prometheus:

Or, like the thief of fire [Prometheus] from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoomed by God--by man accurst
(Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte, 304-308)

Byron leaves the, now dethroned and dishonoured, historical Napoleon and addresses his dreamt-of idol. He compares Napoleon to historical and mythological heroes who were “as heroic in adversity as in triumph” (Clube) and mentioning Prometheus in relation with Napoleon he honours the fallen Emperor. Byron stresses the fact that Napoleon acted against his destiny as he was “foredoomed by God” and in spite of this he was able to act like a great hero, and even dethroned Napoleon still remains a Promethean titan. On the other hand, in certain passages the mythological and historical Napoleons mingle as Byron claims that, unlike legendary Prometheus, Napoleon as a historical figure was fatally flawed. Byron exclaims that “he [Prometheus] in his fall preserv'd his pride,/ And if a mortal, had as proudly died!” (Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 276-277) – Prometheus was able to accept his fate in the right moment and even at moment of his fall he was noble. Napoleon, Byron claims, resisted his fate, on the other hand he was not able to accept it in the right moment and this is the reason why he cannot be fully compared to mythological titans – he aspirated to become one of

them, but he was unable to accept his fate and to leave or commit a suicide in the right moment, not after he was humiliated by his defeat. Byron claims that Napoleon's titanic mission was dissolved in an empty pomp of his imperial ambitions. Shortly before Napoleon resigned, Byron remarked that Napoleon became "his robes as if he had been hatched in them" (Byron 248). Byron then reflects this view of Napoleon in the "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte":

Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star, the string, the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?
(Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte 234-238)

Byron claims that Napoleon partly lost the sense of reality, that he was more occupied with building his empire and with the pomp accompanying it, that he stepped away from the path laid-out by the French Revolution. Byron's evaluation of Napoleon in "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte" is predominantly negative, as it shows the conflict between the actual Napoleon and Byron's "mythologized" idea of Napoleon. It can be postulated, that the depth of Byron's disillusionment with Napoleon only indicates the depth of his attachment to him. Byron in fact was obsessed with Napoleon and his attachment to him was in reality "lover's quarrel, one of many he had with his idol" (Gross 159). Byron saw that Napoleon completely failed to fulfil his destiny – to liberate Europe and to spread the ideals of the French Revolution. Byron understood that by resigning Napoleon betrayed the ideals of the Revolution, that he showed that he did not fully believe in them. On April 25th 1814 Byron composed a quatrain in which he was even more critical to Napoleon than in the "Ode" – "*He* stole from Heaven the flame, for which he fell". Byron here refers to Napoleon as a betrayer of revolutionary ideals and Napoleon is then punished for his betrayal. On the one hand, Byron almost scorned Napoleon after his resignation; on the other hand he was still obsessed with him

as a symbol and could not exist without him. Byron had lost his uttermost idol and symbol of his aspirations and this crisis over Napoleon “prompted a crisis of personal identity” (Bainbridge 143) and Napoleon’s crisis becomes Byron’s own crisis.

In February 1815 Napoleon escaped from Elba and began the march to regain his former fame. On hearing this news, Byron was moved to ecstasy – his disillusionment and doubts about Napoleon and himself were over, and he was ready to forgive his former idol when he exclaimed “Bonaparte!!!--I marvel what next” (Byron 283). It is necessary to note, that Byron used the “Italian” spelling of Napoleon’s surname again. Napoleon was no longer a betrayer of the Revolution and a symbol of wasted chances. Byron was even questioning his critical tone about Napoleon in his “Ode”; he was even ready to “forgive the rogue for utterly falsifying every line of mine Ode... It is impossible not to be dazzled and overwhelmed by his character and career” (Byron 284). Napoleon’s “Hundred Days”²⁰ began very spectacularly and whole Europe was shocked by the return of the “monster”. Napoleon was decisively defeated in June 1815 at Waterloo and Napoleon resigned for the second shortly afterwards. Byron is shocked again and he regrets that the Emperor did not die in the battle by sword. Byron’s views of the future without Napoleon are very dark, as he believes that “every hope of a republic is over and we must go on under the old system” (Byron 302). Byron wrote four different versions of “Napoleon’s Farewell” after Bonaparte was dethroned for the second time. Although Byron was shocked and disillusioned again with Napoleon’s defeat, the fallen Emperor had quickly returned to Byron’s favour. Napoleon leaves his human dimensions and, in Byron’s view, he becomes idol and

²⁰ Napoleon escaped from Elba on 26 February 1815. The regiments that were sent to capture him soon joined him and Napoleon arrived in Paris on 20 March and governed for a period called Hundred Days. Great Britain, the Netherlands, Russia, Austria and Prussia bound themselves to put 150,000 men into the field to end his rule, Napoleon gathered 200,000 men. The French Army of the North crossed the frontier into the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, in a modern-day Belgium. Napoleon was finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo by Wellington and Blücher on 18 June 1815.

symbol. Napoleon in Byron's eyes reaches his titanic height as he was able to stand up again and fight for his truths. Byron partly forgives Napoleon as he wrote his short poem "Napoleon's Farewell (From the French)" in the first person from the point of view of the dethroned Emperor. Byron identifies himself with Napoleon again, as he depicts the Emperor leaving France into his final exile. There are ironical biographical links between Byron's and Bonaparte's lives, because Byron will be in the same position, leaving his home country and never returning again. Napoleon/Byron bids farewell to his native country – "Farewell to the Land where the gloom of my Glory/Arose and o'ershadow'd the earth with her name" (Napoleon's Farewell (From the French), 1-2). Byron here puts his idealized Napoleon on a pedestal and he depicts Napoleon's ambitions as unquenchable and eternal. Byron claims that the ideals and ambition that have driven Napoleon were immortal and that Napoleon was not comprehended and fully accepted by his contemporaries. Byron here again foretells his future fate, when he exclaim through the mouth of Napoleon "I have warr'd with a world which vanquish'd me only" (Napoleon's Farewell (From the French), 5). Byron also stresses the fact that Napoleon's ambitions were not empty ideals when he was able to mobilize huge masses of people, not only his soldiers, but also vast numbers of his followers and enthusiastic supporters around Europe – Byron being one of them. For Byron Napoleon remains a symbol which stands for freedom and Byron is not as pessimistic as he is in the "Ode" and he exclaims if "Liberty rallies / Once more in thy region, remember me then" (Napoleon's Farewell (From the French), 17-18) and so he believes that the ideas of the French Revolution which Napoleon followed are universal and eternal.

Byron also reacted to Napoleon in a similar poem titled "From The French", in which he not only expressed his support to Bonaparte, but he also placed himself into

the position of a loyal subordinate. Byron describes the scene when Napoleon leaves into his final exile on St. Helena and bids farewell to his loyal officers and the he is described through the words of a weeping officer, who could not accompany his Emperor into exile:

Must thou go, my glorious Chief,
Severed from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief
Maddening o'er that maddening adieu?
Woman's love, and friendship's zeal?
Dear as both have been to me-
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?
(From *The French*, 1-8)

By choosing this emotive scene, Byron demonstrates his deep attachment to Napoleon and “at some profound psychological level it meant more to him than anything or anyone else” (Ford 187). Byron’s mythological Napoleon enters the scene again – Byron does not depict the humiliated former monarch who was not able to leave the scene of history in the right moment, his Napoleon is heroic and titanic in his tragedy. Napoleon will spend the rest of his live almost like a prisoner on a small island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean²¹; in Byron’s description of Napoleon’s farewell scene the fallen Emperor is depicted almost in Arthurian terms. The king is dying; the fame of the Knights of the Round Table is over, but the idea of the Holy Grail lives on. Byron’s heroic “Buonaparte” is in a similar situation – in the abstract sense he leaves for the “Avalon” and although his empire was overthrown, the ideals of the French Revolution will not die and they will inspire numerous followers. Napoleon is still a symbol worth following; he remains the “Idol of the soldier's soul!/ First in fight, but mightiest now” (From *The French*, 15-16). Byron expresses his deepest personal attachment to

²¹ Napoleon spent the last six years of life on the island of St. Helena in the Atlantic Ocean, 2000 km from any major landmass. The cause of his death remains unknown; an autopsy concluded that he died of stomach cancer, although it is speculated that he might have been poisoned. He died on May 5th 1821. in 1840 his remains were transported back to France and he was buried in Les Invalides in Paris.

Napoleon when he exclaims “My chief, my king, my friend, adieu!” (From *The French*, 20-21). Although Napoleon leaves for the exile, Byron in fact depicts a pompous death scene of his idealized mythological Napoleon. Although Napoleon will live for six more years until May 1821, in Byron’s view, however, Napoleon no longer exists physically but only as a symbol. It is necessary to mention the biographical links between Byron and Bonaparte again, as Byron will be in a similar situation only a year later. As was already mentioned, Byron repeatedly claimed in his “Napoleonic” poems that Napoleon was forsaken and not fully comprehended by his contemporaries. When Byron described emotional scenes of Napoleon going into exile, he in fact imagined and foretold his own departure from his homeland and soon his “his exile become as necessary and inevitable to him as Napoleon's“ (Clubbe).

In 1815 shortly after Napoleon’s departure to exile, Byron wrote another of his pro-Napoleonic odes – “Ode on the Star of `The Legion of Honour””. In Napoleonic times the order of the Legion of Honour²² decorated individuals who proved their exceptional bravery on the battlefield. Byron treats Napoleon as an ultimate symbol of liberty again. Byron sees that Europe is returning back to the conservative pre-revolutionary orders and his native Britain is one of the main actors in this process:

Star of the brave! – whose beams hath shed
Such Glory o’er the quick and dead-
Thou radiant and adored deceit
Which millions rushed in arms into greet
Wild meteor of immortal birth!
Thy rise in Heaven to on Earth?
(Ode on the Star of `The Legion of Honour', 1-6)

Byron is disappointed by the political development in Europe after Waterloo and he leaves human affairs and turns to the natural world. He identifies the star-shaped medal with an actual star or a meteor which will bring to an end the unjust political situation in

²² *Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur* is the highest decoration in France and is divided into five various degrees. The order was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, at that time the First Consul of the First Republic.

Europe. It is now the world of natural phenomena that symbolizes universality, immortality and gradual recurrence of the ideals of freedom and liberty. Byron identifies then with a rainbow which consists of three colours – “The three so mingled did beseem/ The texture of heavenly dream” (Ode on the Star of ‘The Legion of Honour’, 15-16). Byron then returns to the contemporary situation and claims that it will take long until the revolutionary ideals will become topical again as the light of liberty “is pale, / And darkness must again prevail!” (Ode on the Star of ‘The Legion of Honour’, 21-22). Byron is not very optimistic about the current situation in Europe, on the other hand he believes that the ideals of the Revolution will find a wide support and “human beings may again have occasion to sacrifice themselves for freedom” (Gross 95).

Byron wrote another in the series of his “Odes” – “Ode (From The French)” during 1815 in a very difficult personal situation. This situation was in many respects similar to that of Napoleon – the public meaning was gradually turning against Byron for his numerous affairs, his wife left him with their child²³ and his beloved idol was also gone. This poem was published in 1816 and it was presented as a translation of a contemporary French poet. Byron recalls the Battle of Waterloo which he sees as a “necessary prelude to a final, bloody overthrow of tyrants everywhere” (Clubbe).

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 'twas shed, but is not sunk
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion
It soars, and mingles in the air,

²³ Byron was known for his numerous affairs. He eventually married Anna Isabelle Milbanke. The marriage proved unhappy. He treated her poorly and showed disappointment at the birth of a daughter Augusta Ada, rather than a son. On 16 January 1816, Lady Byron left him, taking Ada with her. Rumours of marital violence, adultery with actresses, incest with Augusta Leigh, and sodomy were circulated. Byron resolved to escape the censure of British society (as he was accused of sodomy and incest) by living abroad. Byron left England in 1816 and did not return for the last eight years of his life, even to bury his daughter.

With that of lost Labedoyère--
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the 'bravest of the brave.
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
(Ode (From The French), 1-12)

Byron here uses his vision of Buonaparte – liberator, who is only the first among liberators that will dethrone tyrannical monarchs. Byron does not focus on actual politics and he turns to the world of nature. Similarly to the previous poem, he creates a scene of a natural catastrophe that will smash tyranny from the face of Earth. Although Byron does not directly address or speak about Napoleon, the image of the mighty titan appears in the poem again. On the other hand, Byron becomes slightly critical to Napoleon again as he claims that the “Buonaparte” – hero and liberator has gradually become Bonaparte Emperor and monarch. In Byron’s view Napoleon could not be defeated as long as he embodied the ideals of the French Revolution, he was defeated only when he was “goaded by ambition's sting, / The Hero sunk into the King” (Ode (From The French), 32-33). Byron is not as uncritical to Napoleon as he was in his previous works, as he blames Napoleon that he has betrayed the Revolution and he became tyrant Emperor, similar to those he fought against. By becoming a monarch he cut himself from the community and that was the reason why he had lost his decisive battles. Byron also mentions the fact that France has been taught a moral lesson, which involves “equal rights and laws/ Hearts and hands in one great cause” (Ode (From The French), 42-43). Byron believes that Napoleon, by becoming a monarch, has discredited the ideals of the Revolution, on the other hand, this does not deny their rightness. Byron compares the dethroned Emperor with the new “legitimate” king Bourbon Louis XVIII. and he concludes that “safety sits not on a throne, / With Capet²⁴ or Napoleon!” (Ode

²⁴ Louis XVIII. (1755-1824) was King of France and Navarre from 1814 to 1824, omitting the Hundred Days in 1815. His reign was called Bourbon Restoration. Louis XVIII succeeded his nephew Louis XVII. as a titular King.

(From *The French*), 55-56). Byron believes that although Napoleon partly betrayed the revolutionary ideas, he was one of the first in the line of liberators, because Byron insists that a new “son of Freedom” will arise. Although the anti-Napoleonic coalition redrew the map of Europe without any concern to aspirations of people and national groups, Byron does not lose his hope and he believes that the justness of revolutionary ideals will be proved at the right moment. At this point it is necessary to mention the biographical links between Napoleon and Byron, as the poet often saw himself as a “son of Freedom” due to his enthusiastic support various liberty movements – his active participation in the Greek liberation fight²⁵ being the most famous one. In this poem Byron openly revealed his political views and ambitions – “he intends to fight, by word or (if occasion arose) by deed, for freedom in every land oppressed by tyranny” (Clubbe).

As was already stated, Byron often imagined himself as a titan and he felt strong parallels between himself and Napoleon Bonaparte. Byron repeatedly focused on the scene of Napoleon leaving France into exile and never seeing his country again. Byron’s “Napoleonic” poems “Napoleon's Farewell”, “From the French”, “Ode on the Star of the Legion of Honour” and “Ode (From the French)” were published in 1816 in a slim volume titled *Poems*. Byron wrote and published these poems in a period of his personal and identity crisis when he lost his idol Napoleon Bonaparte and the public meaning turned sharply against him. It can be said, that Byron wrote these poems as a “chief response to the campaign of defamation mounted against him” (Clubbe). By fact that he allowed to publish these poems, he distanced himself from the English society and in the time when the English celebrated Wellington’s defeat of Napoleon, he identifies

²⁵ Byron decided to take part in the fight of Greeks against the Ottoman Empire. He spent £4000 of his own money to refit the Greek fleet. Before his expedition could sail, on 15 February 1824, he fell ill, and the usual remedy of bleeding weakened him further. He developed a violent fever, and died on 19 April 1826.

with the former Emperor who stands for liberty and justice. Byron wrote the “farewell” poems as a tribute to his beloved idol Napoleon and also as farewell poems to his land which he would not see again. Byron enclosed his *Poems* volume with a stanza from “Napoleon’s Farewell”:

Farewell to thee, France!--but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then,
The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys;
Though wither'd, thy tear will unfold it
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that surround us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice
There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!
(Napoleon's Farewell (From The French), 17-24)

Byron wrote these lines as an anticipation of his own fate – if we replace France by England- “Farewell to thee, England!”. It is interesting to see how different is reading of these lines after 1816 when Byron is forced to leave England. As Byron strongly identified himself with Napoleon, he wrote “Napoleon's Farewell” as his own farewell to his country. If we extend the Byronic-Napoleonic parallel, there also appears a strong prophetic tone in these lines. Byron mentions the fact that the French will call back “the Chief of thy choice”, that is Napoleon will return to France, not only physically, but that he will be treated like one of the greatest figures of human history and his legacy will be recognized. When Byron was driven away from Britain he was enraged and humiliated, on the other hand, he did not suffer from a lack of self-confidence and even narcissism, so he felt that his people will call on him as the “Chief of choice”. It can be said that Byron “returned” in a similar way as his idol Napoleon – he became a symbol that overshadowed the actual figure, an embodiment of free will and individualism, an icon which stands for the whole period.

5. Conclusion

William Blake, William Wordsworth and George Gordon Byron represent different generations of British romanticism and thus different approaches to the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. William Blake, being the oldest, experienced the French Revolution and Napoleon as already a mature man. William Wordsworth was only 20 years old at the beginning of the Revolution and he was in his early thirties when Napoleon rose to power. George Gordon Byron was only one year old when the French Revolution began in 1789 and he really reacted to Napoleon only in the last years of Napoleon's career. As was already stated in previous chapters, each writer constructed his own image of Napoleon and these served different purposes – either as an embodiment of one's ideals and hopes or an antithesis of the author, to which he objected to. It can be said that each "Napoleon" was in many respects a reflection of the author himself. No matter whether the attitude to Napoleon was negative or positive, it is obvious that at a certain moment in each poet's lives he played an important role in each writer's poetry and imagination. It can be said that Napoleon "conquered" Blake's, Byron's and Wordsworth's poetry in the same way as he conquered the European continent. Byron's attitude to Napoleon can be interpreted as mostly positive, while Blake' and Wordsworth's responses to him are rather negative, nevertheless each of them was fascinated and in a way charmed by Napoleon. It can be said, that Napoleon became the usurper or ruler of each poet's senses and imagination.

William Blake represents the oldest generation of romantics – he experienced the French Revolution as a rather mature man and this also conditioned his views of Napoleon Bonaparte. On the other hand, unlike Wordsworth and Byron, he did not travel much and he was quite isolated from what was going on the Continent. Although Blake's writings are concerned with spiritual, philosophical and highly abstract matters,

he is clearly a political writer. Blake's political views can be labelled as republican, but it cannot be said that he was really radical in his views. Blake supported the ideals of the French Revolution and he soon became disillusioned with the situation in France. The ideals of the Revolution were right, but he claimed that the real motives behind the Revolution were purely material and this was the reason why the Revolution failed and degenerated into Napoleonic tyranny. Blake believed that the real motives behind the Revolution were material profit and desire for influence – the Revolution became ideologically empty and later turned into tyranny, first Jacobin and later Napoleonic. In accordance with his *Songs of Experience* Blake saw two distinct qualities in Napoleon. Napoleon represents a threat of tyranny and oppression and he is ominous due to his seeming invincibility and military genius. This quality made Napoleon really unique and greatly contributed to the creation of Napoleonic myth. Although Blake disapproves of Napoleon he cannot help and he is truly fascinated and attracted by him. Here appears the second important quality of Napoleon's personality – due to his power and influence he is irresistibly charming and attractive for his contemporaries even though they criticise him for his imperial and expansive ambitions. As was already stated, Napoleon not only conquered Europe militarily and politically, he truly became a ruler of Blake's imagination and senses. The thesis examines Blake's work *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion* which deals with spiritual matters and does not address Napoleon directly, nevertheless, the ominous Emperor enters the poem - Blake's apocalyptic visions clearly reflect the horrors of wars and the threat of Napoleon's invasion to Britain. Napoleon becomes the master of senses and conqueror of imagination. Blake claims in *Jerusalem* that contemporary world and Britain most notably, suffer from the decline of imagination and creativity. Blake claims that contemporary world is focussed too much on senses, external material world and

experience achieved *via* senses. Blake associates Napoleon with material world due to the fact that he is able to “usurp” even people’s imagination senses and creativity. Blake does not only disapprove of the actual “historical” Napoleon, as the poet stood firmly against any form tyranny and oppression. He is predominantly critical of the imagined Napoleon, the conqueror of senses. Blake associated Napoleon’s imperial ambition with barbarism and degradation of revolutionary ideas. As was already stated, Blake praised the ideals of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. Liberty is the one the most important aspect of human existence and it is inseparable from human emotions, creativity and imagination. Napoleon, on the other hand, represents lack of emotions and he has a degrading and devastating effect of human imagination and creativity as he “conquers” it. Blake believes the ideals of the French Revolution declined as the Revolution soon turned into its antithesis – into a struggle for influence, power and material profit. On the other hand, Blake claimed that Britain made a great mistake that it rejected revolutionary ideals completely and condemned liberty in France. Repressed and degenerated liberty gave birth to repressive European wars which embodies Napoleon Bonaparte. Britain with its empire degraded to a similar level as pre-revolutionary France and Napoleon’s regime.

William Wordsworth’s attitude to the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte can be also classified as rather critical. Similarly to Blake, Napoleonic usurpation becomes one of the leitmotifs of Wordsworth’s reactions to Bonaparte. Wordsworth’s views of Napoleon are greatly conditioned by his revolutionary experience – Wordsworth visited France twice as a young student and this influenced his later views of Napoleon. Similarly to Blake, Wordsworth enthusiastically supported the Revolution and he later became disillusioned with it. He also partly experienced the Jacobin Terror and this partly contributed to his loss of illusions about the actual political processes in France.

On the other hand, he did not lose his belief in the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. Wordsworth's "French episode" played an important part in his imagination and it can be interpreted as a kind of Wordsworth's political initiation. Unlike Blake who did not travel, Wordsworth never lost his interest in France, also due to the fact that his daughter and her mother were French. Due to this he was highly suspicious of Napoleon and he watched the situation in France very carefully. Unlike in the in case of William Blake, Wordsworth's attachment and interest in Napoleon was partly also personal, due to the memories of his juvenile visits to France. The word "usurpation" appears numerous times in Wordsworth's poems reacting to Napoleon. It is important to note that this "usurpation" is not only Napoleon's of also Wordsworth's own. In France Wordsworth was driven by the desire to see, to usurp the Alps – it is now obvious that Napoleon enters Wordsworth's imagination. Similarly to William Blake, Napoleon becomes a master of senses – a "soulless image" destroying the living thought. As in Blake, Napoleon rules and restructures imagination and creativity. When Wordsworth in *The Prelude* expresses his disappointment with alpine scenery, he also metaphorically expresses his disillusionment with revolutionary France and later Napoleon. Wordsworth repeatedly mixes his own experiences and recollections with a wider historical context – he describes his visit to the Alps and he immediately refers to Napoleon's invasion to Switzerland, what clearly supports the claim that Napoleon was not only an abstract threat, but almost a personal enemy. One of the recurrent motives in Wordsworth's "Napoleonic" poems is that unfulfilled and hopes and expectations. When Wordsworth reacted most intensively to Napoleon in the first years of the Revolution, he was still influenced by his memories of "pure" and optimistic revolutionary France of his first visit in 1790. Napoleon, on the other hand, embodied the failure of the Revolution, so when Wordsworth "grieved for Buonaparte" he does

not grieve for the actual person, but more specifically for the hopes Napoleon failed to embody. Wordsworth often depicts Napoleon as a usurper – predator who conquers what is pure, clean or just – most notably the ideals of the French Revolution. Wordsworth believed that Napoleon misused the ideals of the Revolution for his expansive ambitions. Wordsworth was then shocked by the fact that the same, once revolutionary, nation which charmed Wordsworth during his first visit to France, celebrates an autocrat and tyrant. Napoleon degraded the revolutionary ideals to mere empty words and he turned the ideals of the Revolution into their antithesis. Napoleon was also one of the reasons why Wordsworth turned finally to patriotism, although in 1792 he scorned Britain that is began war with revolutionary France. The greatest disillusionment with Napoleon came with his coronation to Emperor in 1804 – this act was in Wordsworth’s view final confirmation of Napoleon’s imperial and expansive ambitions. Napoleon became dangerously close to Wordsworth due to the threat of French invasion to Britain and this was the moment when Napoleon became most “physical” for Wordsworth. In spite of the fact that Wordsworth was mostly critical of Napoleon, he was attracted by this personality. In numerous sonnets Wordsworth expressed his disdain with Napoleon; on the other hand there is a shade of Wordsworth’s own unfulfilled ambitions. Since his visit to France, Wordsworth had cherished the idea that he could succeed in political sphere and achieve a certain public influence and fame. As Napoleon was definitely the most influential, powerful and also highly popular among huge masses of intellectuals in Europe, he partly embodied Wordsworth’s unfulfilled personal aims and ambitions.

George Gordon Byron and Napoleon Bonaparte have long been linked together as they both dominate the 19th century conception of a hero. Both the poet and the Emperor have achieved titanic status which overreaches their actual lives as they are

characterized by individualism, high aims and ambitions and also by striking biographical similarities. Byron was fascinated by Napoleon – unlike in the cases of Blake and Wordsworth, he did not see him as an antithesis of the Revolution but as its continuation and a person who would spread the revolutionary ideals over Europe. Byron's imagined Napoleon was not necessarily an antithesis of his ideals and aspirations, he embodied them. Napoleon's titanic struggle against the old Europe greatly impressed Byron and it can be said that he had similar aims. Byron stood very firmly against injustice, tyranny and oppression and he reflected these views in his actions – his involvement in Greece's fight for liberty and independence is only the most prominent one and Byron saw Napoleon's defeats as his own defeats. On the other hand, it cannot be said that he was completely uncritical to Napoleon. In his "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte" he clearly expressed his disillusionment with him. Contrary to Wordsworth or Blake, this disillusionment stemmed from the fact that Napoleon failed to complete his visions and aims. Byron's disappointment was also conditioned by the fact that Napoleon had lost his titanic dimension and he became a "mortal" human being. In Byron's view, the only true titanic end would be spectacular and it would greatly contribute to Napoleon's greatness. It can be said that Byron does not want to see the real Napoleon, but only the imagined mythological hero. The defeated and dethroned Emperor only serves as a sad symbol and a tragic reminder of ideals that he failed to put into practise. He also claims that the fact that he became an Emperor was one of the reasons why he failed to materialize his ambitions. Napoleon was occupied with creating an empire and this cut him away from the voices of his supporters. On the other hand, the actual historical and imagined Napoleon often mingles in Byron's works. In the "Ode" he compares Napoleon to Lucifer-light bearer and he claimed that Napoleon spread light and pure revolutionary ideals across Europe. In Byron's

“mythological” perception of Napoleon the Emperor’s fall is depicted as spectacular and Byron claims that although Napoleon failed to fulfil his aims his legacy will continue and he is only the first in the line of revolutionaries who will spread the ideals of freedom and liberty over the world. Byron also repeatedly reacted to Napoleon’s departure to exile and it can be said that he predominantly depicted his imagined Napoleon rather than the actual figure. The series of Byron’s “Farewells” to Napoleon serve a demonstration of Byron’s closest attachment to Napoleon. Byron created almost “Arthurian” scenes in which the dying king (Napoleon leaving into exile) is departing into his Avalon and his legacy lives on. Byron in many respects foretold his own fate as he was also scorned by his own nation and forced to leave into exile.

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7. Czech Résumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá reflexí Napoleona Bonaparta v dílech anglických básníků Williama Wordswortha, George Gorgona Byrona a Williama Blakea. Napoleon Bonaparte sehrál významnou roli jako císař, státník a vynikající válečník, ale ve své době byl také mnohými intelektuály oslavován jako symbol svobody a nových pořádků. Stejným způsobem jako se jeho armádám podařilo ovládnout podstatnou část Evropy, jeho činy a osoba samotná ovládla představivost mnohých soudobých umělců. Tato práce se snaží doložit rozmanitost a nejednoznačnost reflexí osoby Napoleona Bonaparta v literatuře anglického romantismu.

Každý z vybraných básníků representuje jednu z generací anglických romantiků a specifický přístup k Napoleonovi. Je potřeba si uvědomit, že obraz Napoleona Bonaparta v pracích jednotlivých básníků se neshoduje se skutečnou historickou postavou. Dá se tedy říci, že každý z autorů si konstruuje „svého“ Napoleona, který více než o historické osobě samotné vypovídá o jeho tvůrci. Osoba Napoleona se tak stává projekcí ideálů a ambicí autora, nebo se vůči němu básník vymezuje.

Práce se nezabývá Napoleonskou tematikou v dílech Wordswortha, Blakea a Byrona v celé její šíři. Je potřeba si uvědomit, že každý ze zmíněných autorů básnický reagoval na Napoleona ve větší či menší míře od počátku 19. století až do jeho konečné porážky v roce 1815. Z tohoto důvodu se moje práce zaměřuje jen na krátké období života každého z básníků, kdy Napoleon hrál v jejich představivosti a básnické tvorbě největší roli. Nejstarší z vybraných básníků – William Blake reagoval na Napoleona Bonaparta převážně v několika prvních letech 19. století, zejména kolem roku 1804, tedy v době, kdy se Napoleon stal nejmocnější osobou v Evropě a kdy se nechal korunovat na císaře. Z tohoto důvodu se práce zaměřuje především na jeho alegorické dílo *Jerusalem The Emanation of the Giant Albion*. William Wordsworth, který

representuje střední generaci romantiků, se osobou Napoleona výrazně zaobíral zhruba od roku 1802 až 1806, opět v době Napoleonova růstu moci, připravované invaze do Británie a jeho úspěšných válečných tažení. Práce se zaměřuje především na jeho básnickou autobiografii *The Prelude* a na sérii politických básní a sonetů, v nichž odrazil svůj náhled na Bonaparta. Nejmladším z vybraných autorů je George Gordon Byron, který výrazněji reagoval na Bonaparta až v posledních letech jeho kariéry, jmenovitě především v letech 1814-1816. Kapitola věnovaná Byronovi se zabývá především jeho básní „Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte“ a dále sérií kratších básnických útvarů, v nichž reagoval na Napoleonův nucený odjezd do exilu.

William Blake reagoval na Napoleona Bonaparta spíše nepřímou, prostřednictvím symbolů a alegorií. V Blakeově pojetí se v osobě Napoleona střetávají dva principy. Napoleon je hrozivý a nebezpečný a v této hrozivosti je zároveň přitažlivý a neodolatelný. Podle Blakea je to právě tato hrozivá krása, která z Napoleona činí ikonu a symbol. Blake je nicméně k Napoleonovi velice kritický – vzhledem k tomu, že Blake odmítal jakoukoli formu tyranie a útlaku, nemůže Napoleonovi prominout jeho expanzivní plány. Napoleon podle Blakea zradil ideály Francouzské revoluce a naopak v Evropě rozšířil tyranii a nesvobodu, čímž se stal vlastně antitezí revolučních ideálů. Napoleon ve Francii znovu zavedl feudální pořádky, čímž se Francie vrátila zpět do předrevolučního období. Na druhou stranu Blake také obviňuje Británii, že úplně zavrhl ideály Francouzské revoluce, čímž se degradovala na podobný stupeň barbarství jako Napoleonova Francie.

William Wordsworth během svého mládí nadšeně podporoval Francouzskou revoluci a její ideály rovnosti a svobody. Navzdory tomu, že později o Francouzské revoluci ztratil většinu iluzí, jeho přístup k Napoleonovi byl v mnohém ovlivněn právě jeho „revoluční“ zkušeností. Napoleon pro něj představuje spíše antitezi myšlenek

Francouzské revoluce a Wordsworthův Napoleon je tedy spíše zosobněním promarněných ideálů a iluzí. Ve Wordsworthově přístupu k Napoleonovi je možné vystopovat jistý biografický prvek – Wordsworth často směšuje jeho životní etapy a zkušenosti se širším historickým a společenským kontextem, v němž hlavní roli hraje především Napoleon. Napoleon tedy fyzicky neokupuje pouze Evropu, ale především Wordsworthovu imaginaci a tvořivost. Wordsworth asociuje ideály Francouzské revoluce s čistotou a nevinností, Napoleon je na druhé straně vykreslen jako predátor či dravec, který slouží jako jejich protipól. Dá se říci, že Wordsworthovo básnické „zápolení“ s osobou Bonaparta získává určité rysy souboje se skutečným rivalem, Napoleon se tedy jakoby stává Wordsworthovým osobním nepřítelem.

George Gordon Byron představuje nejmladší generaci britských romantiků a jak už bylo řečeno, reagoval na Napoleona až v posledních letech Bonapartovy kariéry. Je možné říci, že Byron v Bonapartovi viděl zosobnění svých ideálů a ambicí. Napoleon pro Byrona představoval triumf lidské vůle a individualismu. Byron obdivoval Napoleonova génia, s nímž byl schopen ovládnout Evropu a rozšířit tak ideály Francouzské revoluce. Byron totiž, na rozdíl od Blakea a Wordswortha v Napoleonovi nespatoval antitezi Francouzské revoluce, ale naopak, její logické pokračování. Je potřeba si uvědomit, že Byron si Napoleona velmi idealizoval až zbožštil, takže Baronův „Napoleon“ je v pravdě mytologický hrdina vzdálený od skutečné historické postavy. Na druhou stranu Byron nebyl k Napoleonovi úplně nekritický, naopak, nemohl se snést se skutečností, že Napoleon po své porážce prostě rezignoval a nezemřel jako hrdina. Napoleon tak pro Byrona částečně ztratil svoji auru hrdinství a neporanitelnosti. Byron nicméně nikdy neztratil víru ve správnost Napoleonových činů a nadále se s ním osobně identifikoval. Byron rovněž ve svých dílech opakovaně reagoval na Napoleonův odjezd do exilu, kde opět kolem něj vytváří auru

mytologického hrdiny. Byron v Napoleonově odjezdu do potupného vyhnanství předznamenal svůj vlastní odjez ze své vlasti, do které se vrátil až své smrti.

8. Summary in English

The thesis deals with Napoleonic imagery in William Blake's, William Wordsworth's and George Gordon Byron's poetical works. Each poet represents a different generation of English romanticism and their views of Napoleon Bonaparte differ markedly. The thesis does not examine their "Napoleonic" views in their entirety, it deals only with short periods of their lives when the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte was topical for them. The thesis focuses on William Blake's works from the first decade of the 19th century. In the case of William Wordsworth the thesis focuses mostly on the period between the years 1802-1806, when Wordsworth wrote most of his "Napoleonic" material. George Gordon Byron represents the youngest generation of romanticism and the thesis examines his poems written between the years 1814-1816.

Blake's views of Napoleon were predominantly negative, as he saw Napoleon as an oppressor and tyrant who had betrayed the ideals of the French Revolution. Wordsworth's approach to Napoleon was also highly critical. Napoleon represented for him an antithesis of revolutionary ideals. Wordsworth is impressed by Napoleon; on the other hand he represents for him a predator and tyrant who brought chaos and war to Europe. Byron's perception of Napoleon was highly idealized, as he saw Napoleon as his ultimate hero and idol. Byron constructed an idealized image of Napoleon in which Napoleon reaches mythological and titanic status.