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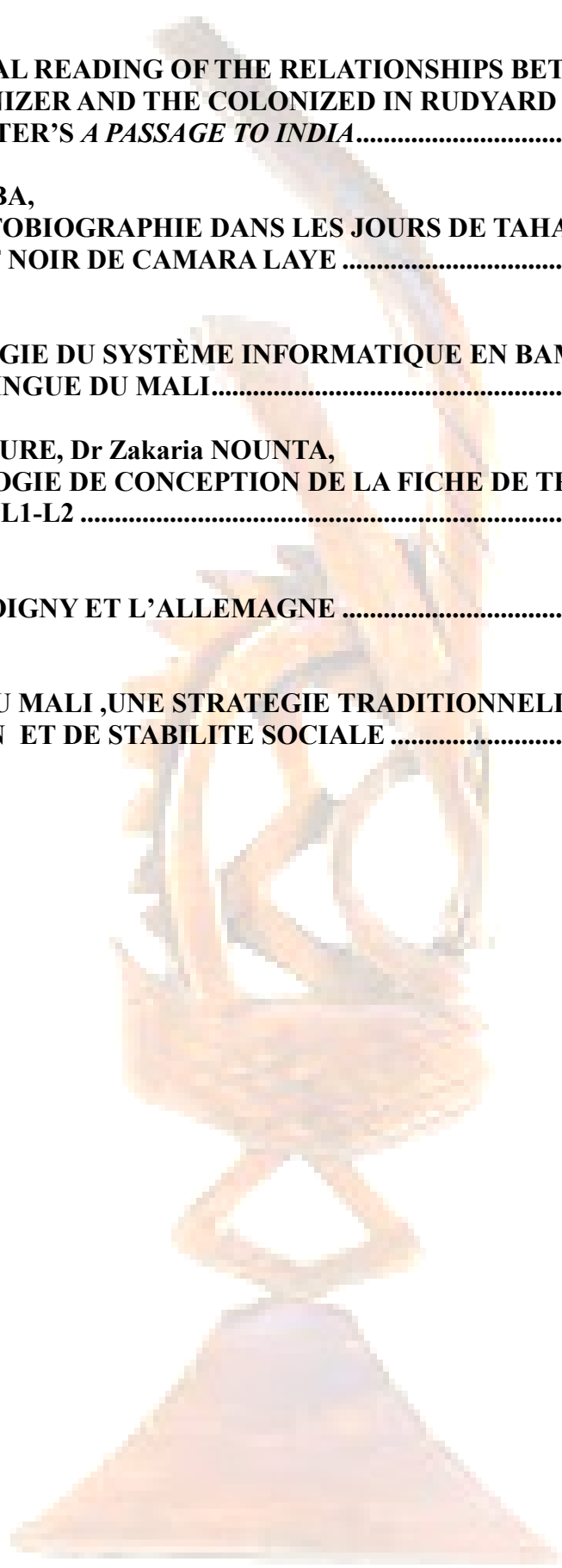
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DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BYRONIC HERO IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANTICISM

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Résumé

Cet article vise à expliciter les caractéristiques du héros byronique dans le contexte théorique du romantisme. Lord Byron était un poète anglais de l'école romantique. Avec ses contemporains comme Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley et bien d'autres, ils ont abordé les problèmes majeurs de leur époque à travers leurs héros. Mais Lord Byron a refusé de fournir à ses héros des visions et des concepts romantiques classiques. Il lui fallait travailler sur des héros qualitativement différents des héros romantiques traditionnels. Un autre objectif de l'étude est de fournir quelques définitions significatives du héros byronique, de ses principales caractéristiques, de son état d'esprit et de ses défauts. En conséquence, l'étude a révélé que Lord Byron a créé un nouveau type de héros romantique qui sera plus tard appelé le « héros Byronic ». Elle révélait aussi à quel point le héros byronique était prêt à risquer sa vie, ses biens, son pedigree pour sauver les autres avec le souci majeur de leur assurer liberté et justice.

Mots clés : caractéristiques, définitions, héros byronique, littérature, romantisme.

Abstract

The paper seeks to account for the characteristics of the Byronic hero in the theoretical context of romanticism. Lord Byron was an English poet of the Romantic school. With his contemporaries like Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Shelley and many others, they have addressed the major problems of their epoch through their heroes. But, Lord Byron has refused to provide his heroes with classical romantic visions and concepts. He needed to work on heroes which should qualitatively be different from the traditional romantic ones. Another objective of the study is to provide some significant definitions of the Byronic hero, his major characteristics, his spirits and flaws. As a result, the study found that Lord Byron has created a new type of romantic hero which later would be called the 'Byronic hero'. It also revealed how far the Byronic hero was ready to risk his life, his estate, his pedigree to rescue others with the major concern to provide them with freedom and justice.

Key words : : Byronic hero, characteristics, definitions, Literature, romanticism.

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Introduction

Poetry, being a major literary genre promoted by Romanticism, is the main focus of Lord Byron's works. As for romanticism, it is indeed a literary movement which appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century. This is confirmed by Kofi Agyekum (2013) when he says: "Romanticism is a literary, artistic and philosophical movement that originated from Europe in the 18th century and lasted somewhere in the 19th century." (206). It has not lasted long as a literary trend, but it was rich in events and was the mirror of the European nations which were living under harsh ruling of different monarchs. That violent political life was accompanied by social injustice and different kinds of abuses. Accordingly, masses from different countries organized to face tyranny and despotism. Those social convulsions and riots have culminated in Europe with the outbreak of the French revolution. This French revolution was regarded by Percy Besshe Shelley, an English writer living in Switzerland, as the main event of their epoch. This implies that the romantic writers were socially urged to portray as close as possible the ongoing historic events of their societies. Their analyses, critiques and depictions should therefore be meant to enlighten the forthcoming generations. The main pioneers of this literary movement such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Shelley and many others were scrupulously respectful of the different stylistic and poetic rules in their writings as advocated by romanticism.

As far as Lord Byron is concerned, he is the main concern of this current study because of his particular reaction and contribution to romanticism. He was an English poet, born one year before the outbreak of the French revolution. He has crossed a tumultuous childhood full of family drama and moral insanity. Later when he grew up, his name was connected with a series of love affairs and social scandals. Moreover, he had a club foot that has finally sharpened his sense of irritability and nervousness. Then, when he started writing, he was deeply disappointed by the home and the foreign policies of the royal government, the status of women and the living conditions of the British citizens. These and many other elements of social injustice have finally led Lord Byron to reject the rules and the norms of his society. These social realities - social injustice, political violence, women status, working class riots- were the subject matters of the Romantic movement and Lord Byron did not comply with that Romantic sense of doing things in poetry. He was bored with the traditional romantic portraits of his contemporaries. He was reluctant to follow the different literary lines and instructions widespread by his fellow writers. He has created a new type of hero which would later be known by critics, essayists and analysts as the "Byronic hero". He did this because, for Iyengar, K R Srinivas and Nandakumar, Prema, "the poetry of the Romantic age was not a mere revival of the Renaissance. The intervening centuries, the rise of intellectualism, and science and the social and urban consciousness of the 18th century, could not simply be washed away." (2009, p.195)

It is with regard to what precedes that the objective of the study is therefore meant to define and specify the characteristics of the Byronic hero in the theoretical context of romanticism. To attain the objective of this study, the following questions are formulated: how to recognize the Byronic hero in a piece of literature? What are the characteristics of the Byronic hero?

Structurally, the paper is divided into two major sections: the first makes attempts to define the Byronic hero whereas the second unveils and explicates the main characteristics of the Byronic

hero. By so doing, the reader would be able to distinguish the concept of the traditional hero in literature from the new Byronic hero.

1-How to know the Byronic hero?

As a recollection, the term “Byronic hero” has appeared late in literary works under the analyses of critics and essayists such as Thomas Moore and John Hobbhouse who have intensively contributed to the promotion of the concept the “Byronic hero”. Lord Byron did not expect such aura around his heroes while writing. He only felt a strong need for change of his literary school. The term “Byronic hero” refers to a series of definitions that have evolved through time and through the different literary movements. Each trend has brought its significant nuances denoting the evolution of the given term through years. From a general point of view, a Byronic hero is first of all a young man, a sort of knight “satiated with life” wandering through furthest climes.

The choice of a young man as a hero was not fortuitous in the romantic literature. The eighteenth century was a tumultuous period of history. Many changes have taken place, the most among which has been far the French revolution. The images of young heroes were necessary to support ideals of change, freedom and justice. Any revolution or other form of change basically relies on youth for its success. Young heroes were endowed with energy and courage to carry out historical achievements.

Moreover, there was a similarity between the poet and his hero as far as age was concerned. Lord Byron has started writing when he has hardly turned twenty years old. A young poet would logically need young heroes to support his convictions. Charles Wynne Nicholls (2022) said: “the Byronic hero was a disillusioned character, at the same time unhappy and melancholic, in rebellion and rejected by his own society” (p.1). The young man full of energy and arrogance, claiming better living conditions for his people, could not tame his feelings and ideals with social and political norms. That situation partially explained his rejection by his own society, not as a person but a symbol representing a large layer of the population. He was unhappy and melancholic for he was not satisfied with his living environment. Elsewhere Nicholls (2022) has also noted: “the Byronic hero was also a person dark and bitter, sneering and disdainful, hiding his passions under an apparent coldness” (p.11). The gentleman should be dark for his inner life; he could not be accessible by common people. He usually did not appreciate much the company of others. That solitary life was hiding a strong determination to support and defend his ideals and passions. His darkness and bitterness were closely connected to his choice to live away from his compatriots.

The Byronic hero was also a cold and a flawed character living under the mirage of great deeds. He deemed himself invested with a historical mission or destiny to save a whole cause. His determination to help other people was compensated by his rejection in his own society. That contradiction also boosted his energy and feelings in carrying out his actions and plans. Though he had strong passions, he nevertheless did not expect any medal as a compensation of his achievements. In sum, the Byronic hero was first of all a solitary character complaining about his surrounding environment, refusing that reality in the form of rebellion and revolution. That was why his name was basically connected to social convulsions and changes.

2.0 Characteristics of the Byronic Hero

The Byronic hero has several characteristics related to his personality and behavior. He is a freedom fighter, a social and political activist and he has strong passions for his ideals and for his sentiments.

2.1 Freedom Fighter

As stated above, the Byronic hero is a young man complaining about his living environment. From that uneasiness, he usually comes to conclusion that he should face challenges. In so doing, he sets fighting against injustice and violence. All along his life, the Byronic hero strives for others and cares little for himself. In the *Corsair* (1814) by Lord Byron, Conrad, the hero appeared as a freedom fighter.

As a recollection, the *Corsair* (1814) is a tale written by Lord Byron among his oriental narratives. The story addressed the life of a pasha named Seyd living with tens of his wives and captives within a harem, symbol of captivity and imprisonment. Seyd the pasha was seen as a despot, abusing the elementary rights of his people. As for Conrad, the head of the corsairs, he was seen as a liberator of all the people kept within the harem. Conrad was described as an exceptional chief with “few words from his lips and keen were his eye and hand” (*Corsair* p.21). His accents and actions were so prompt that “all obeyed and few inquired his will” (*Corsair* p.23).

Conrad and his troops have left their isle and have headed to the isle of Seyd the pasha. He was disguised as a dervish and introduced into the harem. His entrance was followed by the one of his troops. The main objective of their intrusion was to free the captives of Seyd the pasha. Among those captives, there was the favorite captive of the pasha. Her name was Gulnare. She was also another motif of the battle between Conrad and the pasha:

“For now the pirates pass’d the Haram gate
And burst within-and it were death to wait.” (*Corsair* p.106)

Under the swiftness and the violence of the battle, Seyd the pasha lost for a moment the control of his troops. But very soon he contrived to reorganize his troops, arrested Conrad and fettered him. Later Gulnare reorganized the remnant corsairs and freed Conrad. He was taken to his ship and sailed to the pirates’ isle. As the prototype of Byronic hero, Conrad has battled to gain freedom for a whole community. He did not care much for his own safety, but he rather cared for others. The Byronic hero usually cared first for others on the detriment of himself. He was first a servant for others and not a conqueror.

The actions of the corsairs headed by Conrad have revealed the opposing visions of the western world and the oriental one about slavery. Conrad was representing the western vision; Seyd the pasha was representing the oriental one. While Seyd the pasha was defending and supporting slavery as a social system, Conrad and his troops were fighting to eradicate it as a system. The corsairs have found an inhuman living situation on the isle of the pasha. The typical Byronic hero is not usually satisfied with his society. He felt an obligation to change the given situation. The intrusion of the corsairs into the harem of the pasha was partially explained by their will to put an end to an inhuman system. On attacking the harem, they fulfilled a mission to provide freedom for a whole community. From their analysis, justice and human rights were violated by the pasha. They felt invested with that mission to restore peace and stability inside the harem. The attack was highly symbolic since it intended to destroy not only an institution -slavery- but

also a community –the harem. But judging from the side of Seyd the pasha, Conrad and his friends were typical invaders and foes. They should face trial. Of course Lord Byron has expressed his grievances and convictions through his hero Conrad. As a European citizen and a poet fervent of liberal conviction, he deemed slavery as an abomination. There is a convergence between the ideals of Lord Byron and the ones of his hero. Those ideals claimed a radical change of the oriental world through the harem of Seyd the pasha. But for the pasha, Conrad was a foe worth being arrested, fettered and imprisoned.

Conrad and his friends have failed to destroy the old system and to establish a new one. Their failure has revealed that all the basic conditions for a change were not yet gathered. There was still a long social way to go before reaching a point susceptible for a change. Conrad was arrested on order of the pasha. Michel Martin del Campo(2022) thinks that “more importantly, to contrast them with Romantic heroes, Byronic heroes are also self-destructive and reckless.” Conrad’s course has been destructive not only for the corsairs themselves but also for the political agenda he was supposed to fulfill. His friends have abandoned him and have fled away. His rescue has been possible due to the help of Gulnare, the favorite slave of Seyd the pasha. Gulnare ordered: “Receive this poignard-rise- and follow me”. (*Corsair* p.186)

2.2 -Seduction and Passivity

The Byronic hero usually develops strong passions for his ideals and for his sentiments. He usually finds himself in situations where his feelings would appear amoral and illegal for others. Nicholls(2022) attested that, “the Byronic hero was incapable of love or was capable of impossible love; he suffered endlessly” (p.11). He is usually involved in love affairs whose ends go out of his control and his will. Despite his charisma, he does not lead a normal idyllic life. According to Nicholls (2022) the Byronic hero “possesses a great deal of magnetism and charisma; he uses these abilities to achieve social and romantic dominance” (p. 13).

The typical example of a seductive hero was in *Don Juan* (1819) by Lord Byron. The hero of the book was also named Don Juan. He was a young man of sixteen years old. His tender age, naivety and beauty have seduced Julia, a married woman of thirty-two years old. All along his love adventure with Julia, Don Juan seemed to be victim of his naivety and joviality. His conduct and sentiments were guided by the caprices of Julia. The latter one was basically seduced by his charisma and his tenderness.

As a recollection, Julia was a friend of Donna Inez, the mother of Don Juan. She regularly attended the family for civility. During her numerous visits, Julia has noticed and has appreciated Don Juan as a “naïve boy whose heart was worth conquering”. Juan's apparent timidity and innocence have served as strong opportunity for Julia to first manifest any smoothing feelings towards him. But Silvia Bordoni (2005) thinks that " Julia's taking initiative over Juan derives from the exclusive eagerness of Byron to feminise his hero" as an easy prey at the mercy of greedy lioness as Julia was. Juan's passive appearance somehow impulse and nerves to Julia while expressing her feelings to him.

Nevertheless Bordoni (2005) has underscored that incisive intention of Lord Byron in assigning his hero to an environment where he could neither feel proud nor selfish. In these conditions, there was nothing surprising in seeing " Juan dissimulated as a toy within bed sheets and pillows" kept under bed from Don Alfonso's eyes. Don Juan was as pretty as Julia, though she

was much older. Another reason for their relation was Don Juan's passivity. His naivety and passivity have brought him into a scandal of morality. He has been found together with Julia in the same bed. Meantime Don Juan was turned into a toy to escape the vigilance of the police. After a calamitous liaison with Julia, Don Juan was sent by his mother to Italy "to mend his spirit". That voyage to Italy confirms the position of Richard Cardwell (2009) who had previously warned that "Byron shared much more than common ground with his hero Juan. On cautioning to display, "to make Juan perform as a toy within the disposal of strong ladies" as Julia, Byron has taken the risk of turning Juan into a happy-go-lucky. But Katha Pollit(2009) thinks that "the inversion of role between Julia and Juan has started when Julia, a married woman, had succeeded" in organising an appointment with Juan despite her husband jealousy and nervousness.

On his way to Italy, there was a shipwreck where many passengers had died. But Don Juan has escaped and has been found on the seashore by a young girl named Haidee. She too has been seduced like Julia by his tenderness and beauty. Nicholls (2022) thinks that, "women love Don Juan, and he lets himself embark by the course of the adventures" (p.12). His tender age and his fragile situation have finally pushed Haidee to develop a feeling for him. That position was relayed by Allan Gregory (2009) when he thought that " Juan was always seduced, but never the seducer".

Julia and Haidee shared in common strong passions for the targets of their concern. Under fascination and seduction, they forgot their rank and estate. In a desperate letter to Don Juan, Julia has admitted her errors before being taken to the convent. Her letter has revealed her weakness in front of Don Juan's charisma. That weakness was compensated by the passivity and the naivety of Don Juan. As for Haidee, she used Don Juan as a little toy to entertain her compound. But her father old Lambro was clever enough to take him to Constantinople for sale. Don Juan has been sold as a slave in the market of Constantinople. He has been bought by Gulbeyaz, a princess with strong passions. Don Juan's passivity and smoothness have finally seduced and fascinated Gulbeyaz. On arrival, he was masked among the various captives of the sultan. Though he was living among the various captives of the sultan, Don Juan was soon noticed by Gulbeyaz, the princess. She contrived to get him close to her. He became an object of desire between the sultan, his wife and his captives.

Lord Byron has been object of various critics for the passive role bestowed to his hero Don Juan. The feminization of Don Juan aimed at "mocking the manners and the traditions of the British society". Johnson (2007) did not find any excuse in the feminization of Don Juan. In many of his other writings, male figures appeared to be strong and self-made persons. In *Mazeppa*(1819), in *Parisina*(1816), in *Beppo*(1818), in the *Bride of Abydos*(1813) and in the *Corsairs*, male figures played the leading role compared to their female partners.

The previous writings about Don Juan as a hero in the previous centuries have presented a strong gentleman conqueror and aggressive ready for bloody confrontations. That gentleman was invested with supernatural powers to take any kind of challenges. His energy combined with ferocity was described to promote his leadership compared to other characters in the different writings. The classical Don Juan was physically strong and morally wise, an example to be followed. He voluntarily respected the rules and the practices of the society he was living in.

Lord Byron's Don Juan was basically not of a conformist obedience. He felt that there was a need for change. But how shall that change come out? The Byronic hero was in permanent quest of an appropriate way to achieve his goals. A peaceful change would take too much time and negotiation to carry out. A violent change would require skills, determination and blood. The Byronic hero was permanently fleeing between those two options. Conrad and his troops in the *Corsairs* were typical examples of a violent solution whereas Don Juan in the book *Don Juan*(1819) was a passive expression of male identity.

Marc Porée, (2022) speaking of Don Juan, has stated: "From conqueror, Lord Byron has made a victim, from a predator, a prey: his Don Juan would be more seduced than a seducer" (*Folio* p.147). All his affairs long, he has been driven by women "with strong sex" as Lord Byron too had met strong ladies ranging from lady Caroline Lamb, Teresa Guiccioli, lady Oxford to Claire Clairmont etc... The puerile appearance of Don Juan has finally seduced each of his female partners.

2.3-Political and Social Activism

Another characteristic of the Byronic hero is his political and his social activism. As a recollection, he always complained about his living environment and rejected the national institutions. Conrad in the *Corsairs*, Harold in *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* (1812), Selim in the *Bride of Abydos*(1813), Giaour in the *Giaour*(1813) were all activists determined to change a situation. Harold, a vagrant gentleman, unsatisfied with the regency, embarked on a European tour. He "was disillusioned with a life of pleasure and revelry and looked for distraction in foreign lands". (*Childe Harold Pilgrimage* p.12).

Harold's long voyage through European climes attested his despise and scorn toward the rules and the norms of his own country. Though he was of a high pedigree, he could not change almost anything in his country. For example, Harold did not much appreciate the weather of the realm; he did not appreciate much the political life of his country. His solution has been to travel far away in order to discover warmer climes. He found English women colder than the Italian ones.

His visits to Spain, Italy, Greece and Switzerland echoed the warm climate, the nice people and the open, cultural life of those climes. Harold has chanted their green nature, their historical places and achievements, but he has meticulously avoided to sojourn in France where the French revolution was still going on. He has not hidden his favor and praise for that revolution. His expectations were to reach the English people to reconsider their lifestyle. He pleaded for a political and social change in his own country.

In the *Bride of Abydos*(1813) Selim's confrontation with old Giaffir was basically due to his eagerness to protect his love. As a recollection, Selim was an adoptive son of old Giaffir, the pasha, who had killed his father during a battle. The pasha has been so kind to adopt him in his harem. Selim grew as a slave in the hands of the pasha. He shared his childhood and his friendship with Zuleika, the elder daughter of old Giaffir. As they grew, both Selim and Zuleika have developed mutual sentiment that later has become love. But old Giaffir has promised the hand of his daughter to another man Osman Bey. But Zuleika already loved Selim and was "basically attached to him". To avoid the wedding day, both Selim and Zuleika have fled away to a grotto where they would clash with the troops sent by old Giaffir. The bloody battle has

finally turned in favor of Giaffir; both young men have died. Selim's heroism and determination could not balance the pasha's cruelty. Selim's eagerness to protect Zuleika from forced marriage materialized his determination to restore justice in the society. The settings of the story took place in oriental climes where Muslim values were parts of the local culture. Accordingly, matters related to culture like marriage could not fairly happen under those climes. Only activists like Selim, the lover of Zuleika, could attempt to face the trouble. As a Byronic hero, he has acted according to his convictions to save a situation. For Nicholls (2022) "a Byronic hero is on his own side and has his own set of beliefs which he will not bow nor change for anyone (p.12).

Selim was deeply convinced that Zuleika did not love Osman Bey. She rather loved Selim, her half- brother with whom she had grown in the same family. His actions and convictions have not been shared by all the members in the pasha's family. Though his actions socially looked reprehensible, but still he was keeping upon them as defensible and realizable. That obstinacy, that blind attachment to his convictions often led to his failure, to his death. The latter one most often happened in a violent way since he was not ready "to bow or change his beliefs for anyone".

On the same line, Conrad in the *Corsairs*(1814) and his troops have attacked the harem of Seyd the pasha, symbol of slavery. His actions were conducted with the main objective to destroy a politico-social system. As a recollection, Seyd the pasha was keeping hundreds of captives in his harem on the sake of culture and traditions. That inhuman practice was widespread under the oriental climes in a considerable part of the eighteenth century. The Byronic hero Conrad has attempted to restore justice in attacking the harem. Though he has failed in freeing all the slaves and the captives from the harem, he nevertheless has contrived in "warning the local environment about the ongoing slavery of humans by other humans". He was arrested and fettered in the order of Seyd the pasha. His failure was rather due to his young age than his revolutionary spirit. That defeat has symbolically revealed that slavery as a socio-political system was not ripe for destruction. Gulnare, a favorite slave of the pasha, has attempted to reorganize the remnants of Conrad's troops. However, Meckler Adam(2007) judged Gulnare "not materially prepared to stand to the tower" because a slave could "only rebel with bare hands". Conrad"(p.14). A freshly freed slave like Gulnare was fighting to guarantee her freedom in resisting to the desperate attacks of Seyd the pasha. Bordoni (2022) has underestimated the revolutionary spirit of the harem dwellers since they were basically feminine figures ready "rather to bow than to face" challenges. A slave at best bows his head while addressing to his lord. This act was considered as a sign of civility and convenience. But an activist like Conrad and now Gulnare prefer facing challenges.

The same activism was relayed in the *Giaour* when Hassan, the master of Leila, has attempted to take her back after her fleeing. As a recollection Leila was a slave living in the harem of Hassan her master. In that Turkish tale, Lord Byron has described an oriental society where slavery was still going on as a social phenomenon. The tale developed a competition between two men around Leila, the slave of Hassan. The Giaour was her lover and Hassan, her master. During the Bairam feast, when "the mosque's high lamps were quivering still", Leila has decided to flee her master's harem. (p12). She has "wronged her master (Hassan) with a faithless Giaour". (p.39). The way she had fled away was explained in the following lines:

Strange rumours in our city say

Upon that eve she fled away

When Rhamazani's last sun was set (the Giaour, p.38)

Hassan and the Giaour were disputing one and the same person: Leila. She was Hassan's slave and at the same time the Giaour's love. From a cultural point of view, Hassan was right to claim back his fugitive slave. She was a kind of his possession. Since slavery was a common practice of that time, Hassan's actions were considered normal. The departure of Leila, a slave, could motivate other slaves to follow her example. Hassan and his troops were impelled to defend their position since Leila had fled away with the Giaour. From a sentimental and a human point of view, the Giaour was right to fight against "slavery as an inhuman bondage". Servitude was an old practice under the oriental climes. As such the Giaour knew he could not on a single attempt destroy a system aged of many centuries. The best way in such a case would be to gradually destroy it in "nibbling it piece by piece". Leila was a tiny part of the system. Her fleeing from Hassan's harem thanks to the Giaour was explicative of the decadent trend taken by slavery as a social but inhuman phenomenon.

The Giaour has eloped with Leila as an attempt of providing "all the other captives living under the control of Hassan, the slave master" with freedom and prosperity. Slavery could never be taken as a model of human development. The new society the Giaour was fighting for was expected to provide each citizen with freedom, equal opportunity for success, justice and solidarity. From that revolutionary point of view, the Giaour was socially defensible in his attempt to demolish slavery as a social system:

Tw'as then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly searched in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wronged him with a faithless Giaour. (p.20)

Bordoni(2005) had another appreciation about the Giaour's actions. For her "the Giaour had no moral right to attempt any demolishing actions against Hassan's harem" (p.23). Slavery was a very old cultural practice under the oriental climes. Hassan was interested in prospering that system in keeping "many captives like Leila within his harem". From that perspective, the Giaour was considered as a foe to be defeated. Hassan was in his right to defend his possessions materialized by the ongoing system of slavery on the land. The clash between Hassan, the slave master, and the Giaour, the liberator of the slaves, has revealed the confrontation between the Western and the oriental philosophies. Hassan looked as a conservator whereas the Giaour appeared as a reformer, a modernist. Under the oriental climes, slavery was a common practice profitable for the rich layers of the society. During his European tour in 1812, Lord Byron visited such oriental countries like the Ottoman empire, Albany, and basically Greece where there was going the Greek war for independence.

Most of his tales were taken from the Ottoman empire, today Turkey. As a true representative of the western culture, Lord Byron shared a rejecting vision about the cultural practice of the oriental world. In *Beppo* for example, he has deplored the fact that "Moslem women were veiled all days in verandas"; "their days were spent either in nursing or in taking care of their children and husbands" (*Beppo* p.54). Through his various heroes, he expressed his deep concern and consternations as far as women situations were concerned in the oriental climes.

The battle between Hassan, the slaveholder and the Giaour, the slave liberator, appeared to be a battle between justice and injustice. Holding slaves in his possession was morally unfair of Hassan. Human bondage could not anyway be considered as a social standard or fashion. Hassan was fighting to keep, to entertain a vanishing system which undignified human race. No credit should be given to a system – be it social, economic or political- which enhanced and encouraged the subjugation of human souls. No system should be strong enough to encourage such a practice. The killing of Hassan by the Giaour and his troops was symbolic in the sense that it confirmed the decay of slavery as a social and a political system:

His breast with wounds unnumbered riven
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies- his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy...(the Giaour, p.56)

The Giaour in the role of the Byronic hero abhorred slavery as a social system. Hassan was a true representative of that system. His death should be explained by that necessity to put an end to an evil. The Giaour has then expressed his disgust his loathe towards slavery. Leila was a slave living among many other slaves in Hassan's harem. She has taken advantage of the Ramadan feast to flee her master. She has eloped with the Giaour whose mission was to make her free from servitude.

Though his conduct was legally reprehensible, the Giaour was morally right in destroying the social system entertained many centuries before him. His actions were closely connected to a general need of change. The advent of a new society was a historical necessity. All the necessary conditions had been gathered for a radical change. Slavery had been a human indignity for many centuries. Slaves over years have learnt much to accept the ongoing situation. They were waiting for any opportunity to revolt against the inhuman situation. The deeds of the Giaour and his troops should be understood within that frame.

The elopement of Leila with the Giaour and the subsequent death of Hassan, her master, embodied that inevitable decay of slavery as a social system. A new day of freedom, justice and enlightenment was rising on the oriental countries. Byronic heroes were contemptuous of their living environment. They forcibly attempt in altering, in destroying the existing order. They might fail or succeed. Their deep concern was to take the risk of actions. Their relief was the changing situation that loomed ahead, not their personal agenda.

Conrad in *the Corsairs*, Selim in *the Bride of Abydos* and the Giaour in *the Giaour* were fighting to change a decadent situation. Though their actions legally looked reprehensible, they nevertheless have kept on carrying out their deeds on behalf of human dignity and freedom. On taking the different risks, they did not care for the success or the failure of their actions. They only felt the need of change, and they carried it out sometime at the detriment of their life, their health, their family and background.

Conclusion

On breaking up with the traditional romantic hero, Lord Byron has constructed a new type of hero more passionate for his ideas and his siblings, but less careful about himself. The byronic hero globally reflects that tumultuous period of the eighteenth century when Europe was undergoing huge social turmoil and convulsions. Lord Byron needed each other to survive the various challenges of their epoch. Byron needed that kind of hero to merge as a poet within the

English aristocracy; the byronic hero needed the author to be proposed as another alternative for various crises.

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