Don Juan as a typical Byronic Hero

The term “Byronic” is an adjective from of Byron who is a famous romantic poet of English Literature. Byron has created many heroes in his writing. Childe Harold, Manfred, Don Juan and others are called “Byronic hero”. Because they possess some special characteristics which make them entirely of Byron. They are highly romantic, whimsical and cynical. They are sadistic, passionate, rough and tough. They are generally handsome but cruel and careless to the spiritual union. Don Juan is considered as a typical Byronic hero. He has played a very significant role in the famous poem, *Don Juan, Canto-I* by Lord Byron.

Byron’s concept of hero is different from other Romantic poets. He believes a real man should be of flesh and blood with essential human feelings and emotions. The Byronic heroes have got some qualities in common and these qualities constitute a concept of a Byronic hero as far as his role and function is concerned in the poem.

A Byronic hero is essentially handsome, attractive and adventurous. For women he becomes a heart throb by virtue of his attractive qualities and undaunted courage. Juan’s physical attractiveness is revealed in Canto-I.

“Young Juan was sixteen years of aye
Tall handsome, slender but well-knit he seemed
Active, though not so sprightly as a page”

Lord Byron has neither chosen the military heroes like Vernon, Cumberland, Wolfe, Ferdinand nor the Revolutionary leaders like Barnave, Brissot for his epic. Bernard Beatty is of the opinion that “Byron’s hero seems to resemble his original only in his name and in his sequence of love encounters. There are, however some important underlying connections between them.”

Really speaking, his heroes are his own glimpse, and tell his own view and highlight his character, personality and philosophy. A Byronic hero is not purely good or dignified; rather he is a mixture of both good and evil. Byronic hero differs from the conventional epic heroes. So, he says in the opening lines:

“I want a hero; an uncommon want.
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till after cloying the gazettes with cant
The age discovers he is not the true one.”

*Don Juan* is a picaresque piece of art in respect of its hero’s adventure. Juan is the perfect hero of Byron. Through him we get the authentic picture of a Byronic hero. He is a scoundrel who does not hesitate to do immoral work. He was a “mischief making monkey from his birth.” But he is humble and obedient to his mother. He does not cross the limitations imposed by his mother. He dose not mix with other boys because of her prohibit dance. Even he undertakes a sea travel to carry out her wishes.

The Byronic hero is a person who craves for power and breaks the chain of authority. Don Juan is a victor who does not want to be defeated by anybody. Alfonso wanted to kill him with his sword, but Juan was able to manage an escape by knocking down Alfonso, though he was compelled to leave his only dress.

In *Don Juan* the protagonist responds to the love of fascinating Julia, enjoying her company and consumes her love. But his attitude is rather passive. He lacks that seriousness which makes more involved emotions. Juan wants to possess Julia physically and never take care of her feelings. He has indulged in physical unions with her on a number of occasions without any moral or social hesitation. When his illicit love is discovered he flees in the darkness. Julia writes to him expressing her passionate love after she is discovered and sent to the convent. But Juan’s attitude is rather indifferent. He follows his mother advices to undertake a sea voyage in different European countries.

It is evident that Byronic hero is concerned with sexuality, escape, quick-witted, trickery, journey and disobedience. The hero is a villain but as with many villains, we have a sneaking sympathy for him. We show our sympathy for Don Juan as we show for Macbeth. An analysis of the predicament of Juan indeed presents him as a typical Byronic hero.