

The Feminization of Don Juan in Lord Byron's *Don Juan*

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Abstract

This paper focuses on establishing the different reasons of Don Juan's relative passivity in his adventures with women. As a recollection, Juan has first evolved under the influence of his mother Donna Inez, determined to provide her single son with a complete education. The objective of the study is to account for the feminization of the person in the poem "Don Juan". The foregoing is achieved through a socio-critical and biographical analysis of the selected poem. The results of the study have shown that the persona's mother's eagerness and stubbornness have finally impacted on Juan's social conduct all along his different itinerary. He therefore became passive, naïve, attractive and smooth-hearted in his juvenile peregrinations as a woman would be.

Key words: influence, feminization, passivity, epic poetry, woman

Résumé :

Cet article porte sur les raisons de la relative passivité de Don Juan dans ses aventures avec les femmes. Pour mémoire, Juan a d'abord évolué sous l'influence de sa mère Donna Inez, déterminée à offrir une éducation complète à son fils célibataire. L'objectif de l'étude est de rendre compte de la féminisation du personnage principal dans le poème « Don Juan ». Cet objectif est réalisé à travers une analyse sociocritique et biographique du poème sélectionné. Les résultats de l'étude ont montré que l'empressement et l'entêtement de la mère du personnage principalement ont finalement eu un impact sur le comportement social de Juan tout au long de son itinéraire. Il devient alors passif, naïf, séduisant et doux dans ses pérégrinations juvéniles comme le serait une femme.

Mots clés : influence, femme, féminisation, passivité, poésie épique.

Introduction

Don Juan has been an old literary figure throughout many centuries. It is a fictional figure whose history was traced back from the seventeenth century in Spain. Basically his story was closely connected to love affairs portrayed in illegal contexts. His portraiture was associated to an aggressive gentleman who used to abuse or commit crime to reach his objectives. Over centuries, the character of Don Juan has significantly evolved to become nowadays a "universal seducer of ladies". He was performed in theater, in films, in sculpture, poetry, opera etc... Lord Byron, an

English writer of the nineteenth century, was also fascinated by the adventures of Don Juan as a literary figure. He has been working on his long poem *Don Juan* until his death in 1824. His version was significantly different from the previous ones. “I want a hero, warns Lord Byron, an uncommon want”.

This paper actually strives to account for the feminization of the main persona of the poem “Don Juan” because very few studies have tried to understand the causes or reasons for the weaknesses of Don Juan especially for women and his passivity. The objective of the current is therefore to unveil and explicate the causes of the feminization and the passivity of the main person of the selected poem. To be able to achieve the above objective, two theories are mainly used: the biographical criticism and socio-criticism. The biographical and socio criticism seem to be relevant to the current study because we believe that we can better appreciate a piece of literature like a poem by using the insight provided by knowledge of the poet’s life. The second approach is also relevant because society always influences authors and any craft reading of literature entails an investigation into the socio-cultural and political environments of that literature. Poetry does not make any exception in this sense.

Methodologically, the study adopted a qualitative method because the selected research design is content analysis and all the sources utilized are written documents. Besides, we use words to explicate the findings of the study. Structurally, the paper is divided into four main parts. The first part deals with the issue of education and the second one focuses on unveiling the process through which the main persona of the poem has been feminized. The third one explains his passive love with Haidee fourth one focuses on his disguises and the last one sums up the study by revealing the influences of the three women met by Don Juan.

1. Education of Don Juan:

Juan, the hero of the epic poem “Don Juan” was born in Seville, Spain to Don Jose and Donna Inez. He was of a noble pedigree. His parents were leading a sort of strife, despise and mutual scorn which had resulted in the humiliation and later in the death of Don Jose. The little Juan was left in the hands of his mother who wished “all sorts of education for Juan ranging from mathematics, arts, artillery to gunnery” (p.18). Under such a strong mother, Juan was left almost “no free environment” suitable for his moral blooming. His mother intended to provide him with an exemplary education. Mambrol (2021) thought that “Juan’s mother, Donna Inez, had made her utmost to prepare her single son to face future challenges” (p 5). As a true Hidalgo – a famous Spanish noble family-, Juan “should be quite a paragon, worthy of the noblest pedigree” (p 20). Different teachers were successively working hard “to mend his knowledge and his spirit”.

Don Juan has grown up in a feminine environment. He was alone with his mother which had deeply affected his nerves. He has also grown up in seclusion far away from other youth of his generation. That isolate life has affected the psychological development of the young Juan. In seclusion, he had no opportunity to share his boyish naivety, innocence, chimera and fantasias.

Lord Byron warned that “Juan had grown pale and bored” in the hands of a mother determined to make him an example of success for his generation. In that isolate life, there was a high risk for the little Juan to be hampered in his sentimental development. There was a need for him to attend social environment, to meet other people to mend his knowledge. At that age, Juan was the prototype of that social class known as the nobility. Children basically received home education under the supervision of home teachers and governesses. They learned natural and social sciences necessary for their overall prosperity.

2. Victim of Love

Juan was living in such a limited environment when he first met Donna Julia. She was his mother’s friend, and regularly attended Juan’s family. Lord Byron warned that “Julia often caressed Juan- such a thing might be quite innocently done, and harmless styled-” (p 30). But Julia had tolerable ground while judging her affection towards “the handsome and slender Juan”. Her attachment to Juan’s family needed precious explanations.

Donna Inez and Don José were Juan’s parents. They formed a strange sort of pair. Donna Inez was a strong, nervous person whereas her husband Don José was a man who “had little care about himself and about learned persons” (p 13). That dualist statement made their force and their weakness. While Donna Inez received many friends indoors, Don José almost did his utmost to avoid their acquaintance. Donna Inez’s past was far from being an example worthy of praise and pride. Before she married Don José, she had a love affair with Don Alfonso, husband of Donna Julia.

Donna Julia was twenty-three years old when her husband Don Alfonso was fifty. She has grown bored with the marriage of Don Alfonso. An old man married to a young lady, both make a curious pair. Lord Byron doubted whether “at fifty (years old) love for love might be”. In her boredom life, Donna Julia sought how to change her daily reality full of resentment and desolation. That strong need to change her life was explicative of her relation with Donna Inez. Another problem has been the former love affair between Don Alfonso and Donna Inez. Lord Byron was certain that “all Seville knew about the issue. Julia might know it but obviously had not cared about”. Del Campo (2022) estimated that “Donna Julia had been a morally strong lady as she was aware of that love affair between her husband and her friend Donna Inez” (p 11). He has seen another explanation in Julia’s attendance at Donna Inez’.

Julia needed to plunge into a moral comfort and consolation. She thought her friendship with Donna Inez could serve “as a way to soothe, to relieve her pains and wounds” in Don Alfonso’s family. As Donna Inez and Don Alfonso were still- though morally- in complicity, Donna Julia thought she could fill her sentimental gap by setting a close tie with Don José. But it was obvious that Don José would not be receptive to her wishes as he “had little care about himself”. Accordingly, she should compensate her affection towards Don José. On the same line, she has contrived in setting a tie with little Juan. Donna Julia has paid several visits to Juan’s

mother Donna Inez. During those visits she very often “caressed Juan quite innocently”. Juan was seen as the future Don José. Julia’s impossible love with Don José was compensated or replaced by her affection towards his son Juan. From that perspective, Juan could not be blamed for his ties with Donna Julia, a married woman!

At sixteen years old, Juan was no longer a boy. He needed to lead the life corresponding his age. His feeling was no longer boyish and naïve. He was already developing almost moral, physical features worthy of a grown-up, determined to play his partition in the society. He felt sad, timid though bright and intelligent. He possessed all necessary elements to be a good “cavalier servente” for any young lady. His only problem was his shyness due to his permanent seclusion by a nervous mother. Juan’s seclusion within the hands of his mother has revealed the significant role played by mothers in the upbringing of their children. Over centuries that maternal role has increased as men were mobilized in much more aggressive functions like military service, in scientific expeditions etc... Donna Inez was the prototype of her generation, concerned mainly with the moral and the social conduct of the little Juan. Such a strong mother delivering such a strict moral education to a single son in a home condition should certainly have some consequences for Juan. His social environment was limited to home activities and leisure. Juan has never got opportunity to enjoy himself outdoors with any of his mates. In such an isolate situation, any surprise, acquaintance would be precious for him to leave his boring situation. He has never met a girl before. In such a confinement, Juan was exposed to any social risks, but basically idyllic risk. He was an “easy prey” to any voracious lady.

In such a condition, he was seduced by Donna Julia, who was trying to get an alternative to her boring life with Don Alfonso. Donna Julia was twenty-three while Don Juan was sixteen. Juan’s passiveness in his rapport with Julia was explained by his difference in age with her. In normal cases, a man is relatively older than his wife while marrying. Accordingly, Juan should relatively be older than she was. That difference should morally help the husband in leading his future household. But Lord Byron has deliberately chosen Julia much older than Juan in the sense to bestow much more influence and role to Julia in their rapports. The elderly age of Julia enabled her to take the lead over Juan. Accordingly, she drove moral force and prestige upon Juan in their relations. On according a leading role to Julia, Lord Byron has decided “to submit the feelings of Juan to the caprices of Julia”. Juan was expected to follow, to submit his desire and feelings to the will and intrigues of Donna Julia. From that perspective, Juan was condemned to play a figurative, passive role in his relations with Julia. “One hand on Juan’s carelessly was thrown, quite by mistake—she thought it was her own” (p 42). From this statement above, the hand of Julia “was carelessly thrown” on Juan’s one. There was a change in role since Julia was the first to take the initiative over Juan by throwing her hand into Juan’s. Lord Byron has henceforth conferred to Julia a male role while Juan was invested with a female one. That feminization of Don Juan aimed at religiously “absolving his sins through innocence and naivety”. The fornication was religiously reprehensible in the society. Critics from various schools would find Julia and Juan’s attitudes abhorrent.

The younger age of Juan aimed at exculpating him in that strange relation with a married woman. The author was concerned with the way he would protect his hero from the critics. His feminization in his love relation also intended to facilitate his “swallowing by strong female figures” like Julia. Juan seemed innocent and naïve in his adventures. That passive position enabled him “to profit the grace and the sublimity of his mistresses”. He was seduced, but never the seducer. But Del Campo (2022) has not totally shared that statement. According to his analyses, “Juan also used his patience and calmness in conquering the heart and the body” of his victims. Such types of gentleman usually put their moral qualities much more ahead than their physical ones in their conquests. Despite his physical features, Don Juan also disposed of much moral fairness and brightness. He seemed to be innocent in his adventure with Julia, a married woman. How could he dare find himself late in the bowers “when the nightingale sang and sighed” for lovers?

The main sin for Juan could be his attachment to a married woman, and he seemed not to care much for his pedigree and his security. He was also a novice in matters dealing with affection and love. His passive attitude in his rapport with Julia was explicative of his tender age and inexperience. The leading role played by Julia covered Juan’s juvenile triviality and hesitation in exposing his feelings. Del Campo (2022) has attempted to establish “ a correlation between Juan’s prudent attitude and the relative offensive of Julia in seducing him”(p 12). Julia was his first love, but he rather played a passive role in discovering Julia as a mistress. Most critics thought that “Juan could stand for Lord Byron himself in his relations with such strong women as Lady Caroline Lamb, Lady Guiccioli, Marie Clairemont” etc... Lord Byron too has long evolved under the influence and the attraction of those ladies.

The hand which still held Juan’s, by degrees
Gently, but palpably confirm’d its grasp,
As if it said, ‘Detain me, if you please;’(p43).

Things could go on well as long as Juan and Julia met outside. But one night Juan was found in the chamber of Julia. Don Alfonso has invited “all Seville to witness the case”. Abettors, judges, physicians, artists were to support his remonstrance against his wife. But Juan was hidden under the bed. After many actions and searches, Juan was not found by Don Alfonso’s company. “Young Juan slipped half-smothered, from the bed” (p 60).

He had been hiding—I don’t pretend to say.
How, nor can I indeed describe the where—
Young, slender, and pack’d easily, he lay,
No doubt, in little compass, round or square; (p 60)

A gentleman like Juan was “easily packed, lying in little compass, round and square”. Julia and her maid Antonia have been clever enough to wrap “Juan like a little toy” just to deceive the

vigilance of Don Alfonso and his company. Lord Byron was mocking the moral discrepancies of the Spanish aristocracy and indirectly castigating the vice of the British society. In normal conditions, articles like shoes, clothes, papers, other staff are packed for appropriate purposes. But it is not worth wrapping a normal human being like Don Juan. In so doing, both Julia and her maid Antonia have attempted to wipe up “the moral sin “of Juan, which had consisted in compromising himself with a married woman. But Mambrol (2021) thought “Juan no longer deserved the attribution of a normal person” since he had a love affair with a married woman. Neither his tender age nor his naivety could serve as a legal ground to exonerate him from that moral abhorrence. Juan could no longer pretend to any place or social usefulness worth his rank. On his birth, his parents have done what they could to provide better living conditions for him. Those conditions ranged from a decent housing, education, arts up to an adequate training for professional purposes. The degradation or the subjugation of his personality to Julia accounts for a deliberate poetic choice of Lord Byron to alleviate the sinful conduct of his hero. It also accounts for facilitating Juan’s contact with strong ladies like Julia. That poetic proceeding enabled to entertain and to maintain Juan’s innocence until he grew enough to become answerable before the law. His female partners were portrayed as leading and conquering figures whose merits had been to contain and to tame his boyish caprices.

On the same line, Juan was growing in a female environment where he was expected to play no better than a secondary role vis-à-vis his partners. That secondary role assigned to him has not hampered any of his acquaintances yet. Juan seemed to draw a kind of moral relief from his relations as the story continued. His tender age could not serve as an excuse in compromising himself with married women.

But (Julia) pressed her bloodless lip on Juan’s cheek
He turned his lip to hers, and with his hand
Called back the tangles of her wandering hair. (p 61)

Don José, his father, has not cared much about himself during his lifetime. As a true heir, Juan too did not care much about his security and honour in visiting Donna Julia in her bedroom. No matter what might have happened there, it was not so prudent from an adolescent like him “to get in company of a married woman seven years his senior”. The risks could range from a physical clash with her husband up to a judiciary prosecution against him. Finally, Juan has clashed with Don Alfonso, Julia’s husband. The strife appeared rather a self-defense for Juan than an aggressive action. On his way out from Julia’s room, he met her husband, furious and determined to pay him through his nose. But a teenage like he could fiercely stand to the clash with an old man of sixty. Obviously the young man was expected to win the battle after sharp molestation. He has finally contrived in getting rid of Don Alfonso and has disappeared through the bowers.

Juan had reached the room-door in a trice,
And might have done so by the garden-gate,

But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
Who threatened death—so Juan knocked him down (*Don Juan*.p 65).

Juan and Julia's affair was no longer a hidden case in Seville. Local press and other mass media have echoed the drama which would for years followed Juan as a harassing sin. He could no longer pretend to have been "victim of voracious lady" as some critics had portrayed Julia before. Though Juan was impelled to face Alfonso, his force and his determination were factors to propel his maturity. His mother Donna Inez has judged useful to send him abroad "just to mend his spirit". Italy was chosen by his mother for his future destination. By this time, he has lost his father, dead on chagrin and desolation. On his way to Italy, there was a shipwreck that had claimed the life of hundreds of passengers. A lot of material damages happened as the aftermaths of the ship sinking. Juan, half unconscious and deeply exhausted, was dragged to the sea shore like an old trunk of tree.

After so calamitous an adventure with Julia, the young Juan needed to take holidays from any bothering enterprise. His temporary withdraw from the scene enabled the writer to deeply think about his case. That pause allowed Lord Byron to sketch "a new itinerary for his hero since he had been unable to fulfill his previous assignments". He was expected to play a male, more aggressive role in contact with Julia. But he had rather a more passive, delicate and figurative role. Lord Byron needed to define a new environment for Juan's development as an individual. That new living environment should take into account not only the physical development of Juan, but also his psychological growth for his forthcoming campaigns. It would depend on Lord Byron to draw a new path susceptible for Juan to join the circle of other normal gentlemen of his generation. But dependence was fleeting on the writer's will to confer his hero which kind of man he would like to make it of him. Against any expectation, the poet has decided to bestow a second chance to his hero. He has estimated that his hero was still young, and accordingly he had time and opportunity to become responsible. Within that frame, Juan was the main survivor after the shipwreck. That sailing accident should warn Juan about the forthcoming possible dangers in his life.

3. Passive Love with Haidee

Following the shipwreck, Juan has been carried away by the waves and the tornadoes and was thrown upon the seashore, half conscious as an object. By chance he found himself in a grotto until the next day he had been discovered by Haidee and her maid. A new story was then beginning for Juan in the hands of a new woman. From an almost dead situation, Juan would be helped come back to life by these two young ladies.

It was bending dose over his, and the small mouth
Seemed almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recalled his answering spirits back from death (*Don Juan*. p 111).

All along the story, Juan was given a second chance to come back to life anew. Haidee and her maid kept busy of him, bringing foods, fire, furs, clothes, shoes etc.... They paid regular visits to the cave where he resided and made all necessary steps for revitalizing his body and spirit. Day after day his moral and physical situation was improving so as he contrived in moving from mimics to uttering some words with his guests.

The long stay of Juan on the seashore, his maintaining in secret had a family reason. Old Lambro was Haidee's father; he was slave merchant sailing over many ports of the eastern countries Greece, Albania, Ottoman empire, Syria etc... He was also a sea pirate with his team chasing boats and ships on the ocean. That piracy has enabled to build strong wealth upon taking hostages and later selling as slaves in the neighbouring slave markets like Constantinople, Istanbul, Aleppo etc... Juan was a possible prey for old Lambro and his men to be captured and later to be sold on any slave market. Haidee was aware of her father's profession. Though piracy was an illegal activity, it nevertheless was of a common practice in the eastern world. In keeping Juan from the outer world, from the claws of old Lambro, Lord Byron reproved it as a human abomination. Juan was kept in secret from the eye of old Lambro and his pirate team. The different local economies needed slave labour to maintain their stability and concurrent capacity. Meantime Juan was still kept in the cave far away from suspicious eyes. He appeared as a joyful toy given by nature to her.

She came into the cave, but it was merely

To see her bird (Juan) reposing in his nest;

And she would softly stir his locks so curly

Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest

Breathing all gently over his cheek and mouth. (p 132).

From the statement above, Haidee was leading the scene in paying regular visits to take care of him. Juan needed that care to refresh and revitalize his spirit and body. Her care and concern about Juan gradually turned into affection toward him. Another chance was given to him to make a new personality. Since he had been discovered by Haidee and her maid, Juan morally for a moment was not master of his person. He should follow the different caprices and intrigues of Haidee who was waiting for many years such an opportunity to meet a man of her heart. For her, "Juan was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast like a rich wreck—her first love, and her last"(p 133). On regaining his senses from deep slumber, Juan has realized that he had been object of various forms of care, tenderness, affection and solidarity from his immediate female surrounding. He then understood that he was in the hands of pretty girls who made their utmost to make him feel at ease. He no longer was a virtual gentleman worth authenticity and dignity. He belonged physically and spiritually to Haidee and her maid. He was under female control which would guide his conduct, his feelings and actions. His present vassal situation found echo in the following quotation:

He was in love,-- as you would be, no doubt

With a young benefactress,-- so was she,

Just in the way we very often see (p 131).

Don Juan's sentiment for Haidee appeared as a compensation for her benefaction and benevolence. Should she miss in Juan's rescue on the seashore, his fate would flit on the fragile wing of the irrational. Should she manifest any indifference toward Juan's case, the gentleman would probably be a nice repast for sea animals. From that point of consideration, Juan's conduct and feelings were modeled and shaped by the sublimity and the subtleness of Haidee's actions. Lord Byron has asserted that there was a true love between Haidee and Juan since "both were so young, and one innocent...Juan seemed to her ...the kind of being sent of whom these two years she had nightly dreamed"(p 133). Juan's love enabled Haidee to break the chains of isolation. Her father old Lambro has built on piracy wealth considerable enough to render her happy. Material riches could not stand alone for a lasting happiness. In keeping his daughter in a sort of paradise full of flowers, slaves and abettors, old Lambro has taken one significant right from her: moral and spiritual prosperity.

That adventure based on solidarity and cordiality radically opposed the previous one with Julia based on vengeance and vice. Julia was vicious and voracious who needed to take revenge on her marriage with an old man of fifty. She has made her utmost to draw first the attention then the affection of Juan upon herself. That leading role carried out by Donna Julia has definitely tamed, conditioned the reactions of Juan. The latter one was finally playing only a figurative function during their relations. Age was another parameter explaining the feminization of Juan compared to Julia. The first was sixteen whereas the second was twenty-three, and married. Juan should be prudent and passive since he lacked any experience in love. The adventure between a married woman and gentleman neophyte basically turned in favor of the first one. Juan was seduced; he was far from being the seducer. From that point of consideration, Julia's case was rather an accident on Juan's itinerary.

Juan was then totally recovered from the aftermaths of his drowning. He had gained back his slenderness and his vigor. Haidee and her maid have decided to lead him home in her father's paradise-like house. Her father was absent, and it was an excellent opportunity to organize a grandiose feast celebrating the death of the master of the house. Old Lambro, the master, returned from a long journey on the sea where he had captured some ships and had disposed of the men inside. After the grandiose party, Juan had to fight to save his love. Old Lambro's pirates were strong enough to seize him up and put him into a cabin for the slave market of Constantinople. Juan has suddenly changed of status; from a noble status, he has turned into a denuded slave deported to a slave market. That change of status should affect Juan's pedigree since he was a true Hidalgo representing the Spanish nobility. From the high society-nobility- Juan was suddenly thrown down into the lower society-slavery. Juan should then comply with his new status of slave in the hands of a master. That degradation of Juan's personality implied Lord Byron's determination to tame, to control, to subjugate his hero to a social reality.

Slavery was local evidence in the eastern world. Such realms as Greece, Albania, the Ottoman Empire were countries whose economy was based on feudal exploitation. The economy still needed a slave labor for its thriving. The writer sent his hero to discover a new social environment where some people reserved for themselves some rights to subjugate other people on behalf of slavery. It was dishonorable for a noble birth as Juan to get himself in a lower standing. Juan was warned about the possible risks that lay on his way of self-construction.

4. Disguise of Don Juan

Don Juan was deported to the Constantinople market for sale. Old Lambro has made profit by selling him to the sultan wife Gulbeyaz. Slavery was the new yoke under which Juan should then live and express himself. He was still an adult to come about; he needed discretion and protection from the harshness of the daily life. As the sultan, his new master, was so jealous, Juan needed disguise as a young girl to get into the sultan's harem. His new name was Juanna, and should spend night with the other slave girls in the harem.

And now (Juan) being femininely all arrayed

With some small aid from scissors, paint, and tweezers,

He looked in almost all respects a maid.(p 249).

Juan's disguise responded at least two major concerns. The first was to avoid the sultan's ferocity and jealousy. Should he discover that Juan was a male slave brought for any fornication in his harem, he would have castrated him to become an eunuch. He should be hidden enough to deceive the sultan's vigilance. The sultan was busy of defending his sultana from local rivalries and competitions. He was deeply concerned how to keep steady and stable as long as possible his land from neighboring foes and pirates. Don Juan might have been one of those foes who regularly carried out attacks on his sultana.

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,

With all the damsels in their long array,

Had bowed themselves before the imperial eyes,

And at the usual signal taken their way. (*Don Juan*. p 282)

The second concern was how to hide Juan from the sultan's eye before he met Gulbeyaz, his wife. The feminine disguise enabled Juan to get easily in contact with Gulbeyaz whose main intention was to get a home lover. In the eastern world, adultery and fornication were banished from public life. Nevertheless, people at different levels made their utmost in organizing such illegal activity within such close milieus like harems. Gulbeyaz was the sultan's fourth wife, henceforth his favorite. Despite that privilege and prestige, she felt the need to fill a gap generated by polygamy. Gulbeyaz might appear as a voracious and unfaithful housewife. She should contend with her favorite status among four other royal wives in the harem. She might have contended with her status of last wife, henceforth younger the others. From that point of view, she disposed

everything necessary for her well-being. But there was one major domain that constituted a significant flaw in her life: her sexual needs. As Lord Byron has warned “Gulbeyaz could but claim the fifteen-hundredth part of what should be monopoly—the heart” (p 277).

She was the fourth wife of the sultan; accordingly, she was the last in turn to receive her husband into her compound. Moreover, she was younger than the other three. Polygamy did not allow women involved to get equal and sufficient pleasure from their common husband. Her position of fourth wife hampered her a lot to live a normal life. Her younger age pushed her to claim more pleasure elsewhere. That strong biological need accounted for her machinations in getting a substitute to her husband. She was under heavy influence and pressure as far as sexual desire was concerned. All through Gulbeyaz’s attitude, Lord Byron was mocking the hypocrisy of the eastern world whose major cultural values were based on Islam. Fornication and prostitution were religiously and officially banished from daily life. Nevertheless, the local aristocracy and royal family could find ways and means to circumvent the rules and accordingly enjoy themselves. Gulbeyaz belonged to that social class whose desire and intrigues were to be performed without any control. The writer has depicted where injustice coped with various forms of abuses and violence.

Don Juan still under his disguise was led to meet Gulbeyaz on her order. She intended to fill in a conjugal gap in the harem with Juan. She thought she could raise any positive feelings in Juan susceptible to lead to any adventure. By experience Juan did not trust much strong female figures. Donna Julia had been an experience sad enough to be easily trapped by another sexually strong lady. He rather decided to follow, to play again the figurative role in his liaison with that new figure Gulbeyaz. Moreover, Juan knew he was then living under slavery within a Muslim environment where emancipation of women and freedom in general could not be taken as granted. He should be careful in his daily life amongst the other damsels. In that respect his disguise was passport to Gulbeyaz whose intentions were to keep him in secrete for conjugal needs. Del Campo (2022) suggested that “Juan was seen a cavalier servente expected to take the place of the sultan” during his expeditions outside his kingdom. Following his analyses, it appeared that “Gulbeyaz was rather vicious than amorous toward Juan”.

At length, in an imperial way, she laid

Her hands on his, and bending on his eyes

Which needed not an empire to persuade,

Looked into his for love, where none replies. (p263)

Don Juan was still thinking about Haidee, his former adventure, which had dramatically ended with his imprisonment and later his slave status. Juan was still on his guard as far as strong ladies were concerned. As for weak damsels, he did not see any inconvenient in making love affair with. That was the reason why he would quarrel later with Gulbeyaz for having spent night with one of her maids. Nevertheless, she was trying to get his favor at least for one night. Juan’s distrust

and discretion account for his passivity in company of Gulbeyaz. His passivity could serve as an opportunity to make their presence last. But Gulbeyaz was putting pressure on him to accept her offer. In such a royal house, Juan did not feel in security enough to entertain a new adventure. His love for Lambro's single daughter has cost him his social rank and dignity. He has not fortunately lost his life in the strife with Lambro's young pirates. But in the present affair, he might lose his life since it was another social environment. He at best would face castration, or at worst he would face stoning. But Gulbeyaz did not intend to stop on so long a way. She pushed:

“She rose, and pausing a chase moment, threw
Herself upon his breast, and there she grew” (p 263).

But Juan has been reluctant to her caprices and offer. Instead he has fiercely resisted all her attempts and intrigues of seduction. Gradually Juan moved from total passivity and submission to aggressiveness. He was no longer ready to play a second role nor could he accept anymore domination. He was striving to gain back his identity and pedigree. Juan was sure that “love was for the free” persons, therefore he could express no feelings toward Gulbeyaz, though she was the favorite wife of the sultan. The following lines asserted his uprising:

Then rising haughtily, he glanced around
And looking coldly in her face, he cried,
‘The prisoned eagle will not pair, nor,
Serve a Sultana’s sensual fantasy’. (p 272).

That stanza served as a turning point in Juan's itinerary. He has been depicted as moderate as passive in his acquaintances with strong ladies. Lord Byron has on purpose submitted his hero to the caprices of women with different backgrounds and cultures. Julia was a Spanish lady; Haidee was a Greek woman, and finally Gulbeyaz was an Ottoman one. The writer has echoed the different cultures existing in his epoch throughout those ladies. He needed a young but a figurative hero on the feet of strong ladies. Don Juan needed to learn more with his female acquaintances before he came out for epic deeds. Lord Byron needed to protect his hero by making him passive, naïve and sober. Juan was never given opportunity to clearly express his feelings and expectations. He was rather a follower, a figurative element accompanying strong ladies in their love campaigns. His different love adventures have served for him as psychological training before he undertook heroic actions later. He has rebelled against his “slave” label and has proclaimed his integrity and nobility. He then left Gulbeyaz and joined the Russian troops in fighting against the Turkish forces.

5. Influences of the three women met by Don Juan

All through his peregrination, Juan has met on his way three women with different status and background. Julia has been his first love adventure where Juan had learnt the turpitudes of sexual life. Julia was ten years his senior. Accordingly, he was suffering from his tender age, naivety, innocence and inexperience. All along their adventure, Julia was playing the leading role

and Don Juan, the second one. That second role assigned to him by the author has made him passive and figurative, always at the mercy of that great woman Julia.

Lord Byron has deliberately chosen the antonym of the traditional Don Juan whose adventures were strewn with corpses and blood. He has turned a conquering figure into a seductive one; he has turned a predator into a prey for strong ladies. On separating with Julia, Don Juan has turned into a ridiculous and feeble personage. Accordingly, his mother Donna Inez has decided to send him to Italy just to “mend his spirit”. On his way to, there has been a shipwreck where Juan was the only survivor. Totally exhausted and almost dead, Juan has been taken by the waves to the shore. His new adventure will be Haidee, the single daughter of a Greek sea pirate Lambro. Haidee and her maid took care of Juan, and “literally brought him back to life”. Haidee took Juan home, made him change his look; the young couple organized a grandiose celebrating the death of the house. Here again Don Juan has played figurative role compared to Haidee. His clash with Lambro has resulted in his defeat; accordingly, he was turned into a slave and was sold on the market of Constantinople.

A true Hidalgo was suddenly turned into a slave; that decline of his pedigree was another fate scheduled by the poet for his hero. That sudden fall of his hero proceeds of Byron’s intention to control his speed and momentum. Under a slave investment, Don Juan was given the opportunity to assess his own peregrination and errors. That strange situation also enabled the poet to prepare his hero for next adventures. Juan’s last adventure had been with Gulbeyaz, the sultan’s favorite wife, who had bought Juan on the slave market of Constantinople. But Gulbeyaz was not lucky in her enterprise. Juan was disguised into Juanna, a female-like figure which enabled Gulbeyaz to introduce Juan among the other slaves. But Gulbeyaz was as strong as authoritative in her relation with Juan. Now Don Juan has got ripe and mature by different events undergone through diverse ladies. From a servile status, he has progressively hoisted at a noble stage. He was no longer ready to accept figurative role. Though he has been feminized, disguised with feminine vestments, he has rejected Gulbeyaz’s proposals. His relations with Gulbeyaz have served as an ending stage of his immaturity and naivety. From then on he was a real gentleman determined to play his role in the society.

Conclusion

In sum, we may adventure to utter that Juan’s feminization counts for Byron’s deliberate option to differently proceed from his other contemporaries in presenting the legendary Don Juan. Don Juan’s previous portraitures presented a ruthless and irresponsible gentleman abusing social norms and codes. Byron’s Don Juan is rather an effeminate gentleman, rolling from one woman to another almost not controlling his person and sentiments. Don Juan intended to represent his western culture and views with his rebel and revolutionary ideals. Byron’s major merit has been to change gender conventions and codes in a humoristic representation of scenes and characters. Thus, we can understand that Don Juan has been shaped and interpellated by his society to become

a weak, passive and disguised lover due to the types of education he received at home, in the society and with the different women he loved and encountered.

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