

English Literature of the Romantic Period, 1798-1832
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Romantic Literature: Empire and Orientalism 4 Byron

Hello everybody so in the last sessions, we have been looking at empire and Orientalism we looked at a variety of topics and themes we had a specific author Thomas De Quincey that we examined specifically to do with that what battles caught which informs whatever we were saying infection of Thomas De Quincey the male and opium that pathogen is the space of the Englishman and we have made specified many references to the moonstone as well.

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Romantic Literature:
Empire and Orientalism 4
Byron



The *Turkish Tales*: *The Giaour* (1813), *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara* (1814), *The Siege of Corinth* (1815), and *Parisina* (1815)



Today we look at Byron, Byron wrote the Turkish tales the G hour 1813 the bride of Abydos 1813 the Corsair 1814 Lara 1814 the Siege of Corinth 1815 and Parisina 1815, so whole group called Turkish tales.

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Byron here is indulging the popular taste for the Orient, and for vulnerable Asian women, Muslim and other heroes, evil Orientals, etc



What is Byron doing Byron is indulging in the popular English / European taste for the Orient and especially for vulnerable Asian women as these would include Muslim and other heroes all evil Orientals, so you have the vulnerable Asian woman the fascinating hijab bound nearly invisible Muslim woman evil Orientals and things like that and we have seen precursors to this in

our slide on Kuratas batiks mother in William Bedford's novel vatic which we had put up couple of session ago.

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The Giaour set in the Balkans is a love triangle. It showcases the clash between a Muslim (Hassan) and the Christian (the Giaour) over Leila, who is one of Hassan's wives/slaves.

The Giaour tries to save Leila. Hassan ties her in a sack and thrown into the sea as a punishment for her adultery. When the Giaour fails, he joins a band of Albanian brigands, ambushes Hassan and kills him.



The Giaour set in the Balkan it is love triangle it showcase the cash between the Muslim Hassan and the Christian the Giaour over Leila who is one of Hassan's wives but also partially a slave the Giaour tries to save Leila Hassan ties her in a sack and thrown into the sea as a punishment for her adultery, therefore when the Giaour fails to rescue Leila he joins a band of Albanian brigands, ambushes Hassan and kills him.

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Stereotypes of Muslim women abound.
Leila is meek and submissive, at least initially.



It is full of stereotypes of Muslim woman Leila is meek and submissive and beautiful at least initially here is the slide first slide which gives a little image of Leila.

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Oh! who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed
Which saith, that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?



Oh who young Leila glance could read and keep the portion of his creed which said that woman is but dust a soulless toy for tyrant's lust.

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The Giaour (Byron uses the Muslim name for an infidel) is also stereotyped, as demonic, evil:



The Giaour is the Muslim name for an infidel by which Byron appropriate from his period is stereotyped demonic and evil, so having looked at how the Arab woman is stereotyped here is description of the white Christian person.

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If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore.

Though like a demon of the night
He pass'd, and vanish'd from my sight,



If ever angel bore the form of mortal such heaven or, so this is the evil of the place as well this is the atmosphere of religion the atmosphere of place seeping into the person, so one of the things you recognize about or a romantic Orientalism is the place is mystical magical but, so other

people so it is difficult to distinguish between points of origin where this kind of stereotypes focus lies though like demon of the night past and vanished from aside.

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The Muslim section of the poem ends with the fisherman's curse upon the Giaour:



The Muslim section of the poem ends with the fisherman's curse upon the Giaour this is what they say.

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And fire unquench'd, unquenchable-
Around-within-thy heart shall dwell,
Nor ear can hear, nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!-
But first, on earth as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race,
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;



And fire unquenched, unquenchable around within thy heart shall dwell nor ear can hear, nor tongue can tell, the tortures of that inward hell but first on earth as Vampire sent thy corse shall

from its tomb be rent then ghastly haunt thy native place and suck the blood of all thy race there
from thy daughter sister wife at midnight grain the stream of life this is the curse on the Giaour.

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Then follows a battle over Leila,
and Byron's depiction of
violence is singularly bloody:



Then follows a battle over Leila and Byron's depiction of violence is singularly blurry here is
this description coming upon your slide now.

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Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying.
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh sever'd from its parent limb,
Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave,
And lures to leap into the wave.



Sabres clashing form and flying wrong avenged and most importantly Moslem dying on a cliff he had been known to stand rave as to some bloody hand fresh severed from it is parent limb invisible to all but him which beckons onward to his grave and lose to leap into the water.

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When Leila sacrifices herself,
the Giaour appears to endorse it
as righteous – for her infidelity
towards Hassan.



When Leila sacrifices herself the Giaour appears to endorse it as righteous this is because of infinity towards Hassan and this is what a Byron write coming upon his slide now.

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Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one.
Faithless to him - he gave the blow ;
But true to me - I laid him low :
Howe'er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me



Yet did he but what I had done has she been falls to more than one faithless to him he give the blow but true to me I laid him low however deserved her doom might be her treachery was truth to me.

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The work is seen as a traditional Romantic Orientalist text.

[*The Giaour*] must *therefore* be read as part of the cultural apparatus whereby the Orient is contained and represented by ideological frameworks that serve both to incite confrontation and to seal off contestation within the larger structures of imperial history.

Meyer

But more recent evaluations have found a greater degree of ambiguity in Byron's representations of the East/Turkey



The work is seen as a traditional romantic orientalist text the *Giaour* write a critic must therefore be read as part of cultural apparatus whereby the orient is contained and represented but ideological frameworks that serve both to incite confrontation and to see love contestation within the larger structure of imperial history that is this continue in some sense of Homi Bhabha arguments about fetish and phobia we need to read these text the orientalist the Turkish tales as a cultural apparatus.

Where the orient is defined to stereotype somebody is to contain it what do I mean by this once you have categorized a person stereotypes a person that person becomes predictable in your view may or may not be true that is if you expect the black man to behave in a certain way the African woman to behave in a certain way you have contained them you have limited them, so they are no longer a threat because you see you fear what you do not understand but once you have stereotyped it you believe you understand you limit it.

So that is what Meyer is saying these are ideological frameworks that inside confrontation and to see love contestation, so you say oh that is the deceiving Brahman this is the tyrannical African that is this kind of a Muslim and so on so forth, so all of the romantic orientalist texts are actually

working from within this paradigm of containment and to seal off contestation in some way possible more recent evaluations have found a greater degree of ambiguity in Byron's representations of the East and Turkey others are arguing that is not quite true that Byron has something more going on in his text and it is not as simple as saying that this is all there is to Byron.

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The gothic harbors within itself a crucial self-reflexivity through which the British orientalist poet can disclose the construction of narrative as an exercise of power that seeks to define and thereby colonize the other, even as its spectral effects are recruited to stage the failure of that same imperial will to power.

(Yuan)



For instance Yuan has argued that the gothic harbor within itself a crucial self-reflexivity through which the British orientalist poet can disclose the construction of narrative as an exercise of power that seeks to define and there by colonize the other that is narrative itself it seen as a strategy of containment, so it is not just stereotyping but the gothic as a method of enclosing encompassing what is not known where narrative itself is a form of colonization and it is part of the imperial will to power.

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For newer studies, the poem is an indictment of both European *and* Ottoman imperialism, suggesting that all Empires are built on violence .



For newer critics and in new studies poems like the Giaour is an indictment of both European and Ottoman imperialism suggesting that all empires are built on violence this is an important argument what they are saying is Byron does not focus solely on the East or Turkey of the Moslem as evil what it shows is that the east is evil yes is violent yes but it is matched by the violence of the west in short what he saying is all empires all imperial process is are violent, so it is not that that the east is particularly demonic or particularly evil what is saying that all of these impeded structures are inherently demonic inherently evil.

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Additional/Recommended Reading
Drummond Bone (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Cambridge UP, 2004.

Yin Yuan, 'Invasion and Retreat: Gothic Representations of the Oriental Other in Byron's *The Giaour*', *Studies in Romanticism* 54 (2015)



What you need to understand about romantic orientalism and we have seen two cases, so far Thomas De Quincey and George Gordon Lord Byron is it captures the east in a certain way but it develops the certain attitudes towards the east as well the vulnerable woman the nasty demonic African woman or demonic Moslem woman it is speaks about the other but it also speaks about their own anxieties which is why Nigel Esc's book anxieties of empire British romantic writers and the east anxieties of empires makes this very important argument that these are not just mechanisms of representation.

They are mechanisms of dealing with your own cultural anxiety's this again connects to arguments made by people like Homi Bhabha where the stereotype is not a sign of confidence it is a sign of anxiety you create a stereotype because you are afraid of them because you are uncertain of them, so romantic orientalism actually is a deeply divided deeply ambivalent response to the east is the point I am trying to make that while they were still typing while they were categorizing the east they were also doing, so out of sense of anxiety this is something you need to keep in mind when reading many of these text thank you.