



**THE BYRONIC HERO AS REIMAGINED  
IN E.L. JAMES' NOVEL *FIFTY SHADES OF GREY*  
Mahri BABAGULYYEVA**

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**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI**  
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## ABSTRACT

|                        |                                                                                   |
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The aim of this research is the investigation of the concept of the Byronic hero and the discovery of the Neo-Byronic hero in *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy. This paper focuses on representing and showing the characteristics of the Byronic hero from a new perspective of the Neo-Byronic hero, relying on the hypostases that have been conceived from the period Byron created his heroes and maintains to be shaped in history by literary critics until today. Byronic hero prototype is established by Lord Byron in his major works but the literature of posterity continues to be fascinated by this heroic typology, delivering its various hypostases. The most impressive and unexpected reworking of the Byronic hero is to be found in the contemporary trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The purpose of this study is to develop the connections between the Byronic hero and E.L. James's hypostasis Christian Grey.

The questions that are central to this discourse of the Byronic hero will refer to the ways this character is represented, how much Byronic hero's persona is preserved in fascinating Christian Grey and to investigate in which ways the new Byronic hero departs from its original prototype.

Other literary examples of Byronic heroes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards are highlighted, as well as, present some antecedents of the Byronic hero in contemporary popular culture.

**Key Words:** the Byronic hero, hypostasis, the Neo-Byronic hero, *Fifty Shades of Grey*

## ÖZET

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Byron kahramanı kavramını araştırmak ve *Grinin Elli Tonu* isimli üçlemede Yeni-Byron kahramanı oluşumunu irdelemektir. Bu araştırma Byron kahramanının Byron'un yazdığı dönemlerde oluşturduğu ve günümüze kadar tarih içerisinde farklı edebi eleştirmenlerin de katkı sağladığı özelliklerini Yeni-Byron kahramanı bakış açısından tanımlamaya ve yansıtmaya odaklanır. Byron kahramanı ilk örnekleri Lord Byron tarafından kendi eserlerinde oluşturulur ancak gelecek nesillerin edebiyatı da bu kahraman türünden ve tipolojisinden etkilenmeye devam eder ve Byron kahramanının çeşitli hipostazlarını yansıtır. Byron kahramanının en etkileyici ve beklenmedik şekilde yeniden ortaya çıkmasını günümüz romanlarından *Grinin Elli Tonu* isimli eserde bulabiliriz. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Byron kahramanı ve E.L. James'in hipostazı Christian Grey arasındaki bağlantıları geliştirmek ve göstermektir.

Byron kahramanının söyleminin merkezinde yer alan sorular, bu karakterin temsil edilme şekillerini, büyüleyici Christian Grey'de Byron kahramanının kişiliğinin ne kadar korunduğunu ve yeni Byron kahramanının orijinal ilk örneklerinden hangi şekillerde ayrıldığını saptamak için sorulacaktır.

Bu çalışmada, 19. yüzyıldan itibaren Byron kahramanlarının diğer edebi örnekleri incelenmiş ve ayrıca çağdaş popüler kültürde Byron kahramanının bazı ataları irdelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Byron kahramanı, hipostaz, Yeni-Byron kahramanı, *Grinin Elli Tonu*

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## INTRODUCTION

The timeless archetype Byronic hero, created by Lord Byron, can be regarded as “the most popular phenomenon of the English Romantic Movement” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 3). Since its emergence in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, this character type has been so popular, that it still continues to leave its marks on so many literary works around the world until today. Combining the outstanding features from his antecedents, precisely the Romantic Hero and the pre-romantic heroes, the Byronic hero has become the most fascinating character type in the literary history. The traditional Byronic hero is presented as of a ‘bad-boy’, psychologically more real and emotionally deep with his absolutely unique way facing his unprecedented complex nature of emotions, and profundity, rather than pretending to be a hero and acting in a straightforward style. While analyzing the essence of the Byronic hero, most scholars agree on the common traits that define this hero type. For instance, Fred Botting states that the Byronic hero is: “a gloomy, isolated and sovereign, wanderer, outcast, and rebel condemned to roam the borders of social worlds, bearer of a dark truth or horrible knowledge” (1996, p. 98).

There are countless examples of the Byronic hero in posterity literature since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most impressive and unexpected reworking of this heroic typology is to be found in the contemporary trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

The aim of this study is the investigation of the concept of the Byronic hero and the discovery of the Neo-Byronic hero in *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy. This paper focuses on representing and showing the characteristics of the Byronic hero from a new perspective of the Neo-Byronic hero, relying on the hypostases that have

been conceived from the period Byron created his heroes and maintains to be shaped in history by literary critics until today. The purpose of this study is to develop the connections between the Byronic hero and E.L. James's hypostasis Christian Grey.

The first chapter of this study deals with the examination of the archetype of the Byronic hero with its deep historical roots and its development from a simple hero, that was created by Byron, into a literary character type with wide-spreading intertextual perspectives occurring through centuries in different national works of literature to the present. This chapter draws reader's attention to the fact that Byronic hero can be accepted as an extreme variation of the Romantic hero archetype. It also tries to present how the heroes from the Romanticism and pre-Romanticism periods play vital roles in the development of the Byronic hero. At the same time, the chapter seeks for the answers to the appealing questions on how to know when dealing with a Byronic hero? Or what makes him distinct from all other heroes? By raising these questions the chapter shifts the central idea of the study to the male protagonist, Christian Grey, from E.L. James's *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy.

The second chapter attempts to catch attention on the aspect of the Byronic hero in its another hypostasis, Christian Grey. Through investigating in which ways the new Byronic hero departs from its original prototype, this chapter tries to represent Christian Grey as a Neo-Byronic hero. Therefore, an important task of this paper will be to show Christian Grey as an adapted and reworked Byronic hero. The chapter also analyses how E.L. James's skillfully performed her aim of creating the Neo-Byronic hero developing him through contemporary approaches. Finally, closer to the later pages of the chapter two, the questions, raised in the first chapter on

recognizing the Neo-Byronic hero and differentiating him from the rest of the heroes,  
are attempted to be answered.



## CHAPTER 1

### 1. THE BYRONIC HERO WITHIN THE GENERAL ROMANTIC CONTEXT

#### 1.1. The Personification of Lord Byron in the Byronic Hero

George Gordon Lord Byron (1788-1824) is one of the most outstanding English romantic poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is known not only for his unique type of poetry, but also for his provocative biography and for being a fashionable man of his time. Being considered as a romantic poet, his works, however, differ in many ways from the thematic that Wordsworth and Coleridge focused on in their literary works, making Byron distinct and easily recognized. As Petru Golban highlights in his article *Hypostases of the Byronic hero*,

“Lord Byron’s contribution, in general, to the rise and consolidation of Romantic Hero and its modes of textual representation as Escapism and Rebelliousness, and, in particular, the rise and consolidation of the Byronic Hero, and the Byronic contribution does not refer just to the rise of the English Romantic Hero, but also to the affirmation of English Romanticism on general European level stands for a primary importance” (Golban, 2005, p. 320).

Lord Byron, being a man possessed by self-pity, self-consciousness and self-love, created an inordinately popular type of hero, a defiant social outcast, melancholy, brooding and mysterious, who is haunted by a secret guilt, yet charming and fearless – for which, it seems to have become the model, the prototype of the hero in almost all of his poems. Byron admits that the poet identifies himself with the character he creates: “Like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character I draw it” (Moore, 1844, p. 552). Historians and literary critics believe Lord Byron himself as the first truly Byronic hero, for he demonstrated throughout

his life the characteristics of the sort of literary hero he would make well-known in his writing. Bernard Blackstone, for example, affirms that “Lord Byron was able to convince his readers that the concern of his writing is primarily about what he has seen and experienced” (1970, p. 41). Jerome McGann cannot help but agree with Blackstone and add that “Byron wrote about himself we all know, just as we all know that his books, like God’s human creatures, are all made in his image and likeness” (1991, p. 266). For this reason, one can declare Byron as being identified with the Byronic Hero and that this legendary character is the manifestation of his persona, and it functions as a representative of Byron’s own beliefs, thoughts, and ideas. Primarily, the Byronic Hero reflects his creator’s occasional melancholy and loneliness and he immediately conveys the message to the reader that he is a unique individual, who displays several character traits, among which rebelliousness as well.

Following the above-mentioned quotes one can assume that Lord Byron created his works by using the poems’ persona to reveal his own thoughts and beliefs and by making the readers think the speaker was actually a personification of himself. On the other hand, it can be argued that what was being represented did not fully coincide with Byron himself, therefore some literary critics and writers contend that Lord Byron made an attempt to convince people that he was just like that and that he wrote in an autobiographical way. Gabriele Poole believes that “Byron did express some of his own ideas through his main characters, but there is contrasting information with his actual life and the letters he sent, parallel to his writings denote his intention of selling an image of what he created, the so-called Byronic Hero” (2010, p. 7). As to Poole, if one must talk about the Byronic Hero in isolation from Byron’s poems, one can declare that “he is a variant of the Romantic Hero,

represented by a type of character who avoided social norms and institutions, conventions and who was isolated from society because of external reasons or by his own desire” (2010, p. 8). Usually, the Byronic hero is a figure that is capricious by nature and eager about a particular subject matter; at the same time he is superior to the typical man, both intellectually and emotionally, which results in a complicated relationship with society, outside being sarcastic, arrogant, sensitive and extremely self-conscious. It is also said Byronic hero is drawn to a point of nihilism that causes a rebellion against life itself, for his rejection of the established values and moral codes because they do not represent him. With this depiction, the Byronic hero confirms the consolidation of malice and allure, which is a method to strongly draw readers’ attention and feel fascinated about him. Gabriele Poole, in his article *The Byronic Hero: Theatricality and Leadership*, gives a reason why the Byronic hero is the way he is: “Byronic Hero’s use of his misanthropic attitude as an instrument of power. The hero’s introversion and hostility to the world, his isolation and his lack of intimacy with others is sometimes presented as a reaction to the injustice of society, as well as a result of his superior nature and consequent contempt for humanity at large” (2010, p. 15).

All of these characteristics mentioned by Gabriele Poole, do not match perfectly with Byron’s true nature. Poole states a clear difference between the way in which the Byronic hero is portrayed and the way Lord Byron behaved in social events, and it appears clearly that both personalities are not totally equal: the first, fictional and over-exaggerated, and the second, peculiar but manageable. Poole emphasizes this aspect, saying that “the parallel breaks down when we consider his actual behavior. Accusations, even self-accusations, turn out to be false or

exaggerated” (2010, p. 9) and as an example he mentions the scandal about the claims of him being in love with his sister, who afterwards turns out to be “only” his cousin. So, the reason why Byron needs to be related personally with the Byronic hero is to feel empowered and superior to any other beings, creating an aura of mystery and intellectual inaccessibility.

As one can see in the above mentioned paragraphs the Byronic Hero has become such a contentious figure that most of the scholars have argued whether this scandalous hero type is simply created by Byron out of his head, or does it have anything to do with the poet himself who is believed to be the one who tried to reveal himself under the disguise of his hero. The Byronic hero is merely a product of the poet’s mind as one can see, since the hero carries some features of the poet’s personal life. Nonetheless, whatever it is, “Lord Byron is the only English Romantic hero-poet whose hero was his poetry, or whose poetry existed for his hero” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 8), and from this point of view, with his idiosyncratic style and iconic hero when compared to his contemporaries, he surely deserves to obtain a more special place in English literature.

### **1.2. A Historical Approach to the Emergence of the Byronic Hero**

The Age of Sensibility which took place in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a process of the major change in English Literature at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The early hints of a shift in taste can be found in Samuel Richardson’s novels which are full for sentimentalism and a fashionable Gothic vogue in which the expression of feelings and emotions was no longer irrelevant. As a result, a majority of poets began rejecting the common rules and imitations of traditions of the neo-

classical verse. The representatives of the so-called 'Graveyard School of Poetry' started concerning about the individual feelings and emotions. There was a rise of interest in the Middle Ages and the poets' new sources of inspiration came from the mysterious pagan traditions of Nordic and Celtic culture.

"The Gothic fictional form drew many of its intense images from the graveyard poets, intermingling an eccentric setting and a forlorn melancholic character" (Shevchenko, 2016, p. 18). As L.L. Shevchenko mentions in her book *History of English Literature*, "the development of the Gothic Novel had a profound impact on the emergence of Romantic Literature" (2016, p. 19). Gothic fiction is considered to be as one of the aspects of the Romantic Movement in the English literature. It is worth saying a few words about the definition of the Gothic Novel, since its absolute influence on the further stages of the Romantic Movement.

In the above mentioned book, Shevchenko points out that "the Gothic Novel emerged in the literary context of the middle 18<sup>th</sup> century and that the word 'Gothic' was used to describe novels dealing with macabre or mysterious events in a medieval setting". She also says:

"This type of fiction is characterized by horror, violence, supernatural effects, and medieval elements, representing the atmosphere of terror found in graveyards. Usually, the story is set against the background of gothic architecture, especially gloomy, isolated and haunted castles, with mysterious underground passages and trapdoors. It also may include insanity, often in the form of a mad relative kept locked in a room in the castle, as well as ghosts and spirits" (Shevchenko, 2016, p. 19).

By publishing, as generally regarded first gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, Horace Walpole (1717-1797) inspired his colleagues – Clara Reeve (1729-1807) with her *The Old English Baron* (1777), Mathew Gregory Lewis (1775-



1818) and *The Monk* (1796), Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) with her *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Walpole and the ones who were inspired by his works discovered the mysterious and terrible, in the novels they also discussed the topics of death, creation, and destruction, darkness, horror, madness, terror, evil and sometimes weird sexuality. The readers were kept in tension during the novels which were full of fantastic elements such as caves, ghosts, animate statues, appearances, and disappearances. Readers' obsession with terror paved the way for a thrilling new ideal that helped make widely popular the Movement. The aspects of Gothic literature that made it compelling to the audience include mystery and suspense, atmosphere and setting, and omens and curses.

Romanticism is known as a literary movement that took place in Europe from the 1790s to the 1830s, which actually begins in England and Germany then spreads through Europe. Imagination; freedom of thought/expression; and idealization of Nature, are the main characteristics of the Romanticism. The term comes from the word "romance", meaning "freely imaginative fiction" which is able to create a new reality. It is also said that Romanticism is an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as it stresses strong emotions as a source of aesthetic experience. With the influence of the American and the French Revolutions, the 18<sup>th</sup> century political, social, religious, philosophical, and artistic ideas could not be considered adequate any longer. The new ideas threatened the the early 18<sup>th</sup> century society and its balance and symmetry of man and nature, freedom and democracy, art, and literature. As a result, many poets and artists began to reveal their reactions against the suppression of human nature. These people rejected the idea of a man being a 'social animal' highlighting the importance of the individual

and the creative potential the individual has. Those were the representatives of the Romantic Movement and they were called Romantics. Thus, English Romantic poets as William Blake, George Gordon Byron, Samuel T. Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Percy B. Shelley, and John Keats manifested themselves against the accepted traditions of the Neo-classical literature of the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even though some of the Romantics borrowed some of the classical forms (as ode) and added to them the elements of Greek mythology, they did not accept the idea of imitation as it seemed to them too restrictive of creative imagination. In other words, Romanticism signifies subjectivity, irrationality of the mind, emotionalism, demonism, and reveals the complexity of the human being in its contradictory states between sublime and grotesque. While discussing English literary periods intensively, Petru Golban, in his book *A History of the Bildungsroman: From Ancient Beginnings to Romanticism*, comes to the conclusion that:

“Romanticism means the new sentiments and attitudes towards nature; romantic literature means the dualism of existence, rebelliousness, escapism; it also means the romantic revival as if to find a simple way of living, less complicated than the one which is contemporary to the poets, even though rudimentary or primitive, belonging to an extinct autochthonous civilization” (2018, p. 170).

He also states that “as an aspect of the romantic revival and against the sophistication of the classical civilization, the romantics turned to their own, autochthonous, national cultural heritage, which is reified in the creation of literary ballads and various gothic and historical novels” (2018, p. 170).

According to Mario Praz, “the Romantics were the first group in the history of art to take delight in the horrid, to see the beauty in the grotesque, even the bestial” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 7). Therefore, he mentions Romanticism “as a movement

of a new erotic sensibility, a perverse sensibility, in which pleasure and pain, love and hate, tenderness, and sadism are inextricably blended”, what is technically called “algolagnia”. P.L. Thorslev Jr, a professor of English at the University of California, in his turn defines the age of Romanticism as “one of rebellion – social, moral, and philosophical, at the same time an age of heroes” (1965, p. 15). He also believes that “the poems and novels satisfied the taste of the age and that they gave it a surfeit of heroes, all passion and fiery energy, all moral, intellectual, and political rebellion” (1965, p. 15). Petru Golban in his article *Hypostases of the Byronic Hero* calls into attention the fact that

“English Romanticism gave rise to many literary expressions in poetic, dramatic and fictional texts, such as the Romantic Revival and the Romantic Individualism, romantic concern with nature and countryside, Romantic Dualism of Existence, and others, among which the rise to the Romantic Hero in English literature, which represents one of the factors that determined actually the beginnings and consolidation of the English romantic tradition in literature in general.” (Golban, 2005, p. 320)

While bringing up the Romantic Movement as the “Age of Heroes” one should note that the essential key characteristic of Romanticism is ‘individualism’. It is a known fact that Romantic poets and their heroes were isolated from the society of their day; they were all, to some degree, rebels and misfits. In other words, as Romantic poets “considered themselves alienated and isolated from society because of their greater sensibilities, because of their greater closeness to nature or to God, or merely because of their radical ideas in the areas of social, theological, or moral reform” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 18), they alienated and isolated their heroes as well. “Their heroes were solitaries like Northumberland dalesmen or disillusioned hermits; intellectual rebels like Faust; moral outcasts or wanderers like Cain or Ahasuerus; or

rebels against society and even against God himself, like Prometheus and Lucifer” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 18).

Thus, English romantic writers came up with newness in “battle” against tradition; they tried to expose “a major concern with psychological issues, their special insights into the inner human existence, promoting individuality, concentrating on the individual and the experience of childhood.

### **1.3. Variation in the Definitions of the Byronic Hero**

It is a known fact the “hero” archetype has been present in literature since the earliest mythologies and until now is believed that being a hero is one of the most important ways to achieve symbolic immortality, since heroes are abnormal characters who are believed to have greater levels of self esteem; and although they are abnormal, other people may adore them for their strength and their fearlessness confrontation in death. It is believed that heroes do not have to be an exemplar of any definite cultural worldview; they rather should have the skill and talent of creating their own worldview. The term “hero” comes from the Greek word “heros”, which means ‘a demigod creature’; ‘defender, protector’ or ‘man of superhuman strength or physical courage who exhibits great bravery’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The psychoanalyst and ethnographer Joseph Campbell has noted that “hero mythology is a cultural universal and that the heroic journeys have been a part of these mythologies, as symbolic representations of human psychological and biological development” (2008, p. 2). Campbell’s heroic “monomyth” perceives a common framework underlying the hero’s journey—the hero undergoes a cycle of separation, initiation, and return. Separation involves both: the introduction of a hero and his

departure from home, initiation entails the hero's trials and tribulations, and finally, the hero triumphantly comes back with transcendent, enlightened knowledge. Campbell defines the hero thus: "The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normal human forms" (2008, p. 7). Campbell's beliefs of an ascertained hero symbolically conquering the troubles of his era are similar to the prominent traits of the many varieties of hero, available in contemporary literature and film industry. Anyhow Campbell's characterization of hero in the universal monomyth suggests more clarification and improvement in these various genres.

When it comes to the literary archetype or character type the Byronic hero, one can claim that this unique figure is one of the most special hero types throughout literary history, for his distinctive and attractive style. As it is common to say, the Byronic hero was first developed by the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century English Romantic poet Lord Byron. As P. Golban believes, "the creation of the Byronic character is directly connected with and dependent on the rise of the romantic hero, in general, which is an essential aspect of the more general romantic rise of individualism" (2018, p. 203). Byron and Shelly created an imposing and appealing character type, named "romantic hero" and Childe Harold appears to be "one of the most famous romantic characters in English and World Literature", and is the first in the line of protagonists generically labeled as a "Byronic hero" (2018, p. 202). However, according to P. Golban, some of Byron's texts are vivid exceptions to the romantic rule and could be viewed as a type of romantic anti-romanticism. "The Romantic Hero, who is rebellious and escapist, positioned in the dualism of existence because his spirit is defined by inadaptability, a constant soul search, his reality "torn by antagonisms,

never finding peace”, and haunted by doubts and unexplained desires” (Calin, 1970, p. 107, translated by Golban, 2018, p. 175). The timeless character type of Byronic hero is presented as of a ‘bad-boy’ psychologically more real and emotionally deep with his absolutely unique way facing his unprecedented complex nature of emotions, and profundity, rather than pretending to be a hero and acting in a straightforward style. Therefore the Byronic hero is typified by Fred Botting as: “gloomy, isolated and sovereign, he is wanderer, outcast, and rebel condemned to roam the borders of social worlds, bearer of a dark truth or horrible knowledge” (1996, p. 98). Critic and historian Lord Macaulay accentuates on our hero’s uniqueness with the words: “[Byronic hero] a proud man, moody, cynical, defiant, with misery in his heart, scornful, implacable in revenge and yet capable of deep and strong affection” (Christiansen, 1988, p. 201). The Byronic Hero is a kind of outlander and solitaire who has no unification with society, its regulations, and any kind of authority. This powerful figure that can set up his own rules and moral codes is deeply keen on his privacy and freedom. He is also known for not bowing to the common his rebellious spirit and self sufficiency. He is also a self-reliant figure who knows how to behave, and since he is the creator of his own universe, he cannot be a fatalist but he is self-destructive. He knows taking responsibility and burden for his own mistakes, sins, and actions. Yet, if one digs deeper in search for the perfect definition of the Byronic Hero, some difficulties emerge since there were and are so many historians and literary critics who had/have been working on defining the true image of the Byronic Hero. For instance, Peter J. Manning in his turn declares that the Byronic Hero is “a thwarted figure, ignorant of his essential self, who represses his inner dismay under a shell of sternness” (Stein, 2004, p. 2). Lady Caroline Lamb

who is said to have had love affair with Lord Byron, describes the Byronic Hero as a “mad, bad, and dangerous to know” (Douglass, 1999, p. 53). This quotation should not be taken seriously though, since she was madly in love with Lord Byron and could not get what she wanted, which resulted in her aggressive comments about his hero. Atara Stein seems to support Lady Lamb, by saying the Byronic hero is “a creature of extremes,” who actually is “a dork; he doesn’t know how to relate to other people, he is a self-absorbed egotist, and he makes annoying, gratuitous displays of his powers, unaware of any other means of human interaction” (2004, p. 20). Strictly speaking, the Byronic Hero is a typical ‘bad boy’ who is a very charming and unpredictable figure “with his pride, mysterious past, secret sins, and burnt-out passions, ridden with contradictions and paradoxes due to his complex nature as a man of extremes” (Stein, 2004, p. 20). Abigail Myers characterizes Byronic hero as: “intelligent, passionate, and usually above-average in almost every way (including good looks), but also tormented, mysterious, unpredictable, and scornful of authority” (2009, p. 148). In addition to this, Atara Stein continues saying that the Byronic hero has

“ambition, aspiration, aggressive individualism, and ‘Promethean spark’... he is an unattainable ideal, a hero who inspires awe but cannot be emulated. At the same time, he lacks social skills and an ability to relate to other people. The Byronic hero is a loner and an outcast; he can be arrogant, contemptuous of human beings, bad-tempered, overbearing, cold, ruthless, and emotionless” (Stein, 2004, p. 1-2).

Cedric Hentschel in his book *The Byronic Teuton: Aspects of German Pessimism 1800-1933*, describes the Byronic Hero as “a tripartite individual”, saying that “he is the type of satanic, sadistic dandy”. He also adds “insofar as he is satanic,

he is a descendant of Prometheus Lucifer, meaning that he is a sadist, he stands in the shadow of the 'divine Marquis'; as a dandy, he manifests fastidious exhibitionism" (2016 p. 8-9). According to D.L. Kirkpatrick, the Byronic Hero is "a saturnine figure, pathetic, statuesque, posturing, conscious of his suffering, remorseful whether as an outlaw of his own dark mind or as wrongfully ostracized by others. He is mysterious, attractive to women yet self-sufficient, lonely and capable of brave acts". (1991, p. 342). Kendrick A. Clements sees Byronic Hero as "a character exhibiting melancholy guilt for secret sin, pride, defiance, restlessness, alienation, revenge, remorse, moodiness along with noble virtues such as honor, courage, and pure love for a gentlewoman as well as meditating on ruins, deaths, and the vanity of life" (1992, p. 764). Nevertheless, this type of character becomes one of the most compelling and important character type in Western literature, art, and entertainment. While in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the Byronic Hero is being defined as "a boldly defiant but bitterly self-tormenting outcast, proudly contemptuous of social norms but suffering from unnamed sin" (Baldick, 2001, p. 31). Thorslev consecutively says that the Byronic hero was "the most popular phenomenon of the English Romantic Movement and the figure with the most far-reaching consequences for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western Literature" (1965, p. 8). The Byronic Hero is the prototype for so many characters in the literary works from the Romantic Movement period until now. Those heroes (Childe Harold, Manfred, and Cain) left their mark on so many poets all over the world.



### 1.3.1. Petru Golban on Hypostases of the Byronic Hero

Starting with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-1818), after having had a grand tour through the Mediterranean Sea, Byron gained success not only among people but it established him as one of England's leading Romantic poets. He was only "twenty-four years old when he awoke one day to find himself famous" (McCann, 1928, p. 22). In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Byron reveals a young pilgrim's reflections on travel in foreign lands and creates a prototype for the moody, handsome character type, who would eventually be defined "The Byronic Hero". Therefore, according to P.L. Thorslev, "Childe Harold is the first important Byronic hero and the prototype of all the rest" (1965, p. 128). John R. Greenfield, in his turn, agrees with Thorslev and adds: "in Harold, Byron had created a new significant character type which reappeared in almost all of his heroes" (1990, p. 48). Childe Harold "is an aristocrat by birth and spirit, sensitive, highly imaginative, intelligent and generous-minded, but also disillusioned, lonely and unloved, rejecting human community" (Golban, 2018, p. 203).

Some critics believe the poet's other poem, called *Manfred* (1816-1817), to be autobiographical or maybe confessional, since the central character is additionally "tortured by the sense of guilt for an unmentionable offence" (Golban, 2018, p. 203). Manfred is considered to be the first anti-hero, who fought against society and its norms for his own cause only for the reason of his tragic and mysterious past. Manfred desires escapism, or rather wants to escape escapism, "since isolation and seclusion, suggesting accomplished escapism, bring neither happiness nor the desired oblivion" (Golban, 2018, p. 203). According to P. Golban, "romanticism here is

actually anti-romanticism, and the narrative of *Manfred* is an anti-Faust story or a negation of the Faustian story” (2018, p. 203). In *Manfred* the poet developed his Byronic hero by adding to this hypostasis “a new aspect of a superman, halfway between gods and mortals”. *Manfred* is also an outcast from society, a proud soul, skeptical, inadaptable, seeking solitude, and expressing an immense capacity for suffering. The creator of *Manfred* describes him as “half-dust, half-deity” (Golban, 2018, p. 205), and makes him the romantic prototype of the extraordinary man with “unusual sensitivity and superb intellectual capacity” (Golban, 2018, p. 205). The romantic aspects of the poem can be seen in the character’s alliance with the sense of extensive melancholy, the impression of inevitable grief and suffering. Alike the Byronic hero, this hypostasis is also a tragic figure who displays the “abnormality” of the romantic condition. Yet, he is considered to be “more than that, for his alienation, his negation of the whole existence, the intensity of his mental frustration, coming from the sickly sense of despair, make him different from other hypostases of the Byronic hero, in that his unadaptability is a passive one; resisting with extreme lucidity both the spirits and the Abbot, *Manfred* becomes a sort of passive rebel who struggles with his own ambiguous nature, which, being equally of the godlike and the mortal, reveals his abnormality” which, according to P. Golban, characterizes the romantic hero in general (2018, p. 206).

Cain, another hypostasis of the Byronic hero, wandering throughout the worlds, is a romantic rebel; his rebelliousness, however, has little to do with any social background or the poet’s concern with social, moral, and normative aspects of existence. Lord Byron adds the enormous aspect to the demonism of Lucifer to comprise Cain in a further development of the Byronic hero, making him the

characteristic romantic rebel. According to Byron, love encompasses all values and love transcends rebelliousness.

“The poet, by interpreting the *Bible*, emphasizes the revolt and rebellion, following the realization that the human condition is absurd; through his character, Byron presents and interprets rebellion, but eventually understands the proper limits of rebellion: Cain finally feels sincere remorse for his rebellious murder, and consciously praises the value of love, which seems to be the only true and certain human value in the world of irrational conflict and loss of equilibrium” (Golban, 2018, p. 206).

To sum up, the above mentioned characters, from Byron's different works share some common features and are labeled as hypostases of the Byronic Hero who is an inadaptable rebel placed in the dualism of existence and seeking for escapism.

### **1.3.2. The Byronic Hero: deriving from the Romantic Hero**

A Byronic hero as it was mentioned above can be developed as an absolute variation of the Romantic hero archetype. The traditional romantic heroes reject or question of common rules and codes of behavior, they are isolated from the society they belong to. They see themselves as the center of existence, and believe in their ability to inspire others to commit acts of moral and virtuous. Romantic heroes are likely to be accepted as imperfect heroes or often flawed individuals who behave in a courageous and fearless manner.

According to literary critics and biographers, Lord Byron acquired the paradigm of the Byronic hero since he was not satisfied with the traditional Romantic figures. While creating his appealing hero type, Byron wanted to establish the character that would be more realistic and closer to the readers. Thorslev mentions in his studies about Byronic hero that “his origins are usually humble, but there is

almost always some obscurity or mystery connected with his birth; often he is an orphan brought up by strangers who have concealed his true parentage” (1965, p. 30). One can say that the archetype of the Byronic hero is not far away for his features from the traditional Romantic hero. They both are likely to show their refusal against the ordinary codes but at the same time they prove of having personalities that are not traditionally heroic. Anyhow, the Byronic hero normally appears to be emotionally and psychologically more complex than the traditional Romantic heroes.

The Byronic hero is notable not only by his utter refusal of traditional heroic virtues and values, but also by his “impressive intelligence and cunning, strong feelings of affection and hatred, impulsiveness, strong sensual desires, moodiness, cynicism, dark humor, and morbid sensibility” (Madhusudana, 2019, p. 1). He also tends “to appear larger than life and dress and style himself in elaborate costumes to make him as different from others as possible, and at the same time, he tends to only seem loyal to himself and his core beliefs and values”. As from the above-mentioned descriptions, one can conclude to some characteristics of the Byronic Hero which emerge from different perspectives. Thus, the common characteristics for the Byronic Hero are that he can be: “intelligent; cunning; ruthless; arrogant; depressive; violent; self-aware; emotionally and intellectually tortured; traumatized; highly emotional; manipulative; self-serving; spiritually doubtful; often reckless or suicidal; prone to bursts of anger; decidedly prone to substance abuse; dedicated to pursuing matters of justice over matters of legality; given to self-destructive impulses; seductive and sexually appealing”. It is worth reminding that to achieve a true Byronic Hero he does not have to carry all above-mentioned characteristics.

However, while researching the emergence of the Byronic hero one can note that the aspects of the hero Lord Byron developed in his works existed before his time, yet mostly separately. He perhaps was, without even realizing, the one who merged them into one character developing his soon to be famous a Byronic hero. So, basically, Byron gained glory and success by only mixing in his character the aspects the age found attractive. “Such a hero could not fail to attract in the Romantic age” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 139). Therefore, it becomes obvious that the new figure is not far from the old.

### **1.3.3. The Byronic Hero as categorized by P.L. Thorslev**

Peter L. Thorslev analyzes the Byronic hero intensively in his book *The Byronic hero: types and prototypes* (1965), noting that “the genesis of the Byronic Hero has not been so definitively studied as most scholars suppose” (p. 8). He believes that “no poetry in English affords a better opportunity for the study of the Romantic hero than that of Lord Byron” (1965, p. 8). According to him, Byron “is the one poet in the Romantic Movement whose hero was his poetry, or whose poetry existed for his hero”. Moreover, professor Thorslev supposes that the Romantic heroes summarize “many of the most important aspects of Romanticism, and the Byronic Hero shows the elements of every major type of Romantic hero”. Thorslev’s book is a thorough and impressive paperback of just what it claims to be the major examples and antecedents of the Byronic Hero in the Romantic period and its preceding eras. To understand the root of this figure, the author attempts to find out his widespread influence, including how he continues to shape conceptions of the heroic in the modern-day, even by his absence in an anti-heroic climate. As we have

already mentioned, there had not been a definitive study of this character type's ancestors in the literature at large before Byron, and the author investigates to explain that the Byronic Hero, for all of his identification with his namesake, did not emerge full-grown from Byron's head, but it derived out of a well-established tradition that had developed along the centuries. Thorslev believes that Lord Byron influenced and was influenced by the cultural trends that created the Romantic hero.

The author launches his investigation by providing a set of prototype "pre-romantic heroes, including the Child of Nature, the Hero of Sensibility (the Man of Feeling or the Gloomy Egoist), and the Gothic Villain". Throughout the first chapter of his book Thorslev gives a thorough analysis of each type, listing numerous examples, and drawing wide outlines of their basic characteristics and determining their expansion at the same time proving how they attribute to one another in further subdivisions.

Afterwards, the author investigates the manifestations of the Byronic Hero himself, including The Noble Outlaw, Faust, Cain/Ahasuerus, and Satan/Prometheus. Each of these categories grasps a chapter-length analysis with a signified evolution in their appearance, as Thorslev approaches Byron's own use of these characters. Considerably, the legendary figures like Satan, Faust, and Prometheus receive impressive attention resulting in the growth of enthusiasm for these characters and evolving from merely sentimentalized beginnings to the colossal phenomenon at the height of the Romantic Movement.

Agreeing with the author's final chapters, one can add that Lord Byron himself developed conceptions of the Romantic hero in the various stages of his composing and moved further and further towards a more unified characterization of

his heroes. The heroes are given in the samples of his works as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Turkish Tales*, *Manfred* and *Cain*; prove the establishment of the Byronic type as being the highest expression of the poet's conception of the Romantic Hero.

Relying on Thorslev's theory, one can determine the literary hero types that Lord Byron established in obtaining the legendary Byronic hero by borrowing some characteristics from the pre-Romantic eighteenth century types "the Child of Nature", "the Hero of Sensibility", "the Gothic Villain", and the Romantic types "the Noble Outlaw", "Faust, Cain/Ahasuerus" and "Satan/Prometheus". Thorslev supposes that studying above mentioned hero types separately will "provide antecedents and a context, a scheme and a terminology, for the discussion of the Byronic Hero himself, who is always a combination of these elements, sometimes unified and sometimes not" (1965, p. 21). The scholar believes there to be clear and coherent relationships between those individual figures above, even a few of them can be said to "fade into" one another, "as do colors in the spectrum – the Gothic Villain into the Noble Outlaw, for instance – and the possible combinations, as is the case with the primary hues of the spectrum, provide an almost infinitive variety of types and shades." (1965, p. 20). The relationship between these major groups and the members of the certain period can be surely clear.

Therefore, while researching for his study on the Byronic Hero, Thorslev reveals that "the Child of Nature" includes "all of the naive, unsophisticated, usually impulsive and somewhat aggressive types, with primitivistic or at least 'close-to-nature' origins" (1965, p. 21); "the Hero of Sensibility" in his turn carries "the relatively well-bred and sophisticated cultivators of feelings – feelings ranging from

graveyard gloom through the merely tearful to the whimsical” (1965, p. 21) and by that the author means “to denote the hero who is distinguished not by daring exploits or superior intelligence, but quite simply by his capacities for feeling, mostly for the tender emotions-gentle and tearful love, nostalgia, and a pervasive melancholy” (1965, p. 35). The two 18<sup>th</sup> century forms of this type – “the Man of Feeling” and “the Gloomy Egoist” – became famous before 1780, but “the Hero of Sensibility” remained a dominant type of hero all the way through the Romantic Movement. “Closer to the Child of Nature than the Gloomy Egoist, the Man of Feeling is probably the more important of the two for the Romantic Movement” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 35). “The Man of Feeling” in his turn was a new type in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The historians agree that “the Man of Feeling” and “the Child of Nature” have some common philosophical background as “the belief in the moral goodness of the ‘natural man,’ and the egalitarian conception of common reasonableness, both in man and in the natural universe” (Thorslev, 1965, 36).

The name of “the Gothic Villain” is of course “self-explanatory” as Thorslev believes (1965, p. 21), yet it is worth mentioning that the Gothic Villain is an antagonist hero in the Gothic Novel who is presented as a dark “yet striking and frequently handsome man, of about middle age or somewhat younger, he has a tall, manly, stalwart physique, with dark hair and brows frequently set off by a pale and ascetic complexion”. He has some more identifying characteristics as being: shifty, cunning, and able to mold their behavior to match the need of the circumstance. Accordingly, villains will take advantage of deterrence, deceit, and even seduction to attain their objective.



Meanwhile, two of the major 18<sup>th</sup> century types – “the Child of Nature” and “the Man of Feeling” – believe in the concept of the indispensable decency of human nature, and of the usefulness or even the essentiality of all moral suasion being affected through an appeal to the emotions. However, “neither of these types is really a thoroughgoing rebel in his society” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 21). Despite the fact that “The Man of Feeling” shares the moral and social norms of his hero-neighbors, he is isolated from the community for his being peculiar and for obtaining an aggravated sensitivity. “The Child of Nature” is also known as a hero who tries to adjust to the demands of the society. “The Gothic Villain” who is also a misfit and who reflects his society around him, never sympathize the readers. On the other hand, the Romantic Heroes, from “the Noble Outlaw” through “Satan-Prometheus” can survive outside of the society. “Thoroughgoing rebels invariably appeal to the readers’ sympathies against the unfair restrictions of the social, moral, or even religious codes of the worlds in which they observe themselves” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 21).

Whereas “the Gothic Villain” and “the Noble Outlaw” share common characteristics as “their physical appearance and bearing-dark, handsome, but with a cool reserve or even asperity of manner; in the sense of secrecy and frequently of destiny which surround their every appearance; in the frequent flashes of a guilty conscience”, Thorslev points out that:

“there is a large and important difference: the pre-Byronic Gothic Villain (of the novel, at least) is never sympathetic; if anything, he and his crimes are made to appear even more monstrous and grotesque by the addition of gratuitous acts of cruelty or sadism; the Noble Outlaw, on the other hand, is always first a victim of, and only then a rebel against society; his sins, if not completely exonerated, are at least

palliated by reference to his innate gentleness of nature, shown especially in his courteous treatment of women” (1965, p. 22).

The other Romantic heroes – “Faust and Cain/Ahasuerus” – are known as Romantic revivals developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. “Faust has no important forebears in eighteenth-century England, and one must go back to the Renaissance for his last significant appearance” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 21). And “Cain” and “Ahasuerus”, villains previously, now represent “the permanent and lonely wanderer, who had always an air about him of the mysterious and the supernatural and above all of destiny or tragic fate” (Thorslev, 1965, p. 21). It is clear that none of the famous heroes today can be as ‘pure’ as one wants. Heroes are developed through ages in different stages by various artists and writers.

#### **1.4. The Archetype of the Byronic Hero from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century until now**

Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the archetype of the Byronic hero has remained popular and relevant throughout Western literature and entertainment. There are enormous samples of Byronic heroes including the protagonists of nearly all of Byron’s epic poems as *Manfred*, *Don Juan*, and *Childe Harold Pilgrimage*. Other examples of the Byronic hero of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be found in Emily Brontë’s novel *Wuthering Heights* in the face of Heathcliff, Jane Austen’s Mr. Darcy from her novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Victor Hugo’s Claude Frollo from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Captain Ahab from Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Alec d’Urbervilles from Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

There are also a great number of works with Byronic heroes in 20<sup>th</sup> century western literature, including Jake Barnes from Ernest Hemingway’s novel *The Sun*

Also Rises, Jay Gatsby from Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, these Byronic heroes are appealing for their dark sensibility, cynicism, arrogance, high intelligence and a refusal to outright obey authority.

A typical Byronic hero in literature is represented as "an enigmatic anti-hero who acts without a clear meaning"; he is also portrayed as "a tragic soul who fights for neither good nor evil". The Byronic hero is considered to be the most famous figures in literature, film, and other forms of pop culture. For instance: the Byronic hero can be Lucifer Morningstar from the famous TV series *Lucifer*, Edward Cullen from the *Twilight* Saga, Christian Grey from the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, and even Severus Snape from the *Harry Potter* series'.

So, how can one know when dealing with a Byronic hero? Or what distinctive features he has that other heroes and superheroes don't? Superman, for instance, is easy to recognize. He is clearly on the side of good acting in a straightforward way. Superman, as it is common to believe, fights for justice and protects the city and everyone he cares about. The Byronic hero also fights against injustice but against those which concern himself, usually in a selfish way following no strict rules or codes of behavior. Exemplifying Christian Grey one can say he is represented as a person who fights against his past which might destroy his future. There's something about this apparently wicked, conceivably egoist with his doubtful nature that continues to leave women breathless. While remaining in the spotlight, the Byronic hero appears as fascinating as Christian Grey, as captivating as Edward Cullen. They manage entrap the female readers with their despicable ways which produces the effect that some small dangers make a man more appealing and

that a woman shouldn't hesitate of becoming romantically involved with this type of man.

Supposedly, from the time this type of character was created, he has been sealed in the people's mind, usually women, as the perfect model of a man sacrificing warmth and emotion for strength and dominance; aloof, yet vigorous, powerful and protective. This flawless image of a man has brainwashed readers to accept the Byronic hero as the ideal, seductive figure with the "mystery and unpredictability", always keeping them on their toes, repeatedly drawing their attention back in to see what the hero will do the next. The readers are fascinated by his overwhelming masculinity and the deeper cause of one's undeniable attraction lies far beneath the hero's flawlessly attractive surface. Although, it's clear that this dimensional character is much deeper than he appears. Mostly, all the "Byronic heroes of the past and present obtain one defining characteristic that captures the attention: relatable humanity".

Christian Grey with his charming appearance still draws the reader's attention to what's inside of him, whereas Mr. Rochester happens to be cynical and arrogant while at the same time sophisticated and intelligent. Following the true Byronic hero trend, "Rochester has some skeletons in his closet, or in this case, a Bertha in his attic". By locking up one woman and telling lies to another, Rochester acts in a strange way, unknown to the reader which makes the reader think that whatever he does, he does it for the sake of love and protection.

Indeed, a lot of works, some of them truly are praiseworthy, have been written concerning the relationship between an innocent heroine and a precarious,

stereotypical bad boy-hero. One can see this phenomenon reoccurring over and over again, in novels from hundreds of years ago, but also in novels written in modern times as well.

Nowadays, readers and moviegoers are absolutely fascinated by the Byronic hero's physical perfection, yet cherishing their emotional imperfection which shows the Byronic hero as a flawed individual. He is not a powerful superhero or mighty god who has savage strength and abilities; instead he is a horribly defected persona. It is not the Byronic hero's heroism that continues to pull a witness in, it is their deeply rooted humanity that makes the reader know and understand their fear, their insecurities, and their love. Christian Grey from *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy can be considered as one of such characters. Further, the next chapter's aim is to reveal his so called traditional Byronic characteristics and to prove that he is a Neo-Byronic character through the 3 original books narrated by Anastasia Steele and 2 with the same storyline from Christian Grey's perspective.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. CHRISTIAN GREY AS A NEO-BYRONIC HERO IN *FIFTY SHADES* TRILOGY

#### 2.1. A Short Introduction to the Novel

British writer Erika Leonard, known for her pen name E.L. James, author of the erotic romance trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey* can't believe "the impact of her work, or the influence her books have had on the fantasies of women around the world". James though thinks "of the books as kind of raw," and says she doesn't think she's "a great writer" or "a very disciplined one" ([www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com)). By using the archetype of the Byronic hero and adding some elements familiar to the contemporary audience, James gives life to a Neo-Byronic hero in the face of Christian Grey. One cannot judge her from her previous works since this is her first experience in writing. People say the language of the novel is quite easy and simple but one should remember the novel is not claiming for being accepted in the row of classical novels or the ones that might be teaching someone life. As the author mentions, the book is to have a rest from the world and enjoy the passionate love story, with some elements of erotica which is unfamiliar to most people. The books attempt to make the reader escape to the world of fantasy.

*Fifty Shades of Grey*, a well-known for its BDSM (Bondage, Discipline/Dominance, and Submission/Sadomasochism) erotic scenes trilogy, cannot leave anybody, who has ever heard, read or seen the movie series, indifferent. These books, "which have been passed around by women like contraband, follow the relationship between the young student Anastasia Steele and very attractive Christian

Grey, who has unruly dark-copper-colored hair and intense, bright gray eyes” (James, 2012a, p. 7). Whenever a person sees or hears the title *Fifty Shades of Grey* they cannot help but picture the erotic scenes, as in the self-titled movie series. Even the ones who have not seen the movie series could have heard about the hot 18+ scenes in them. *Fifty Shades* trilogy is an erotic romance novel telling the story of a rich, handsome young man, Christian Grey, who tries to seduce and persuade an innocent, plain young woman, Anastasia Steele, to become involved with him in a sadomasochistic relationship. Throughout the trilogy Grey reminds a reader the Byronic hero archetype for being a proud man who is moody, cynical, defiant, with misery in his heart, scornful, and yet capable of deep and strong affection. Christian’s power of persuasion, as well as his cold and detached manner of being is revealed as following: “I have to show her – demonstrate what this all means, what we can do together. Show her what we can do in the playroom. Then she’ll know. This might be the only way to save this deal” (James, 2015, p. 212).

The first volume of the trilogy introduces the characters to the readers yet not specifically, as one finds in later pages. Sure in both narrations one can sense a lack of information about Christian, since he’s not fully disclosed, but portrayed similar to the traditional Byronic hero, who is mysterious anti-hero, behaving without a clear meaning, on the other hand represented as a tragic soul who fights for neither good nor evil. The motif of knowledge reworked in the novel as well. Knowledge in the Biblical sense that implies sexuality, but at the same time it alludes to the apple of knowledge, that brings corruption after temptation.

“Always so keen and eager for information, Miss Steel” (James, 2012a, p. 361).

“Once you’re enlightened, you probably won’t want to see me again.”

“What does that mean? Does he white-slave small children to some Godforsaken part of the planet? Is he part of some underworld crime syndicate? It would explain why he’s so rich. Is he deeply religious? Is he impotent? Whatever secret he has is so gross that I don’t want to know him any more then, quite frankly, it will be a relief. Don’t lie to yourself – my subconscious yells at me– it’ll have to be pretty bloody bad to have you running for the hills” (James, 2012a, p. 74).

The second part called *Fifty Shades Darker* assumingly because at this point of the story the knowledge unfolds, as Christian reveals all of his sins, secrets and the reason of his fear about Ana’s leaving him once she sees the face of the monster.

“What is the secret that makes you think I’ll run for the hills? That makes you so determined to believe I’ll go?” I plead. “Tell me, Christian, please...”

“I’m a sadist, Ana. I like to whip little brown-haired girls like you because you all look like the crack whore – my birth mother. I’m sure you can guess why” (James, 2012b, p. 329).

Acknowledging the depth of his depravity, Christian feels more unworthy, but paradoxically he feels ‘alive’ when he is with Anastasia that’s why he’s ready to do anything in order to be with her. The knowledge of his secrets seem to be the end for their relationship, however only by sharing the truth/knowledge that functions like a confession, leads to the strengthening of their relationship through care and unconditional love.

“Why me, Christian?”

What should I tell her? Because I’ve woken up since I met her? Because my whole world has changed. It’s rotating on a different axis. “You make me look at the world differently, Anastasia. You don’t want me for my money. You give me ... hope” (James, 2017, p. 127).

The final part of the trilogy, *Fifty Shades Freed*, puts everything on the right places and Ana succeeds in bringing Christian towards the light as the two of them emerge from the hell of their insecurities, feeling of neglect and become healed by



their love. “She brightens up my home, my life... me” (James, 2015, p. 462). “She’s good for my dark, dark soul” (James, 2015, p. 467). “Brought light into my life. Light and Love” (James, 2017, p. 409).

## **2.2. *Fifty Shades: Another Cinderella Fairytale***

The romance formula in the novel is properly followed, as Anastasia is younger and virgin – preferable element in this kind of romances – who is the only one with the certain ability to soften, domesticate and heal Christian, who has unconsciously been striving for being in the light since he was a small boy. And that it’s taken an extraordinary young woman, Anastasia Steele, to make him realize that. As Christian discloses, he has spent all his adult life trying to avoid any extreme emotions, yet Ana brings out the feelings inside of him that are completely alien and have power to wound. Christian calls Ana as his “guiding light” while he explains, “I’m her lost boy, now found” (James, 2017, p. 526) or, “She’s driving the darkness out and I’m drinking in her light” (James, 2017, p. 144).

Throughout all 3 books, Ana admires Christian for his physical appearance and her descriptions remind of a gothic villain as for being “a dark, striking and frequently handsome man who has a tall, manly, stalwart physique, with dark hair and brows frequently set off by a pale and ascetic complexion with the most noticeable of his physical characteristics are his grey eyes”. The physical appearance of the protagonist is accentuated throughout the entire trilogy, an aspect that fascinates Anastasia, as well as most women who surround him:

“Christian Grey waiting, leaning up against the wall, looking like a male model in a pose for some glossy high-end magazine” (James, 2012a, p. 40).

“He’s not merely good-looking – he’s the epitome of male beauty, breathtaking” (James, 2012a, p. 25).

“He is beyond beautiful. He is jaw-droppingly handsome” (James, 2012a, p. 311).

“Even his *name* renders people speechless” (James, 2012a, p. 213).

According to Codruta Goşa, the story in *Fifty Shades* trilogy is “as time-immemorial and (stereo) typical as it gets: a love-conquers-all-happily-ever-after-ending kind of story” (2014, p.62). In other words, it’s a Cinderella story with a simple and identical theme of love, spiced up with sexual tension, leading to delayed gratification. The storyline is uncomplicated: a boy meets a girl, they fall in love and eventually they manage to reach the happily-ever-after stage against all odds, due to the female protagonist’s resilience and endurance through mental and physical pain (Goşa, 2014, p.62). The plot is linear, sprinkled with occasional flashbacks or re-runs of important episodes in the mind of the character-narrator also having subplot a love triangle, the rival though is just a secondary, pretext, and vehicle character. Codruta Goşa states that (self) proclaimed fanfiction trilogy *Fifty Shades* can be called by many names, ranging from worthless-copycat-housewife-porn to a witty-groundbreaking-sex-liberating endeavor, it can be loathed, loved, torn to pieces, over discussed, criticized, but it cannot be ignored adding “if you ask around, certainly there is hardly anyone who has not actually heard of it” (2014, p. 57).

In this set of books the vital conflict is triggered by the confrontation between two worlds: a mainstream, ordinary, visible kind of world, and an invisible, underground, flawlessly fantastic one or a darker, uncannily sexually fantastic world,

the world of BDSM. In the novel it is presented as “The intangible, mysterious, vague hues of gray that color my world. Welcome to my world” (James, 2012a, p. 280) or, “We are poles apart and from two very different worlds. I have a vision of myself as Icarus flying too close to the sun and crashing and burning as a result” (James, 2012a, p. 53).

The novel is written in “a witty style” (Goşa, 2014, 65) spoken and informal, laden with sarcasm, double meanings, euphemism, intertextual references, apt metaphors, long compounds, hyphenated phrases, and lexical and/or morphological deviations, along with use of nicknames and short, elliptical, emphatic sentences. For instance, there is a reference to the poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) by S.T. Coleridge, when Ana is uncomfortable with her naivety and wishes to be more like her experienced friend, Kate: “My innocence is the albatross around my neck” (James, 2012a, p. 225).

When Ana describes Christian, she is generous for the metaphors and depictions, similar to the ones that the Byronic hero has, which makes the readers think of him as someone abnormal or superior: “Christian, you are the state lottery, the cure for cancer, and the three wishes of Aladdin’s lamp, all rolled into one” (James, 2012c, p. 280). Or, as in “Dark knight and white knight, it’s a fitting metaphor for Christian” (James, 2012a, p. 92). Ana uses the metaphors of “dark knight” and “white knight” to show the ambiguity and ambivalence in Christian which most of the time impede their relationship.

### 2.3. Criticism of the Trilogy

Some critics and regular readers blame the author claiming her having a bad taste of writing, some say reading the trilogy is the worst thing they have ever done, this is a dreadful book or even there are some readers who would say that they don't know how *this* became a best seller. Moreover, some organizations, which look to preserve media integrity and protect families by promoting fundamentalist Christian values, have claimed that *Fifty Shades* trilogy not only borders on pornography, but also glamorizes abuse through its striking sex-scenes and promotion of BDSM. To the statements from the religious side of the auditory saying it is so inappropriate using any religion in the series of erotica, E.L. James replies: "the 1<sup>st</sup> book wasn't for public access" (Lorraine, youtube channel, 2019), because she wrote it for herself as she was extremely impressed by *the Saga of Twilight* (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) by Stephenie Meyer that she decided to write a fanfiction which wasn't aimed to reach popularity. During the various interviews, James defines Christian as "the ultimate fantasy guy. And that's the point: as long as you accept that fantasy guy – fantasy sex, fantasy lifestyle, a broken man who needs fixing through love – what woman could resist that?" ([www.huffpost.com](http://www.huffpost.com)). Strictly speaking, Christian's hidden vulnerability and softness are presented as the key components of the overall fantasy scenario. It would be Anastasia's task to rescue Christian, who despite his breathtaking masculinity, power and domination, is in great need of healing through romantic love: "It's becoming familiar but I don't want to put a name to the feeling. It's too new. Too scary....Usually, I try to avoid eye contact with the asshole in the mirror, but today he looks happier" (James, 2017, p. 150).

Regardless of the author's attempts to defend her characters from the negativity there is still a majority of the audience who cannot accept the fact that Ana gets abused not only emotionally but physically as well.

"I gaze in horror at the red marks all over my breasts. ...My wrists have red welts around them from the handcuffs. No doubt they'll bruise. I examine my ankles – more welts. Holy hell, I look like I've been in some sort of accident" (James, 2012c, p. 41).

The authors of the paper "*Double Crap!*" *Abuse and Harmed Identity in Fifty Shades of Grey* (2013) mention many points on how *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a text full of abusing behaviors toward women by the intimate partner, and the reaction of those abused women in the paper she mentions that the assaulting abused behavior is almost in every interaction between the two characters along with threaten, absolution, stalking, sexual violence, humiliation, and intimidation. Anastasia's attitude reflects the reaction of abused women in Smith studies in the way of perceived threat, stressful managing, yearning, altered identity, disempowerment, and entrapment. *Fifty Shades* is reflecting the intimate partner violence types that being seen between couples who use violent behaviors, like using violence to control the relation, using violence in the sexual intercourse, struggling with intimacy, while the victim tries to leave the harm relation, to control the stress and hoping for more intimacy and less tension. However, Anastasia showing that she is enjoying the abusing behaviors inside the sadomasochism relation could be only a way to hide uncomfortable emotions to be inside this kind of relationship (Bonomi, Altenburger, Walton, 2013, p. 9).

"You're a sadist?"

"I'm a Dominant."

“I have rules, and I want you to comply with them. They are for your benefit and for my pleasure. If you follow these rules to my satisfaction, I shall reward you. If you don’t, I shall punish you, and you will learn” (James, 2012a, p. 100).

As Kristen Ramsdell mentions in her book of *Romance Fiction: A guide to the Genre*, “essentially love stories with contemporary settings, these novels focus on the attempts of a woman to find success and happiness both professionally and romantically, and usually by the end of the book she has attained both”. She also believes that “a committed permanent, monogamous, one that usually includes marriage and often a family is still the ultimate goal of this type of romance” (1999, p. 43). When it is applied this to the female protagonist, Anastasia, one can definitely say “a committed permanent, monogamous marriage” has not been on her wish list. An innocent girl is swept off her feet by the charming Prince and from her ordinary world; she is taken to his domain castle to live happily ever after. However, one wonders of a possibility of felicity in such a luxurious, but sterile environment: “Apart from the paintings, the rest of the office is cold, clean, and clinical. I wonder if it reflects the personality of the Adonis who sinks gracefully into one of the white leather chairs opposite me” (James, 2012a, p. 8) or, “This apartment looks more like a gallery than a place to live” (James, 2012a, p. 93).

This gratifying instant promotion has a rather steep price to be paid: the girl’s physically painful self-sacrifice on the altar of the beloved. To the final lines, Ana meets with an unplanned pregnancy that jeopardizes their relationship with Christian, yet she is able to somehow put things right.

“Christian, we need to talk about this.”

“What’s there to say? We’re going to be parents.”

“You’re scared”.

“I am, too. That’s normal”.

“What kind of father could I possibly be?”

“Oh, Christian.”

“One that tries his best. That’s all any of us can do.”

“Ana—I don’t know if I can . . .”

“Of course you can. You’re loving, you’re fun, you’re strong, you’ll set boundaries. Our child will want for nothing.” (James, 2012c, p. 480)

However, the leading cause of the novel and the film based on it is still the same as the way women could respond to the use of violence sexually inside a relationship. Jacqueline Horn is explaining how the sadomasochism relation must be subjected to some laws to consider acceptable, agreeing with Bonomi, Altenburger and Walton, that the relationship between Ana and Christian is missing the power imbalance and consensual relationship. The domination and controlling intimidation is not limited to their sexual lives but also is affecting their daily lives, as Christian is practicing intimidation, stalking, and pressure on Anastasia (Horn, 2015, p. 11).

“I pore over the executive summary for the hundredth time since I received it two days ago, looking for some insight into the enigmatic Miss Anastasia Rose Steele” (James, 2015, p. 18).

“I’m now behaving like a stalker” (James, 2015, p. 18).

“What can I say to convince her to give our arrangement a try?” (James, 2015, p. 143)

Despite plenty of negativity, criticism, and misunderstanding, one should see in the books more than BDSM and abuse, one should go deeper in the thoughts of the author which is beyond erotica, and focus on the elements and ways James uses to make the novel and the characters more appealing and provocative.

### **2.3. Fascinating Christian Grey as a Neo-Byronic Hero**

Anastasia meets her fate for the first time when she has volunteered to interview Christian Grey – CEO, Grey Enterprises Holding, Inc – instead of her, at that time unwell, roommate Kate Kavanagh. Anastasia tries to envisage the man she is about to meet: “Judging from the building, which is too clinical and modern, I guess Grey is in his forties: fit, tanned, and fair-haired to match the rest of the personnel” (James, 2012a, p. 6). Without knowing and having anything particular on her interviewee, Ana’s impressed by his qualities, especially the confidence and power at that young age. He resembles Byronic hero in that he is “intelligent, passionate, and above-average in almost every way but also tormented, mysterious, unpredictable, and scornful of authority”. Anastasia is immediately fascinated by the young man she meets: “Holy cow – he’s so young and very attractive. He’s tall, dressed in a fine gray suit, white shirt, and black tie with unruly dark copper colored hair and intense, bright gray eyes that regard me shrewdly” (James, 2012a, p. 7). Beside his physical beauty, Anastasia is intrigued by the sense of power that Christian emanates, as she continues to question him in the interview:

“Do you feel that you have immense power?” Control Freak. “I employ over forty thousand people, Miss Steele. That gives me a certain sense of responsibility – power, if you will.”

“Maybe you’re just lucky.”

“I don’t subscribe to luck or chance, Miss Steele. The harder I work the more luck I seem to have. It really is all about having the right people on your team and directing their energies accordingly.” (James, 2012a, p. 10)

Moreover, the most fascinating and thrilling characteristic of Christian seems to be his ability to exercise control. Ana proceeds, asking him about it: “You



sound like a control freak.” “Oh, I exercise control in all things, Miss Steele, he says without a trace of humor in his smile” (James, 2012a, p. 10).

“Do you have a philosophy? If so, what is it?”

“I don’t have a philosophy as such. Maybe a guiding principle – Carnegie’s ‘A man who acquires the ability to take full possession of his own mind may take possession of anything else to which he is justly entitled.’ I’m very singular, driven. I like control – of myself and those around me.” (James, 2012a, p. 11)

Despite his obvious arrogance, Christian affects Anastasia enormously, for though he might be really scary, she notices how charismatic he is. However, when Christian offers Anastasia an internship in his company, she refuses it for her lack of self-esteem and her fear that she will never fit into his perfect world. For a girl like Ana with insecurity issues, as she had several fathers while she was growing up, she has a shortage of self-esteem and confidence, at least at the beginning of their love story; then Ana manages to be self-confident which helps the development of their relationship. The way Ana sees herself at the beginning of the trilogy creates a stark contrast with the way she sees Christian and the more she grows attracted by him, the more diminished she finds herself:

“I scowl with frustration at myself when I look in the mirror” (James, 2012a, p. 3).

“Double crap – me and my two left feet! I am on my hands and knees in the doorway to Mr. Grey’s office, and gentle hands are around me helping me to stand. I am so embarrassed, damn my clumsiness” (James, 2012a, p. 7).

“He is without a doubt the most beautiful man on the planet, too beautiful for the little people below, too beautiful for me” (James, 2012a, p. 370).

“I allow myself a brief moment to examine his godlike profile: straight nose, sculptured full lips, hair falling deliciously over his forehead and this divine man is surely not meant for me” (James, 2012c, p. 33).

During the interview, Ana gives away her nervousness. She is obviously uncomfortable in a face-to-face interview, having the difficulty of making the eye-contact, preferring instead “the anonymity of a group discussion where I can sit inconspicuously at the back of the room” (James, 2012a, p. 6). Ironically, it is initially Anastasia’s desire for invisibility and anonymity that attract Christian in her, leading to his later improper proposal to become his submissive. It is interesting that even though Christian is presented as almost of godlike beauty, he is not a flawless man. On the contrary, the more his physical perfection is accentuated, the more his inner flaws start to emerge. Christian, alike the Byronic hero, is a transgressed man with tragic and mysterious past that fueled his revolt against society and its norms which explains his perverse desires and also his *algolagniac* state; he got abused when in his early childhood by “one of the crack whore’s pimps” who literally left the signs on Christian’s body and now that he cannot but despise his childhood. The images of Hell from his childhood continue to haunt young Christian, as he reflects:

“I have vague memories of the place: drunks, hobos, and crack-heads shouting at us on the streets; the seedy dive we called home; and a young, broken woman, the crack whore I called Mommy, staring into space while she sat in a drab, grimy room filled with stale air and dust motes. And him” (James, 2015, p. 361).

The tormented child grew into a restless and distraught young man and Anastasia tries to understand the reason of Christian’s state: “I am plagued by one question – why is he like this? Is it because he was seduced at such a young age? I just don’t know. He’s still such a mystery.” (James, 2012a, p. 187)

Christian Grey, resembling the Byronic hero, is a ‘bad boy’ who is “a very charming and unpredictable figure with his pride, mysterious past, secret sins, and

burnt-out passions, ridden with contradictions and paradoxes due to his complex nature as a man of extremes”. For this reason, he could be considered as a soul of extremes as “he doesn’t know how to tie in with other people, he is a vain egoist, and he makes irritating, gratuitous displays of his powers, unaware of any other means of human interaction”. As he explains:

“Touching is a hard limit for me, Anastasia,” he whispers.

“I know. I wish I understood why.”

After a while, he sighs, and in a soft voice he says, “I had a horrific childhood. One of the crack whore’s pimps...” His voice trails off, and his body tenses as he recalls some unimaginable horror. “I can remember that,” he whispers, shuddering.

Abruptly, my heart constricts as I remember the burn scars marring his skin. Oh, Christian. I tighten my arms around his neck.

“Was she abusive? Your mother?” My voice is low and soft with unshed tears.

“She was neglectful and she didn’t protect me from her pimp” (James, 2012b, p. 37).

Neglected by his mother, abused by her pimp, being forced to witness her dead body for four days, alone and hungry, deeply affect Christian, and although adopted by the Greys at the age of four, he cannot overcome this trauma until he meets Anastasia. Soon, she becomes the only woman given permission to touch the burn scars on his well-built sculptured body and finds herself getting the point of his being ‘control freak’ and as well as his possessiveness, his jealousy, his over protectiveness.

Christian Grey, bringing to mind Manfred who “is very keen on his own individual freedom and privacy of his own values, never bows to conventional rules or notions owing to his rebellious spirit; he is a self-sufficient and powerful type of a person, who creates his own moral codes and rules”. At the same time, Christian is a

self-reliant person “who knows what he is doing very well, and therefore, he is never fatalist, but the creator of his own universe. He knows taking responsibility and burden for his own mistakes, sins, and actions and as a result of this situation, he is the own destroyer of himself”. Although he has achieved so much in his short life he is still incapable of understanding his worth beyond his business life. When he acknowledges that Ana loves him, he is puzzled by this. He meditates on the issue:

“No one can love a monster, no matter how compassionate they are” (James, 2017, p. 46).

“The monster is not worthy of her love” (James, 2017, p. 355).

“... I’m nothing, Anastasia.” I’m a lost boy, standing before you. Unloved. Abandoned by the one person who was supposed to protect me, because I’m a monster. ... “I’m a husk of a man. I don’t have a heart” (James, 2017, p. 218).

Christian’s emotional insecurity and vulnerability mirrors Anastasia’s initial issues of self-worth. It is through love and care that the two of them discover their wholeness and integrity. It takes a long time in their mutual journey to understand that they are worthy of love and care. The most impressive change takes place in Christian’s case as he reflects: “They care. They fucking care. They were all worried about me. Family first” (James, 2017, p. 473), and “We all love you very much. When are you going to get it through your thick skull that you are loved?” (James, 2012b, p. 476).

In an absolutely gothic tone, Christian, loaded with self-doubt and self hate, thinking of himself nothing but a monster with a dark, twisted, ugly, torn soul and who can exclusively feel soothed when he starts revealing his childhood experiences of hunger, violence, hurt, death, abandonment, as his love for Anastasia blooms. His self hatred and sadly incapacity of seeing the good man he really is makes the reader

to fall in love with the character and his journey, while he's blossoming under the gentle touch and love of Ana.

#### **2.4.1. Self-explanatory Title of the Trilogy**

The title of the book represents a play of words that may become intriguing for the readers. One would spend some time thinking and trying to figure out the reason why the author's choice has fallen onto this phrase which actually says a lot about a work of fiction. It is interesting to mention that it wasn't always *Fifty Shades*. Before it became a novel, the story was a piece of *Twilight* inspired fiction that took a fan website by storm. Author E.L. James went by the moniker Snowqueen Icedragon. The original tale's title was *The Master of the Universe*.

*Fifty shades of Grey* means roughly what one might think it means, as mercurial Christian Grey has a lot of facets of his personality which is not easily understandable since he can go from gentleman one minute to cryptic BDSM "control freak". "He can be so formal and stuffy. It's difficult to keep up" (James, 2012a, p. 302). Ana struggles following his ever changing moods considering him as the most complicated person she knows. "So many sides of Christian—his sweet, gentle persona and his rugged, I-can-do-what-I-fucking-well-like-to-you-and-you'll-come-like-a-train Dominant side—his fifty shades—all of him" (James, 2012c, p. 494). The book is showcasing, similar to ones that Byronic hero has, shades of Grey's character in which one feels a kind of puzzle or even mystery which definitely attract the readers. "Christian is definitely a different species... different planet" (James, 2012a, p. 279).

Christian describes himself “*fifty shades of fucked-up*”. Ana uses the phrase “my Fifty Shades” when she cannot understand him or his behavior or just “Fifty” when she is more playful in thoughts. The “Fifty Shades” confuses Anastasia, as she embarks on a very ambiguous journey: “I’m entrusting myself to a beautiful man who, by his own admission, is fifty shades of fucked-up” (James, 2012a, p. 322). Anastasia uses this expression when she is frustrated, “Christian, please. You’re being”—So Fifty—“so suffocating” (James, 2012b, p. 265), or goodhearted, “I like playful Fifty—he’s fun. Oh, bossy Fifty... he’s never far away” (James, 2012b, p. 294), “My poor Fifty.” (FSHD, 265), or she expresses her depth of emotion and care for him: “I gaze at him and he looks contrite, sincere... he looks like my Fifty” (James, 2012b, p. 331).

The phrase “Fifty Shades” allows the reader compare Christian Grey with the Byronic hero while discovering him as a tough, dark and mysterious guy who has remarkable intelligence, and devious, strong feelings of fondness and loathing, impulsiveness, powerful sensual desires, moodiness, cynicism, and morbid sensibility. He is extremely confusing, as Anastasia presents him as following: “He’s very attractive, confident, commanding, at ease with himself – but on the flip side, he’s arrogant, and for all his impeccable manners, he’s autocratic and cold” (James, 2012a, p. 17). Or, “As I ride up to the 30<sup>th</sup> floor, a thousand butterflies stretch their wings and flutter erratically in my stomach. Why am I so nervous? And I know it’s because I have no idea what kind of mood Christian’s going to be in when I arrive” (James, 2012a, p. 478). Anastasia realizes that Christian is abnormal and that he has weird needs that she is not able to fulfill. Ana thinks that if she can’t give him what he desires, Christian won’t be with her and she will lose her “Fifty” forever.

As for number 50, there are a lot of theories as to why the author has decided on this number. Some have said that 50 is a lucky number, whereas the others say it represents masculinity or passion, the third group says that, according to the Bible, the number 50 represents salvation. Nevertheless, most interestingly, data has found that the human eye can only see 32 shades of gray. So perhaps by choosing a number higher than that, the author is telling readers that one can't see all of the sides of Grey's character without having the full picture, and therefore he cannot be judged without, which reinforces the theme of "shades of gray" confusion.

The group of words "shades of gray" usually indicates a situation that is unclear, especially regarding whether or not something is categorically evil. When doubt comes into sight, things are neither black, nor white, but are in a gray area. Without a doubt, Christian's last name gives carte blanche to the author to entitle the book wisely *Fifty Shades of Grey* with its exclusive spelling of his last name, implying the character's moral and spiritual ambiguities. The concept Gray Zone can be communicative in this respect.

#### **2.4.1.1. The Gray Zone**

The term "Gray Zone is coined by the Italian Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, in his essay collection *The Drowned and the Saved*" (1986). In *The Gray Zone*, "the second chapter and the longest essay in the book, Levi acknowledges the human need to divide the social field into 'us' and 'them', two clearly distinct and identifiable groups, but points out that such binary thinking is inadequate in the face of the complexity of life in camps" (Craps, 2014, p. 202). Basically, Levi talks about the choices people had to make in order to stay alive and become enemies for "their

people” and be friends for “strangers”. The area, zone, line, or whatever words could describe the space between these two sides is a “gray zone” (Craps, 2014, p. 202). As it is clear from the name “gray” one can see for something being not clear or understandable enough in case of our Neo-Byronic hero Christian. Being between good and evil, white and black, past and future, normal people and his pride make his character “gray”. This grayishness seems to accompany him in his life, getting more confusing. “What the hell is going on? My world seems to be imploding. Just when I’m beginning to get back on track with Ana, my past is coming back to haunt me” (James, 2017, p. 193). Ironically, his grayishness cannot make a reader stay aside, on the contrary it fascinates the reader who wonders if he is in the side of Good or Evil, especially when the reader is not familiar with him in the earlier pages of trilogy.

At the bottom, it’s saying that Ana and Christian’s relationship exists in a gray area which is not defined by societal rules or the standards of typical relationships. It falls somewhere in the middle of wrong and right, but not dead center, making it on a sliding scale that can lean toward either end of the spectrum depending on the situation. This ambiguity is started by Anastasia, as she reflects on the nature of their relationship. “We are balanced on the delicate seesaw that is our strange arrangement – at different ends, vacillating, and it tips and sways between us. We both need to edge closer to the middle. I just hope neither of us falls off in our attempt to do so” (James, 2012a, p. 360).

A reader gets more answers about Christian from the one told by himself as he shares his inner feelings, fears, nightmares and love towards Ana, which he



cannot admit any sooner. His grayishness, in a way, reveals his ambiguity, as well as vulnerability, which emerge as a result of a traumatic past:

“The thought of sitting the electronics plant in Detroit is depressing, bad memories for me” (James, 2015, p. 175).

“The darkness swells, startling and familiar, replacing my unease with a sense of dread. Every muscle in my body tenses. And blinks up at me with clear, unflinching eyes as I struggle to control my fear” (James, 2015, p. 316).

Gray Zone challenges, is the wave for the future and a blast from the past, as it can be seen in Christian’s childhood trauma that makes him stoned and forces him to work on himself, a fact which makes him successful at age of 27. He already owns his own company, luxurious lifestyle as expensive cars, outfit, even his penthouse, which is a modern isolated castle, much resembling the one in gothic novels, with mysterious “Red Room of Pain” – as Anastasia calls it, implying darkness and weird sexuality and showing his being abnormal in the relation to other ordinary people. This means he has worked on himself a lot, which leads him being able to control himself: diet, body, health and everything around him which includes his desire of being dominant over Ana not only during their sexual acts, but off the bed: her lifestyle, what she should eat, how many times, what she should wear, even her workouts. Thus, if one should apply “the Gray Zone” theory to Christian, one can say that he does think that control is achieved through the power to impose constraints, moreover he is trying to overcontrol Ana in everything she does. “Obey me in all things. ...Yes, I want you to do that” (James, 2015, p. 204). At first Ana is uncomfortable with his overbearing bossiness, but then she realizes that’s just the way he is. She admits that he likes control over everything, including her. Yet

sometimes he can be unpredictably and disarmingly agreeable too when Christian practices to be tender, good-humored, even sweet.

It is also said that gray zone is an intermediate area between two opposing positions, a situation, etc, not clearly or easily defined, or not covered by an existing category or set of rules. As we know, Christian wants a contract but Ana never signed one (except the NDA), which means they are literally in a gray zone since there are no written rules for them both. “Speaking of contracts,” I add. “The NDA.” “Tear it up,” he says simply. Whoa. “What? Really?” “Yes” (James, 2012b, p. 431).

As one finds out in later pages “Gray Zone” conflict reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of Christian Grey. The fact that he is not ready and moreover does not want to have a child or clearly be a father shows his fear or insecurity of being a terrible father. The ambiguity concerning his ability of becoming a father is also enrooted in his traumatic past, as he never knew his real father, who has abandoned and neglected him. His past vulnerabilities make him feel inadequate in this important role:

“You think I’m ready to be a father?”

“And it all becomes clear, the fear and loathing writ large in his eyes—his rage is that of a powerless adolescent”.

“Oh, Fifty, I am so sorry”.

“I know neither one of us is ready for this, but I think you’ll make a wonderful father,” I choke. “We’ll figure it out.”

“How the fuck do you know!” he shouts, louder this time. “Tell me how!” (James, 2012c, p. 419).

The fear and the feeling of inadequacy make him initially escape, again, but he is driven out of his escapism by Ana’s unconditional love. Once Ana is in trouble in the third book and risks her life again strong stoned Christian shows his fear of

losing both of his beloved ones, Ana and unborn child. This very moment is epiphanic, as he acknowledges what truly makes him feel alive in this life is love and it reveals his strength of forgetting his past and accepting to live his new life in the role of a father.

“Oh, Ana,” Christian whispers, his voice anguished and pained. “I thought I’d lost you. Then I thought I’d lost you again. Seeing you lying on the ground, pale and cold and unconscious—it was all my worst fears realized. And now here you are—brave and strong . . . giving me hope. Loving me after all that I’ve done.”

“Yes, I do love you, Christian, desperately. I always will.”

Gently taking my head between his hands, he wipes my tears away with his thumbs. He gazes into my eyes, gray to blue, and all I see is his fear and wonder and love.

“I love you, too,”

“I’ll try to be a good father” (James, 2012c, p. 480).

But whatever the title’s true meaning, the content of the book definitely brings up some interesting conversation on those lines that define sex and relationships and the confusion that can come from falling into a gray area.

#### **2.4.2. Speaking Names of the Characters**

The names of the main characters – Christian and Anastasia – as seen, both reflect some religious motifs. The male protagonist’s name is Christian, yet he doesn’t behave like a true Christian. The name Christian of English origin meaning “Follower of Christ” is used by both females and males. Christian again reminds the Byronic hero whose origins are humble, and he is also an orphan, like the Byronic hero, “brought up by strangers who have concealed his true parentage”. “Christian” wasn’t his given name though; Maggot is his birth name, which according to [www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com), is “a term of insult for a worthless person, as if a bug”. The Greys, a kind of respectable and religious family, gave him his new name,

symbolizing a new start of life for him, but paradoxically he attains it only after he meets Anastasia. The name Anastasia is a Greek name with the meaning of Resurrection. In fact, Christian is the one who prefers to call her by her full name. “Oh, Ana, it’s so nice to hear someone use your full name,” exclaims my mother. “Beautiful name for a beautiful girl,” Christian murmurs” (James, 2012a, p. 423).

Obviously, the author must have spent some time on choosing the right names for her characters. Supposedly, E.L. James wants to show the process of life of a Follower of Christ and Anastasia is the one who heals Christian’s wounds, by taking him towards the light and as one finds out in the final chapters she succeeds. In accomplishing her mission, she is able to bring both Christian and his heart back to life and has herself never felt so alive, so vital. Although it is not easy for her to adapt to his style of life and she even has almost given up the fight a couple of times. “I had hoped to drag my Fifty Shades into the light, but it’s proved a task beyond my meager abilities” (James, 2012a, p. 513).

According to [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), Anastasia’s last name Steele comes from “the Middle English stele ‘steel’, a nickname for someone considered as hard and durable as steel” which once again proves her strong personality of which she is not aware of yet. Although insecure and very timid, Anastasia embarks on the journey of saving her knight, aiming at driving him to light. Being fascinated by Christian’s masculinity and power, Ana has thought of him as a romantic hero or a brave white ‘knight’. Her fairytale-like dreams ruin when she realizes that Christian is not a hero; but “he’s a man with serious, deep emotional flaws, and he’s dragging her into the dark”. The self-imposed task of bringing Christian to light is a tedious and difficult

one, the loneliness and sadness which she notes in him triggers an avid desire to help him: “This is a man in need. His fear is naked and obvious, but he’s lost... somewhere in his darkness. His eyes wide and bleak and tortured. I can soothe him. Join him briefly in the darkness and bring him into the light” (James, 2012a, p. 504). The novelist is extremely playful in this moment, as the word “knight” would suggest a lady in distress, awaiting for her savior, but here it is the lady, Anastasia, a very humble and timid young woman who saves the powerful mogul and megalomaniac from the depth of his depravity through her unconditional love.

When it comes to Christian’s last name “Grey” one can immediately think of Oscar Wilde’s character Dorian Gray, as he [Dorian Gray] embodies the true beauty and his portrait provides aesthetic illumination to the readers. The portrait functions as a mirror to his own soul and becomes his religion, his God. Camille Paglia has argued that aestheticizing the natural Dorian suggests the desire to give order to nature, to immortalize the ever-changing material body into a masculine form of idealized beauty. Art is transcendent, imperialistic, and dominating; it retains the power of control over the idolatrous subjects. Beauty, she argues, is tyrannical in Western philosophy and capitalism: “[It] is our weapon against nature; by it we make objects, giving them limit, symmetry, proportion. Beauty halts and freezes the melting flux of nature. Beauty was made by men acting together ...” (1990, p.57). The immediate intertextual relations are made, as one recognizes Christian’s preoccupation with beauty. Ana is fascinated by the numbers of various paintings in his apartment, resembling “an art gallery” (James, 2012a, p. 356). His office is also adorned with paintings, the ones that Ana observes, by stating that the artist “Raises the ordinary to extraordinary,” (James, 2012a, p. 8), a statement which surprises

Christian, because he somewhat is the one who aims at this throughout his entire life. Or another issue in *Picture of Dorian Gray* domination could be the reason for being chosen as Christian's last name. As Monique Marie LaRocque mentions, "Wilde's novel is permeated by the rhetoric of domination that characterizes both the relationship between the portrait and the characters and between the characters themselves. Wilde describes the characters as either dominating, being dominated, or, in the case of women, wanting to be dominated by others" (2001, p. 187). So, these could result in the author's decision towards her character's last name, as this domineering characteristic is an important aspect of Christian's life. As he likes the control it brings him, and he wants Anastasia to behave in a particular way, and if she doesn't he claims that he will punish her, but he is sure that she will learn to behave the way he desires. "It's the way I'm made, Anastasia. I need to control you. I need you to behave in a certain way, and if you don't – I love to watch your beautiful alabaster skin pink and warm up under my hands. It turns me on" (James, 2012a, p. 287).

#### **2.4.3. Christian and Angel**

E.L. James has skillfully scattered many mythological allusions, religious symbolism, as well as making multiple intertextual relations with the classical novels, as in:

"Christian Grey, Greek god, wants me, and I want him" (James, 2012a, p. 78).

"As time ticks on, I assign it mythical, Arthurian legend, Lost City of Atlantis status" (James, 2012a, p. 80).

“I agree to the conditions, Angel; because you know best what my punishment ought to be; only – only – don’t make it more than I can bear!” (James, 2012a, p. 249)

The latter line above is from Thomas Hardy’s masterpiece *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891). Ana uses this quote when she returns the first edition series of the novel which has been given to her as a graduation present previously back to Christian. And using this line is quite revealing Christian’s personality from our paper’s point of view. Since, we know Angel Clare, is a freethinking son born into the family of a provincial parson and determined to set himself up as a farmer instead of going to Cambridge like Christian Grey who drops out Harvard University after 2 years education to start his own business. Angel represents a rebellious striving toward a personal vision of goodness, like Christian who is thirsty for causing pain in bed – “*he was so – barbarous*” (James, 2012a, p. 332) – yet does charities, donations and tries to feed the world as one can witness in the following passage:

“Our aim is to develop viable and ecologically sustainable methods of farming for third world countries; our ultimate goal is to help eradicate hunger and poverty across the globe. Over a billion people, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, live in abject poverty. Agricultural dysfunction is rife within these parts of the world and the result is ecological and social destruction. I have known what it’s like to be profoundly hungry. This is a very personal journey for me...” (James, 2012a, p. 237).

Angel is “a secularist who yearns to work for the honor and glory of man, rather than for the honor and glory of God in a more distant world”, which again reminds Grey who has nothing to do with God. He even says that God and he turned their backs on each other a long time ago and that God abandoned him. A typical young 19<sup>th</sup> century progressive, Angel sees human society as “a thing to be remolded

and improved, and he fervently believes in the nobility of man”. He rejects the values handed to him, and, alike Christian, sets off in search of his own in various spheres and ways. Angel’s love for Tess, “a mere milkmaid, and his social inferior is one expression of his disdain for tradition. This independent spirit contributes to his aura of charisma and general attractiveness that makes him the love object of all the milkmaids with whom he works at Talbot hays”. Christian in his turn renders the same role, as he tries to gain Ana’s love skipping the fact that she’s not at his social level, which grabs attention not only of the press but also of his family, especially his mother, Grace.

#### **2.4.4. Binary Oppositions and Strategies**

The story that unfolds in the *Fifty Shades* trilogy is presented by the numerous classic binary oppositions upon which it draws. As in a fairytale or a biblical parable, this is “a story about the attraction and struggle between good and evil, light and dark, the whole and the broken, the pure and the tainted”. In popular culture this actually is one of the most fascinating features to make the products well-known. Producing the feelings of recognition and of security; or comforting familiarity, these ideas resonate with many readers. More vivid binary oppositions that could be found in the text are: “Pleasure and pain, reward and punishment” (James, 2012a, p. 504); Christian’s past and his future, between which he chooses future as it seen in:

“I’ve lived in a bubble for years with nothing affecting me and not having to justify myself to anyone. My past and my future are colliding in a way I never thought possible. I never thought I had a future with anyone, Anastasia. You give me hope and have me thinking about all sorts of possibilities” (James, 2012b, p. 282).



It is worth mentioning Christian's flashbacks about the apple tree in his grandfather Theo Trevelyan's orchard. Supposedly, E.L. James has intentionally chosen the name "Theo" which means "god" in Greek ([www.lexico.com](http://www.lexico.com)). And his garden with all those trees reminds a reader "the Garden of Eden". It is interesting that the motif of the apple is used at the beginning of the trilogy in relation to the temptation, as Satan tempts Eve with the fruit of knowledge, this bringing corruption upon the humankind. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> novel of the trilogy, the apple mostly alludes to a paradisiacal space, induced by the memories of childhood with Grandpa Theo, or Anastasia scent, which delivers a paradise for Christian. "I bury my nose in her hair, overwhelmed by her intoxicating scent. It's reminiscent of happier times: an orchard in the fall" (James, 2017, p. 8). Once in his childhood Christian and Grandfather Theodore tricked the tree which gave bitter apples and used to be green, but now the apples are red and sweet. Apparently, the author wants to emphasize a tree being his life itself with bitter moments, but he chooses red sweet apples as a symbol of his new life with Ana. Christian uses a lot of adjectives involving apples and heaven while characterizing Ana as in: "Where is my happy place? My childhood in the orchard. Now my happy place is with Ana" (James, 2017, p. 292). In the line where Christian describes Ana, saying: "She tastes of heaven and home and fall and Ana." (James, 2015, p. 476) this fall is not represented as corruption, on the contrary, it symbolizes the fall into ecstasy.

The *Fifty Shades* trilogy, structurally and metaphorically, is full of pairs of opposites the ones familiar to the book lovers from fairytales, parables, and romantic novels. Powerful metaphors associate the female protagonist, Ana, with "innocence, light, virginity, and a healthy mentality". These contrast with the Neo-Byronic hero

type, Christian, who is presented as an experienced, dark figure who is sexually deviant and mentally traumatized. The narrative arc of the book follows Christian's [in both senses: literal and figurative] journey from the "darkness of wanting a purely sexual relationship with Ana, centered on controlling BDSM, to an apparently more loving relationship which includes lighter elements of BDSM" focusing mostly on pleasure and intimacy. This transformation, which Ana wishes for early in the narrative, is unfolded in the three volumes though perhaps in a different way than she imagines from the beginning.

As one reads the novel it can be told that James has done pretty much good job on creating the present-atmosphere with different strategies as the juxtaposing the main genre with other genres as epistolary. A traditional epistolary novel "written as a series of documents in the usual form of which are letters and diaries", or when a narrator wants the reader to be closer to them they can address to the reader directly in the novel. James in her turn uses modern-type of epistolary genre as messages, memos, checklists, calls, notes and emails in which the main female protagonist Anastasia could reveal her true feelings and disclose her inner self which aids their relationship take a step up: "[Ana], you have no problem being honest with me in print. Your emails always tell me exactly how you feel. Why can't you do that in conversation?" (James, 2012a, p. 288). Because she's afraid of him since she doesn't know what to expect from him and his mood-swings make her dizzy. Then she starts understanding Christian and tries to excuse him for his behavior since he has "had a grim upbringing, so that is why he's very closed, difficult to gauge".

Another strategy used towards both characters in their own narration is their being schizoid as one can see two personalities existing inside of their heads. To clarify, Anastasia and Christian practice their bipolar voices together or separately, whenever they're not sure about any concern.

“My subconscious peers over her half-moon specs and tuts disapprovingly, while my inner goddess slumbers on her chaise longue, out for the count” (James, 2012c, p. 41).

“There's hope, Grey, hope” (James, 2015, p. 136).

## **2.5. From BDSM to Hearts and Flowers**

The novel plagiarizing another plot has become incredibly successful and turned its author into yet another Cinderella, from rags to riches figure. Codruta Goşa comments on this, saying the reason of its worldwide popularity appears to be explicit, blatant, plentiful, and almost pornographic sex which though being a kind of sex that does not address itself to men, who might see it as belonging to the realm of female fantasy, it definitely addresses the dark side of women (2014, p. 75). E.L. James believes the books framed in this vein are inspirational and work for a directly functional purpose in aiding the readers to make their sexual lives better. After all, sex is born out of love, presented by an expert in the field and has as a consequence the materialization of a woman's most coveted wish: the power to rid him of his flaws and transform him into the partner of her dreams. The unexpected element of the novel is considered to be that “the shame of erotic fiction is largely in the imagination, and once people had read it, they feel happy to discuss it openly”. The sex scenes are so difficult to write, so it is the gear change rather than the sex itself. Obviously, it is extremely difficult to write a regular story spliced with sex. Just as it

would be difficult to tell a story interspersed with explicit sexual details. “E.L. James’s sex scenes are not incidental; they are the meat of the plot, the crux of the conflict, the key to at least one of and possibly both central characters”.

As one observes, the most frequent activity the protagonists indulge throughout the book is having sex. Even though much-favored activity can also be seen as a fight between, in Ana’s understanding common, regular, kind of sex and Christian’s BDSM kind of sex. The books are instantiations of two similar major types of conflict. The first one would be an individual against society: sadists are judged by mainstream society, so they have to go underground and guard their secrets carefully. Secondly, there is that kind of character against himself; the male protagonist is aware that what he is offering to his female partner is an unnatural, deviant kind of love and he does try hard not to hurt his loved one. “She doesn’t know the depths of my depravity, the darkness in my soul, the monster beneath – maybe I should leave her alone” (James, 2015, p. 545). Therefore, Christian Grey, again reminds the Byronic hero, since he is also a thwarted character who is unaware of his essential self and who restrains his inner dismay under a shell of sternness in order to mask his true self in the eyes of the community. For instance after the speech Christian gives at the graduation ceremony explains his preoccupation with feeding the world, Ana approaches his personality one more step closer: “Explains your food issues to me”. “Anastasia, I don’t want to go there at the moment” (James, 2012a, p. 239). Christian’s childhood trauma sets up “a narrative arc that covers purification through his taking of Ana’s virginity and a gradual return to the light of heteronormative sexual relations” (Harrison, Holm, 2013, p. 560). “I feel a weird pinching sensation deep inside me as he rips through my virginity. He stills, gazing

down at me, his eyes bright with ecstatic triumph” (James, 2012a, p. 117). The motif of corruption of innocence is reworked through Christian’s depraving Ana of her virginity, which would convey a conventional attitude towards innocence, but the true loss of innocence is revealed by the abusive and perverted way Christian learned sexuality. He has previously had a protracted affair with an older dominatrix, Elena, in which he’s been the submissive partner, but the relationship ends after her husband becomes aware of it which results in Christian’s desire to be the dominant partner in a new BDSM relationship. The journey of the protagonist “from the darkness of hardcore BDSM to the light of a sexual relationship, where BDSM routine and its rules are a way to intimacy and pleasure is illustrated so dramatically that it may be natural for a reader to lose sight of what is presumed in this narrative arc: it is strongly placed with the framework of the heterosexual matrix, whereas heterosexual BDSM relations stand for the limit of intelligibility with the text the most outrageous preference imaginable”. Christian’s development can be regarded as a “salvation story, but also as a story of normalization and disciplining into the heteronormative regime of his social context” (Harrison, Holm, 2013, p. 561).

It seems that both innocent Anastasia and, isolated from ‘normal’ world in a Byronic manner, Christian are looking for different things in their relationship: mysterious Grey is not looking for an intimacy or more profound emotions, he only wants the sexual, physical gratification of the relation, but even this aspect should be under his conditions and rules, which includes Anastasia’s obeying him while he is controlling her inside of the sadomasochism relationship; whilst Anastasia is looking for something deeper, more intimacy and emotional connection with Christian inside a healthy normal relationship. She reflects on the conditions of their relationship, and

although she is attracted by his exceptionality: “For the first time, I’m wishing he was – normal – wanting a normal relationship that doesn’t need a ten-page agreement, a flogger, and karabiners in his playroom ceiling” (James, 2012a, p. 199). Christian is initially careful by thwarting any romantic expectations that Ana could create. He even tries to warn her against himself, clearly telling her that he is not good for her. However, as the mutual attraction continues and they attempt to develop a relationship, Ana is adamant, claiming that she wants more than just sexual affair which challenges Christian since he has never experienced a relationship with ‘hearts and flowers’. Christian often remembers pleasurable and simpler times when his previous relationships used to be dictated by a set of rules that were followed. But it’s different with Anastasia, since she has never signed the contract he wanted. He realizes that Ana has had him on his toes since they met and probably that’s the reason why he likes her this much, because Ana has dragged him into the light; Ana is the one who loves him in spite of his past, in spite of his wrongdoings; Ana is the woman who’s agreed to be his for the rest of her life and share the unconditional love with her “monster”. And Christian in his turn ready to try ‘hearts and flowers’ in order to be with Ana.

## **2.6. Christian Grey: reworked Byronic Hero**

How can one prove Christian Grey as a neo-Byronic hero? First of all, as it is mentioned in the previous chapter, one can apply the characteristics that are revealed while searching for the traditional Byronic hero through P. Thorslev’s and P. Golban’s studies and the ones common, Christian Grey could easily be one of Lord Byron’s characters for his being dark, intelligent, emotionally and intellectually

tortured and traumatized, given to self-destructive impulses, seductive and sexually appealing. His capacity of having such deep feelings surprises him. As he says: “I didn’t know I was capable of feeling like this” (James, 2017, p. 291). Moreover, he is also a social outcast, as the Byronic hero, with a small exception of not because of the society he exists in, but because that is his own choice being away as possible. This is a little different from the one Byron was trying to impose. Christian Grey though is a Neo-Byronic hero who is on his life journey can now make the turns to every side of the road. In the eyes of people and for himself obviously he attempts to be the right guy by following the norms and rules, yet when it comes to his sexual life he prefers rebelliousness against the society’s moral codes.

**Table 1**

| <b>The Traditional Byronic Hero</b>                                                       | <b>Christian Grey</b>                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| arrogant/ above-average in almost every way/ superior to normal people/ intelligent       | Yes, unpredictable figure with his pride                                                  |
| depressive/ traumatized/ thwarted/ tormented/ emotionally and intellectually tortured     | Yes, especially in his early childhood.                                                   |
| mysterious/ gloomy/ isolated                                                              | Yes, mysterious past, secret sins, perverse desires in his isolated castle aka penthouse. |
| prone to bursts of anger/ impulsive/ unpredictable/ moody/ highly emotional/ manipulative | Yes, unpredictable in all ways.                                                           |
| given to self-destructive impulses/ spiritually doubtful                                  | Yes, he thinks he is not worthy of love.                                                  |
| seductive/ sexually appealing/ passionate                                                 | Yes, he works hard on his appearance.                                                     |
| violent                                                                                   | Only in bed.                                                                              |
| decidedly prone to substance abuse                                                        | Only when he was a teenager.                                                              |
| self-aware                                                                                | Before he met Ana.                                                                        |
| Outcast/ rebel/ misfit                                                                    | Yes, the King of Misfits (acc. to Ana)                                                    |

|                                               |                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| his origins are usually humble                | Yes, crack-whore mother, Maggot – birth name. |
| often he is an orphan brought up by strangers | Adopted by the Greys.                         |
| escapist                                      | Yes, he tries to forget his past.             |
| positioned in the dualism of existence        | Yes, BDSM and Vanilla Sex.                    |
| inadaptable                                   | No, Ana makes him “whole”.                    |

One can observe ‘grayishness’ in everything Christian does, better to say his whole life at the moment is gray, not clear, obscure as it is seen in the line: “Christian Grey has a sad side” (James, 2012a, p. 124). As we know, he lives with his past – the timeline before he meets Ana – but when Ana appears in his life, ironically, by chance he starts changing without realizing his ‘dark color’ towards ‘light color’, a fact which makes him unsure and gray. Without becoming aware of his feelings towards Ana, Christian eventually falls in love with her, which makes him vulnerable and insecure since he’s never felt before the way he feels for Anastasia. As long as all of the three books of the set is considered one may say that in the 1<sup>st</sup> book when the character is being disclosed both psychologically and emotionally with his inner ‘evil’, whereas in the second book Ana somehow makes him rethink over what Christian thought was right for him:

“Perhaps I can do this vanilla thing.  
 She can be really difficult.  
 And the irony is – I think I like it.  
 She makes me question myself.  
 She makes me question everything.  
 She makes me feel alive” (James, 2017, p. 149).

At this point he starts changing both emotionally and spiritually, reflecting that “She’s dragged me into the light and I quite like it” (James, 2017, p. 496).



Finally, in the third book one can witness how she manages to take him to the unknown, but bright future as a family. “I’d thought that relationship with Ana was impossible, but now the future now seems full of possibility” (James, 2015, p. 321). *This* isn’t gained easily and “Aphrodite” (James, 2017, p. 151), Ana, has enough troubles and doubts about Christian and their relationship. The most shocking part of all is the Contract she has to sign in order to be with him. Ana expresses her bewilderment, as she says: “And he comes with a bloody contract, a flogger, and a whole world of issues” (James, 2012a, p. 176). This reminds one of the story of Faust, the Luciferian contract or in another way “Bargain contract” which can be considered as “a pact with the Devil”, or “an agreement with Evil, in the form of the Devil with the paradoxical intention of achieving a higher Good, that is otherwise obstructed”. In this case both the higher Good and the Devil is Christian, he is the one who wants Ana to sign in blood and be *his* only, with her soul and body. Ana would think about the offer, since she desires to get what is for her impossible, Christian, the higher Good. Faustian is Ana’s constant for “more” to the degree that she manages to ensnare Christian in wishing for “more” himself. She also cannot talk about the contract to anybody, even her best-friend Kate. As it is known the nature of an agreement is a risky accommodation, so Ana looks through the agreement thoroughly and finds striking and stupid some points of it. Christian himself has some Faustian features, as yearning for Ana “more than earthly meat and drink” ([www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com)) in his life. This time, “more” transcends the banality of a simple desire for somebody, gaining instead an aura of spiritual accomplishment and wholeness.

As one can realize E.L. James grabs a traditional Byronic hero and dresses him up with her own style of clothes, by putting him in various situations adding some of her own colors, through the elements of religion, myth, and erotica. So, as it's mentioned above, Christian Grey embodies many characteristics of a true Byronic hero. As for today there are 3 books originally narrated by Anastasia Steele and 2 books are narrating the same story by Christian Grey. As our purpose is to reveal the Neo-Byronic hero as represented by Christian Grey, it is better to use all 5 of the books, still called trilogy as referring to the original narrator. The author makes it even better by writing the novel from Christian's perspective, since without any doubts so many questions are left unanswered after the original narration. Being in Christian's head gives the readers a chance to learn him way better as seeing him as an angry man; who still has that frightened little boy inside; who can't get close to anyone; who is terrified from the idea of being touched by anyone. Christian wouldn't sleep with anyone – except his “goddess” Ana (James, 2017, p. 145), for fear that they might touch him in their sleep, and his need to tie up women so they won't be able to put their hands on him during sex. By reading the story from both sides the readers can make their own conclusions and understand them by being closer to their favorite characters. As a result, we can say Christian Grey has the features inherent to the Byronic hero and his antecedents, as the Man of Feeling or the Hero of Sensibility for having the capacity of feelings as love or pervasive melancholy; the Child of Nature for being aggressive; the Gothic villain for his physical appearance; and some other features close to the ones that fit Satan, Faust and so on. In order to state Christian's being a new type or another hypostasis for the Byronic hero the best thing would be to rely on the definition P. Golban uses in his

work *A history of the Bildungsroman* (2018), saying that the Byronic Hero “who is *rebellious and escapist*, positioned in the *dualism of existence* because his spirit is defined by *inadaptability*, a constant soul search, his reality “torn by antagonisms, never finding peace”, and haunted by doubts and unexplained desires” (p. 175) which plays an enormous role in our research. As it is revealed above, Christian Grey is a rebel – for dropping Harvard, as a refusal of obedience or order; he is positioned in the dualism of existence – BDSM and Vanilla sex or normal life; he is seeking escapism – as he tries to forget his past; but he *is not* inadaptable, since Ana makes him “whole”. In other words, adaptable rebel, Christian Grey, being in the dualism of existence, abandoning his former form of escapism, finds a new one in his relationship with Anastasia.

“I’m on the edge of something unknown, a plain where the horizon disappears and the territory is new and unexplored”.

“It’s terrifying”.

“It’s confusing”.

“It’s exciting”.

“What are you doing to me, Ana?”

“Where are you leading me?” (James, 2017, p. 104)

As it was discussed in the previous pages, the traditional Byronic hero is not changing his life-style and views, but our character is Neo-Byronic and is adapting for a new life and, as it seems, he doesn’t mind for some changes in his life. Having a monotonous life, Christian Grey was mechanical before Ana, but now he finds the meaning of his life. He wonders at how, in Ana’s presence he can run through an entire spectrum of emotions, since he has been able to separate the different aspects of his life, his work, family, sex life. But since he met Ana, his life has become colorful and out of his control.

One can see the different stages Christian goes through as he reaches happiness with Anastasia. It hasn't been easy for him either, since he's not used to the life he's being invited to. Therefore, at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> novel Christian accepts the relationship and agrees on trying it as ordinary people. It is gained only as a result of immense pain he experiences when Anastasia leaves him after too tough BDSM incident, as appears to be reunited in the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of the trilogy. As it is seen in the classical popular romance narratives, here there is a principle of 'boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy get girl,' which leads the following two volumes focus on their relationship development. Naming her the best therapy, Christian believes that Ana is the one who makes him forget everything and her name itself can heal his wounds as it is a prayer on his lips.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume, Christian and Ana are being stalked by one of Grey's former submissives and the fear of losing Anastasia brings him to the conclusion of moving in together without realizing or thinking about the consequences. The result of this would be him asking Ana to marry him. He goes through a new passage and feels himself as a new being, a new Christian Grey. Therefore, as one can see at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the trilogy Christian accepts the marriage as being in the right way of healing.

"Happy?"

"Yes. She makes me happy".

"It's a new feeling. I've never described myself in those terms"  
(James, 2017, p. 164).

The 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of the trilogy brings out the situation of Ana's pregnancy, a fact that shocks both of them, but especially shatters Christian, as he is afraid he will

not be a good father and after Ana is being threatened by her former boss who manages to nearly kill her. At the end of the last volume, Christian gradually recovers from his childhood trauma and undergoes some changes in his sexual transformation where some “kinky fuckery” is left, yet it doesn’t dominate their relationship, as he adapts to the normative style of loving “vanilla sex”, monogamous marriage and embraces parenthood. And now at this stage of his life Christian is excited for the new possibilities that future will bring to them.



## CONCLUSION

The archetype of the Byronic hero has remained popular and relevant throughout Western literature and entertainment since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century where were countless examples of Byronic heroes including the protagonists of nearly all of Byron's epic poems, particularly *Manfred*, *Don Juan*, and *Childe Harold Pilgrimage*.

During the research it is shown that the Byronic Hero is a contentious figure which makes argue the critics and scholars on the concept of personification of Lord Byron himself in his famous figure or the poet simply created the legendary heroic typology. Thus, it is revealed that the Byronic Hero is a kind of outlander and solitaire who has no unification with society, its regulations, and any kind of authority. It is been revealed that this fascinating hero type which makes women breathless is fond of his personal freedom and strict concerning his own values of privacy. He refuses to bow to the common codes and rules who can easily set up his own conventions showing his rebellious spirit and power. At the same time, he is a self-reliant figure who knows what he is doing very well, and therefore, he is never fatalist, since he is the creator of his own universe. He knows taking responsibility and burden for his own mistakes, sins, and actions and as a result of this situation, he is self-destructive.

Obtaining, relevant to the Byronic hero, features, Christian Grey is represented as a Neo-Byronic hero in the trilogy. Through analysis of the male protagonist of the trilogy, from the perspective of the concept of the Byronic hero, one can conclude that associated with experience, darkness, sexually deviant and

mentally traumatized, Christian Grey is on his way to be healed by Anastasia Steele's unconditional love.



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