

# Byronic hero

People



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Byronic Hero – Romantic Hero – Tragic Hero – Anti-Hero During the Romantic Era, a hybrid of the Romantic Hero evolved out of the writings of Lord Byron and the combination tragic hero/romantic hero/anti hero characterization of many of the protagonists in Gothic Novels. Frankenstein is considered one of the Gothic Novels that developed out of the Romantic Era. The “heroes” in Frankenstein could fit into the Byronic Hero category or be classified as Romantic, Tragic, or Anti Heroes.

Lady Caroline Lamb, a former lover of Lord Byron’s called him “mad, bad, and dangerous to know.” This epitaph stuck as a way to describe a Byronic Hero in literature as well. See if Victor Frankenstein fits the description of the Byronic Hero or if he embodies more of the traits of the other heroes. What about Captain Walton and the Monster?

Characteristics of The Byronic Hero:

- high level of intelligence and perception
- cunning and able to adapt
- sophisticated and educated
- self-critical and introspective mysterious, magnetic and charismatic
- struggling with integrity
- power of seduction and sexual attraction
- social and sexual dominance
- emotional conflicts, bipolar tendencies, or moodiness
- a distaste for social institutions and norms
- being an exile, an outcast, or an outlaw
- "dark" attributes not normally associated with a hero
- disrespect of rank and privilege

- a troubled past
- cynicism
- arrogance
- self-destructive behavior

Characteristics of The Romantic Hero: Birth and class are unimportant: the individual transcends society

- The battle is internal: it is a psychological war won by the “courage to be me”
- Moral codes are eccentric—heroes make their own rules
- Passions are outside of individual control
- Self knowledge is valued more than physical strength or endurance (physical courage is de-valued)
- The hero is moody, isolated, and introspective
- Loyalty is to a particular project and to a community of like-minded others

Characteristics of The Tragic Hero:

- has strong extraordinary character of noble birth (aristocrat or royalty)
- possesses a flaw in character which is his or her weakness
- Great Weakness (obsession, lust, greed, desire) leads to ultimate downfall
- has a moment of Tragic Choice which spirals into the downfall of hero
- Downfall always includes death in a traditional tragedy
- Downfall also brings about far-reaching catastrophe: many deaths, downfall of family, kingdom or society

- Tragic Hero has potential to turn into an Anti-Hero

#### Characteristics of The Anti-hero

- foil to the mission or life of the hero possesses a sharp mind or cunning nature
- often possesses superhuman strength or power
- may be profoundly evil
- may be misunderstood and have potential for good
- may have been wronged and bent on revenge
- may elicit no sympathy from reader
- may elicit some sympathy from reader
- may possess strong ambition to succeed or desire for power
- lives on fringes of society
- may be considered ugly or unattractive or possesses/obtained some physical scar, deformity or imperfection that may have lead to their evil behavior