

Master-Slave Dialectics and Women Characters in Three Dramatic Verses of Lord Byron

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Abstract

This article aims at illuminating the portrayal of women in three selected dramatic verses of Lord Byron according to master-slave dialectics of Hegel. This theory is based on the consciousness of being a master or a slave within three stages of confrontation, recognition, and acceptance. The process by which one perceives self as master or as slave reflects the conscious and unconscious knowledge and experiences one may get or reach to. Master-slave dialectics refers to two particular key terms which are lordship/bondage and dependency/independency. This paper will discuss the characters of Marina in “The two Foscari”, Myrrha in “Sardanapalus” and Josephine in “Werner” as the three significant female voices in Byron’s dramatic verses. Using the framework of master-slave dialectics the paper will show how the women, while considered as the inferior gender in the Romantic era, actually emerge as superior in the selected works. The discussion will also reveal how these women characters of Byron are presented as having the courage to speak up, having the ability to confront the complexities of their situations, establishing some forms of authority over these situations and ultimately, directly or indirectly, having the power to influence the male characters around them. In this way, the woman as slave rises to the position of master of the situation.

Keywords: gender, Hegelian master-slave dialectics, recognition, romanticism, Lord Byron

1. Introduction

The early nineteenth century, when Lord Byron was highly read, was the beginning of the time when British society was mainly and largely patriarchal. In other words, the history line belonged to the male gender and to the patriarchal traditions during the Romantic period in so far as even the female writers were supposed to write about the topics which were favored by masculine societies (Curren, 1993). Women were expected to write about feminine issues such as love, domesticity, and sentimental notions because the public demanded that way and when a woman writer could receive any praise from the well-known male author of the time, she could likely celebrate her great achievement (Roger, 1982). In addition, women in the 18th and 19th centuries were considered as consumers who contributed to the growing economic system due to the development of economy and industry (Dabby, 2010).

However the novels and others works of female writers that were popular in the later part of the 18th century brought about significant changes. These female writers portrayed women as being capable of reasoning and acquiring knowledge and experience by themselves as much as the men could. They altered their social role and consciousness along with their perspectives. Yet the changes they brought about, came at a price in the way they affected their careers; for example Polwhele (1999) in “The Unsexed Female” refers to Wollstonecraft’s Vindication as being evil and to the writers who got her effects as being vain and non-feminine and immoral (Polwhele, 1999).

In the Romantic period, women were depicted either as the object of love, emotion and inspiration like goddesses and metaphysical concepts or as human beings. In the former type of depiction, women are a part of a poet’s questing and longing for idealization, self-satisfaction or self-reflection. Romantic poets, although originating from male-centered conditions, tried to bring women into their works mostly through the female-male relationship. This depiction owes its change to the French Revolution, which was seeking human rights, liberty, and equality and fraternity. However such depiction was merely a hint at consideration for women.

"Vindication of Rights of Women" (1775) is a brilliant voice to reverberate the fact that women are the subject and they must be educated and independent. Mary Wollstonecraft acknowledges that those women who are amazed with their physical appearance and are irrationally involved with fashion are in fact subjected to slavery cause weakness to them and make them blurred regarding being practical in social affairs (Wollstonecraft, 1775). Studying *Vindication* shows how women were treated and presented in that time. She emphasizes on Women's education as a way of attaining independence (Wollstonecraft, 1775). Benjamin Dabby (2010), pointing to the importance of education for women, introduces a historical perspective towards women's progress; she avows that according to the history of British Literature, women have been capable of accomplishing public careers like men despite the fact that men have been referred to as the "history's real actors" (Dabby, 2010).

In a broader sense, women and gender have been the focus of and connected with various fields of study. They are related to the way females are presented in certain times or literature in different societies, cultures and religions. This presentation can be the reflection of what society and culture dictate and why it is claimed that gender is a concept or a reality that has established itself in the historical, social and cultural construction. Hence, when gender is looked at, social, historical, cultural and political constructions and classes are concerned (Holmes, 2007).

Regarding the assumption of disclosing women as inferior, A. Baker (2005) in his research discusses the connection of verbal activity and gender in the sense that language reflects the identity of the speaker and in case of women, their language says they are sensitive (Baker, 2005). The writer further continues that expectations and social atmosphere are influential in deciding individuality of a particular gender. Such expectation if already established and institutionalized, introduces men as independent, strong, assertive and individual while women are said to be interdependent and easily affected by the opinions of others (Baker, 2005). It is also stated that the cognitive ability is attributed to masculinity as men are stronger in assertion and expression (Baker, 2005).

In another study in another study, violence against women is condemned and the writers assert that "the cultural context reinforces the ideology that a wife must accept and tolerate any punishment or beating from her husband" (Maarof, Hashim, Yusof & Mydin, 2012). Such an irrational submissive attitude was also questioned by Meredith Conti (2010) as well. She points to the Romantic female playwrights who gradually began to interrogate "contemporary sociopolitical structures and gender roles..." (Conti, 2010). She also mentions how women tried to break what has been woven in "the social fabric of the past" in order to gain and to assert their autonomy (Conti, 2010).

Accordingly, in past studies concerned with gender, Lord Byron's works have been the source of many and various interpretations as well. Lord Byron was the male poet whose relationship with women was quite complicated and ambiguous. He created verses in which women are functional and effective despite the note he made about women that "[writing women] now and then are very provoking-still as authoresses they can do no great harm" (Fischerová as quoted from BI & J VI., 2008).

The women of his works are the points of discussion in a few studies. Some of them refer to women as the symbol of love as Byron's theme of love prevails in the poems. In another study by Gina Kang (2009), Byron's women are compared to Wordsworth's women. According to the writer, Byron created beautiful women who were dead or doomed to die and as a result the hero suffers. In other words, women of his works are a kind of scale by which the depth and density of the hero's suffering and grief are expressed (Kang, 2009). In another work, Byron's feelings for women and homosexuality are discussed (Cochran, 2012).

Such studies show that the women in Byron's works have not been considered through the true identity they possess. Most of the studies pay attention to the idea of sex rather than gender. It must be noted that it is the culture which defines gender as a term and subsequently divides it into two major divisions of feminine and masculine. Furthermore, gender clarifies responsibilities, roles and qualities in a society. (Jasmani et al., 2012).

2. The Master-Slave Dialectic of Hegel and the Three Women Characters

The conceptual framework which is applied for the present article is the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectics which works with the concepts of consciousness and recognition. It includes two people who are struggling unconsciously which means that two people face each other and they want to establish their identity: one tries to be superior and thus the other will be the inferior one.

These two entities possess identities and they play certain roles which are, according to Hegel, recognizable and distinguishable when the two of them interact and act mutually. By emphasizing on the term the two, Hegel means that if every time one side is solely observed, the idea won't be determinable. This clarifies why one can objectify the self, as one is observing and contacting the other self which indicates that one can understand the

self-based on the understanding that comes out of the other's understanding. For instance, the slave finds himself/herself a slave because of the presence of the master. Therefore, Houlgate (2003) indicates that I and others are associated in the sense that when others completely recognize and confirm the I, then the phenomenon of self-understanding is taking place (Houlgate, 2003). This suggests that the Master perceives himself as a master and subsequently he gives order and applies his/her power while dealing with the slave. And because the assumed slave takes the orders and does the jobs, he is subjugated by the master.

For elucidating the two mentioned beings Hegel is quoted by B. Leitch (2001), stating that master and slave are opposite sides and one of them possesses a dependent consciousness while the other one possesses an independent one. The nature of former is to give service to the later as the nature of the later is for itself (Leitch, 2001). These words make the two sides' consciousness clear that the master commands the slave and the slave surely obeys and such activities shape the first level of understanding of self for each one.

Furthermore, Houlgate (2003) refers to Hegel's statements stating that the domination of master over slave is indirectly taking place by means of what the slave needs to be dependent on it (Houlgate, 2003). In this regard, struggle is a phenomenon which exists within this complicated relationship. The struggle of master and slave may both be physical and a mental phenomenon which particularly designates what consciousness gets through to be self-conscious. This moving from consciousness toward self-consciousness is the next level of the recognition part and it shows the instant when the slave's understands reveals master's dependency. The slave finds himself stronger than the master as he can be independent expressing the significance of self-recognition.

Margaret Kohn (2005) in her study, emphasizes on the assertion by Hegel that while there is a kind of violence and force practiced from one self-conscious towards the other self-conscious, the mutual recognition is taking place resulting in the submission of one to the other person which clarifies the position of each self (Kohn, 2005). It means that the slave chooses to be a slave rather than to die and hence he accepts the lordship of the master. According to Hegel, the existence of both slave and master is a real phenomenon while their consciousnesses are observed (Hegel, 1967). Once accepted as realities, the two consciousnesses as the master and the slave interact in a mutual way and interdependently. "The consciousness for the-Master is not an independent but a dependent, consciousness" (Hegel, 1967).

The reason for this dependency is that the master is unable to do the job himself and he is consciously dependent on the slave. Thus he is not "certain of existence-for-self as the truth; rather, his truth is the inessential consciousness and the inessential action of the latter [the slave]" (Hegel, 1967). It denotes that the master's consciousness is a truth that is defined by the slave's consciousness and although the defined role and consciousness is being slave but it defines and highlights the consciousness and role of the master.

The master sees himself as a dependent one and looks at the slave as a dependent and bonded human being insisting on the idea that the master is obviously not able to observe the "true values in the slave's recognition of him" (Houlgate, 2003). This idea supports what has been mentioned earlier about mutual interaction as Hegel thinks that one-sided recognition will not be complete and reliable (Hegel, 1967).

What master intends to do is consuming which is the result of a slave's work and labor by which he is made simultaneously dependent. This is the whole idea which represents the slave as free in a self-conscious manner by means of labor he/she performs. Once more Houlgate (2003) clarifies Hegel's idea that "the whether being recognized as a slave or not, the slave treasures his/her freedom despite the act of labor he/she must perform (Houlgate, 2003). It indicates that the master does not intend to declare the superiority of slave and neither does the slave; however the slave becomes conscious of such freedom of dependency and perceives his self-consciousness. Besides, labor maintains the slave's life which guarantees his/her freedom and independency.

Utilizing the Master-slave dialectic, the analysis will bring to light the true identity and entity of women portrayed by Byron. Hence, the argument of this article will revolve around thesis question of how these women are explained according to master-slave dialectics and whether they are the inferior gender. Adapting Hegel's philosophical perspective to analyze the three women characters will help to clarify how male writer assumed about their presentation in a literary work and how they were self-consciously presented.

2.1 Master-Slave Dialectics and Josephine of "Werner"

In the first act of "Werner", Josephine is said to be from another place. She refers to herself as "The foreign daughter of a wandering exile" (I, I, 269). She married Werner against Werner's father's will. Such a description presents Josephine in an ambivalent situation; on the one hand she is decisive and has done things according to her will and on the other hand she has been pushed to marry. On page 280, Fritz talks about their marriage that:

"His Sire made

A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter:
Noble, they say, too; but no match for such
A house as Siegendorf's ..." (p. 280).

In addition on page 277, she declares that she was born into a noble family:

"But I, born nobly also, from my father's
Kindness was taught a different lesson, Father!"

She maintains that she is conscious about the self and her decisions. She adds:

"Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty but as
Millions of myriads feel it-cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou mightiest have earned thy bread, as thousands earn it;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes" (p. 262).

The lines above show that she understands the time and the place. Her superiority of thought over Werner's is concise. Josephine confronts the reality in a precise manner. And, hence, her recognition is perceivably valuable. She is flexible and thoughtful, which is based on Hegel's definition; she is the master comparing to Werner. These lines make her appear as a free person who does not have any unconscious bond to any person. She is highly critical about exercising power over the poor and believes that men in power do not distribute justice but poverty and vice:

"I fain would shun these scenes, too oft repeated,
Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still - the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tattered splendor. What a state of being!" (p. 276).

Josephine does not see this kind of authority as worthless as it is insolence and slavery. According to her such a situation does not distribute the culture of splendor and nobility but vice and misery. Then she compares her homeland and describes it in this way:

"In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
All these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where such herb
Was in itself a meal, and very nice
Rained, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving

His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
 Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
 Oppressive than an emperor's jeweled purple" (p. 276)

She presents her homeland as the land of equality and kindness where even the hard days are nice and less oppressive. Her picture and words reveal her consciousness. She is conscious of the fact that the society in which masters do not see the people and consider them as their slaves would not be a noble one and the result would be rage and poverty and tyranny.

She is critical of what the terms master and lord signify. Her recognition of having authority over the situation and self is revealed through these lines as she thinks that if someone exercises power over weak and poor people, it does not mean the one is the master and possesses authority. It also does not suggest that the others are under the ruler's control. According Josephine, it is the lord who needs the others 'support.

Josephine seems logical about her situation; it is indicative of the fact that she perceives her current identity and situation consciously. , She plays the role of a perfect and sympathetic wife to Werner and a mother to Ulric. She believes that struggling ends in fortune.

The Werner/Josephine pattern shows the master/slave interpretation. Josephine as the woman character of the play expresses more about being free than about having bondage. She is from Italy and if compared to Werner's homeland, she may represent the west which denotes the superiority of western thought. She is not lost within the family relationship and power struggle. However she is obedient and submissive and she is following the stereotype of the women model of the time.

2.2 Master-Slave Dialectics and Marina of "The Two Foscari"

Marina is the second character involved within the master-slave dialectics. She is Jacopo's wife who is referred to as the "high-born dame" by Memmo (I, I, 204). She is precisely direct, brave and exact as well as clear. Marina loves her husband and she keeps on trying to be close to him and to defend him. Hence she assumes that she has every right to order and command as a master:

"This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
 Of the Duke's son, the innocent Duke's son,
 And they shall hear this!" (I, I, 271-273)

Although she knows about the circumstance her husband has been through, she is determined and courageous to follow and to support him even in exile. Hence, in the lines above, she insists on the name of the Duke and the fact that she is having an important role in the palace. She addresses herself as strong and as diligent:

"We all must bear our tortures. I have not
 Left barren the great house of Foscari,
 Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
 I have endured as much in living life
 To those who will succeed them, as they can
 In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
 And yet they wrung me till I could have shrieked,
 But I did not; for my hope was to bring forth
 Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears" (I, I, 238-245).

These lines show her as a thoughtful and tolerant woman. While the typical women of noble origin and of wealth were living in luxury and presenting feminine gestures, Marina depicts a kind of deep concern and consideration about the outside and inside matters and issues. She is a fighter. When she expresses her intention about the Ten and her husband, Memmo says that they will refuse her; she responds:

"Tis their duty
 To trample] trample??] On all human feelings, all
 Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
 The fiends who will one day requite them in

Variety of torturing!..." (I, I, 261-264).

She is abrupt and consciously attentive of the words and situation. When the Doge says that his son has caused disrespect toward the Doge and the family, she defends her husband and says that Jacopo has been loyal to both family and country and no one like him exists with such a passion that may never be false or deceiving. She defends Jacopo consciously. She is independent from any power. She takes the liberty to speak freely and harshly. And then she continues:

"I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dishonored;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did" (II, I, 163-165).

She believes that Venice has been disrespectful toward his son despite all appropriate tasks done for the country. Marina refers to Jacopo as noble and loyal either dead or alive. The way she talks and argues with the Doge reflects her courage and fearlessness. Such idea presents her as an independent character that would not kneel for the established power and rules. Following the defense of her husband, Marina addresses the Doge as a "Tyrant":

"Tis ye who are all traitors, Tyrant!-ye!
Did you but love your Country like this victim
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt" (II, I, 166-170).

Marina says such in order to let the Doge realize that he is full of fear and he is unconscious about it. Doge is mesmerized by the physical crown and the luxury and he is unable to understand and perceive the truth about self and environment.

Marina does not believe in nobility which is by blood; in other words, she does not assume the noble person to be such because of blood and of heritage. She challenges Loredano for this and the fact that having slaves and workers would not help the nobility issue. She courageously declares:

"Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And masked nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and drowning,
Your dungeons next to the palace roofs, or under
The water's level; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions,
Your Bridge of Sighs, your strangling chamber, and
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem
The beings of another and worse world!" (II, I, 299-311)

Marina means that if one attempts to spread the waves of fear and suppression by execution, tax, spying, strangling chamber and torturing devices, one will not have power and will not be able to exercise authority and cannot make a claim upon nobility. Such actions confirm the brutality and ignobility of such a person, which make him/her the slave of self. She continues:

"Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know ye;
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him - you did so, in so dealing

With him. Then what have I to fear from you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?" (II, I, 312-317)

Marina acknowledges her fearfulness through these lines and the fact that it is her true nature not to submit to the power. She consciously shows the characteristics of a lord which comes from the true perception of self. In Act III, moreover, she opposes Loredano boldly; she refers to him as worse and dark as the dungeon; even the reptiles in the dungeon are more "honest" (III, I, 264). Marina speaks consciously and she embraces the consequences. Such act makes her the master of self and the other.

However, in the same Act III, when she challenges Loredano, he considers her as the weak person because of gender idea. That shows how he is inferior; he says:

"Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege" (III, I, 267).

When he asks her how nobler you are, Marina clarifies this concept quite succinctly. She makes it related to the idea of generosity. She argues that it is coming from the blood and those like Loredano's ancestors tried to attach themselves to these ideas but they are deeply dark and rotten. She says that Loredano's hate is rooted in her blood. When Jacopo tries to stop her, she does not fear about revealing her true resentment of Loredano. Marina is highly superior because she is sharp and fearless about the truth. Her perception about her and the others is widely open and vast; she is conscious and aware about her and the others. She calls Loredano the Devil's servant. She adds:

"...See how he shrinks from me!
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit;
They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he live, for him the very worst
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His temper's" (III, I, 313-321).

She says that Loredano is afraid of her and her words seem to make a hole in his heart. She admits that she will not fear if Loredano decides about their destiny. These words by Marina are significantly strong and profound in terms of presenting the idea of gender. The female is generally considered as the inferior, controlled and dependent; however, Marina is showing qualities of a true master whose decisiveness, clarity and sharpness prove it.

Later on, she calls Loredano a felon who is:

"The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone" (III, I, 336-338).

She addresses Loredano as the one who must be imprisoned because prison is the most suitable place for him to dwell.

When talking about Jacopo and Marina's children, Loredano claims that they are, actually, the Country's children and not theirs. He said that Marina can relate herself to them because of maternal things. The response Marina gives makes Loredano change the subject; she says:

"That is,
In all things painful. If they're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die
To me to bury and to mourn; but if
They live, they'll make you soldiers, senators,
Slaves, exiles - what you will; or if they are

Females with portions, brides and bribes for nobles!

Behold the State's care for its sons and mothers!" (III, I, 389-395).

She presents her sons as ones who are nobles, practical and significant. She does not reject the motherhood qualities and moreover she refers to her sons as the ones who bring about the glory to the country. She says that those who serve the country and the welfare of the people are true masters and nobles because they provide motions and changes to the country.

2.3 Master-Slave Dialectics and Myrrha of "Sardanapalus"

The female character in the third dramatic verse, "Sardanapalus" is Myrrha. As Sardanapalus' lover and despite the fact of her being aware of his wife, Myrrha possesses inspirational and emotion quality towards the King. She always obeys the king as a submissive slave. The relationship between Myrrha and Sardanapalus is a significant one as it does not only highlight gender issue but also it points to the superiority of West over the East. Coming from Greece, the country known for its rationality, philosophers and thinkers, she presents thoughtfulness, suggesting Lord Byron's awareness of essentialism regarding West and East.

Myrrha's origin is not accidental. Byron introduces her as a Greek woman to emphasize on the universality of Western strength and wisdom while Sardanapalus is an Eastern king and he is portrayed as being fragile, indecisive and vacillated. This superiority of homeland makes Myrrha consciously disapprove when someone criticizes her country. She is presented as courageous and fearless which according to her is a matter of being a Greek: This idea is reflected in act I, scene ii where she strongly acknowledges that being a Greek and being afraid of death are two extremes.

The emotional attachment which Sardanapalus expresses to her is highly extreme as he claims he would abdicate and would spend his life with her and in seclusion. His words present Myrrha in a positively powerful position. Subsequently Sardanapalus expresses the similitude of profound dark feeling regarding losing the kingdom and Myrrha and the idea that living a simple life with Myrrha will be much more pleasant than living in the castle. (I, II, 609-611). And also, he admits that losing the kingdom will be emotionally easier for him than losing Myrrha while describing her as a vast realm.

This kind of affection for Myrrha reflects his unconscious dependency as he relies on Myrrha's strength of mind and character. Myrrha's qualities are self-consciously strong and she reveals much more observant outlook towards the subjects than Sardanapalus does. Her words make Sardanapalus thinking about situations in which he is required to be a subject: which will make him a commander and the common people will be aware of his authoritative words. (I, II, 712-715).

The king is told by her to practice lawful rules among his people; otherwise people won't deign. As Myrrha assiduously makes him know the condition, she exhibits her confidence despite the fact that she is merely a slave. Accordingly she believes that the existing affection would probably be the reason for making the king aware of vices and truth and for maintaining her freedom and dependency. In act I, scene ii, she states that her feeling towards Sardanapalus is the slave's love and the fact that this love is the key to her freedom.

However her presence is not welcome for all those ones associated with the king both for her gender and her social strata. Pania condemns her presence as "a single female" to be with "sovereign" at the last moments of Sardanapalus' life and describes it as being shameful (V, I, 505-507). Yet she possesses a special place because of Sardanapalus' attention.

Her loyalty to the king goes further than common matter to the point that she rejects to escape and prefers to stay and loses her life. Although Sardanapalus is getting close to end of his life and his reign, he is persistently referred to as a king by Myrrha. Hence she is promulgated as being free and even she deserves to receive the throne (IV, I, 236).

The dramatic and tragic ending of the dramatic verse demonstrates Myrrha as a lord. She climbs up the pyre along with the king and displays her self-consciousness of not submitting to the rebels.

Observing Myrrha within the Hegelian master-slave dialectics exhibits her aspects as a master and as an independent woman. Through the three phases of confrontation, recognition and acceptance, Myrrha showed that she is a self-conscious slave which, precisely, makes her a slave. During the confrontation phase with the superior male king, she submits and serves him. She, in fact, gets her freedom as serving and working makes her independent. Sardanapalus, despite being a king depends on her services and help.

After confrontation, recognition made Myrrha understand her qualities in association with being independent and a master. She is the one whose thinking and plans are reliable which makes the King trust her. In the last act, she

is seen in a life-changing situation in which she becomes a hero (Farivar, Sistani & Mehni, 2013).

3. Conclusion

It is stated that changes in social matters can be practically reflected in Literature. Literature of the Romantic Period reveals the change that transpired within English society. Lord Byron, who belongs to this period, is not far from the changes and the spirit of change though he spent much time out of the Continent. The women of this century were within the vortex of change as well. Either as writers or as characters, they found the courage to speak up and be counted.

This article attempted to analyze three women characters of Lord Byron's three selected dramatic verses. Myrrha, Josephine and Marina as the three female characters present strong perspectives and true self-consciousness about themselves and in association with the superior male characters. They have the knowledge about themselves and they are self-conscious about what should be done and how they should act and react. In this case, master-slave dialectics was applied on them and the discussion was comprehensively done by viewing them through different phases of confrontation, recognition and acceptance. It is shown that women in the selected plays were living in a patriarchal society, side by side, in accordance with the established tradition that has always define their role as being in the margin who needed a male gender to be recognised. Either a queen or a slave, they were surrounded by the archetypal notion of women as the inferior and dependent ones.

However, through employing the Hegelian master-slave dialectics, they are envisioned as the gender that possesses the quality of thinking and effectiveness. In the beginning, they are not conscious of their superiority and independence and that is the reason for clinging to the males. They are shown as submissive yet simultaneously they exhibit a high quality of managing self and others. As the dramatic verses develop, the women become much more aware of their authority. They seem to possess a better quality to speak forward.

The three women become self-conscious and thus they achieve their true recognition of self. Such an understanding, according to the Hegelian master-slave dialectics, makes them independent and courageous, which is the significant change that took place in the Romantic Era.

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