

An Examination of the Personality of Dick Prosser, the Protagonist in Thomas Wolfe's *The Child by Tiger*, as a Byronic Hero

Mehdi Khoshkalampour

Department of English Language, Abadeh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abadeh, Iran

Email: Mapril1979@gmail.com

Received for publication: 21 June 2014.

Accepted for publication: 05 November 2014.

Abstract

Thomas Wolfe (1900-38), the American novelist, has composed one of his most renowned short stories, *The Child By Tiger*, in such a manner that we can trace an eye catching and transparent proximity between its protagonist, Dick Prosser, and a sort of hero having been presented to the world of literature by romantic poet and writer, Gorge Gordon Byron (1788-1824) during the 19th century. Dick Prosser, a callow and astonishing protagonist, who at times can be considered an anti-hero, demonstrates some traits and characteristics that emphatically correspond to what a Byronic hero is anticipated to do when confronting difficulties. The sense of rebel, torment from an internalized agony and grandiose passions accompanied by an interminable escape from an unknown traumatic past have prevailed throughout the story, and cast an unshakable spell on Dick Prosser. The affinity between Dick Prosser the coined Byronic hero becomes more diaphanous when he gets notoriously unorthodox and untamed toward the socially-confirmed laws and disciplines peculiar to his time. Dick Prosser represents some reactions that strengthen the hypothesis alluding to his insanity and savagery. However, when elaborated from the Byronic hero's point of view, the personality he has chosen against his community inclines to be more justifiable. This essay has on its horizon the aim to show the propinquity between Dick Prosser and the standards having been set to fit the Byronic hero. It also endeavors to delineate the historical path through which the Byronic hero has emerged and sustained to come to the present time. The traits Byronic hero should possess will be recounted, and an attempt will be made to portrait how Dick matches his counterpart, the Byronic hero.

Keywords: Byronic hero, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Greek mythology, Prometheus, Romanticism, French revolution, Freud, id, ego, superego

Introduction

The short story of *The Child by Tiger* concerns a new Negro worker who has been hired recently by an affluent family, the Sheppertons, in a town intoxicated by racism and slavery. The Negro man, Dick Prosser, has brought by himself an incipient astonishment to the whole town. He has come to show this people what a super hero with extraordinary abilities might mean. In every aspect he is supernatural, and no ordinary man can compete with him. He plays soccer as well as professional players. Thomas Wolfe in his short story shows that Dick performs the farm jobs with such adroitness that he has aroused all the neighbors' as well as Sheppertons' consternation. His sturdy figure can aptly confirm the fact that he has been in the U.S. army, or that he has fought in the artillery. His behavior, and in particular his exemplary interaction with the children have caused all those who know him to recount his humility, decorum, and punctuality at their circle. There was

nothing that he did not know. We were all so proud of him. Mr. Shepperton openly asserts that Dick has been the best man he has ever had, the smartest darky he had ever known (Perrine, 1974).

He never makes any complaint, or any sort of protest concerning the heavy duties he has been asked to do; indeed, the sense of responsibility and “dutifulness he represents has made the people appraise him. He is not a pretentious man who may work before his master’s eyes, but later does his duties perfunctorily. In addition to his perfection in doing the tasks, Dick has internalized in himself a pure and uncontaminated love to GOD. He lives by this clean love, and God is the only one that can quench his spirit’s thirst for salvation. He is not a hypocrite man who conceals duplicity behind his fabricated piousness to win his master’s favor, and affection. He is a God-fearing man who has devoted himself to sheer and purified spirituality. His Bible is the only haven he appeals to when exhausted by life difficulties. In fact one of the mottos he frequently prognosticates and advises the children on is that man should be honest to God, and people he lives with. He has been seen to recite lines of his Bible; he has been so affected by it that he cries for hours when reading it. “Sometimes Dick would come out of his little basement room, and his eyes would be red, as if he had been weeping”. It seems that he has chosen God as his everlasting shepherd whom he has accustomed to so intensely that he cannot imagine himself separate from him even for a short fleeting time. The simplicity and sincerity he has have given his master a sense of security; the Sheppertons are proud of him, and people in the entire town emulate the family for having such negro at their home. He is the paragon of perfection, someone you have dreamed and liked to be. He is a modernized tantamount to the saints who have spent their blood and flesh for God, and the community. He loves God, and his submissive tears approve his purity.

Dick Prosser is a man of all trades; a superman who has come to our time. There is little that he cannot do. He knows how to drive safely a car. He knows how to shoot and arm a gun. He plays soccer as the professionals do. The people in the town wish they could have such a worker at their home to ask him to do all the tasks they could not do by themselves. Dick brings to mind a ghoul who has come from the antiquity, and he can fulfill all the wishes one might have. However, this legendary and astonishing man resembles a pacific sea which has grown in itself some great storms and destructive waves that then and now would blow down the whole town that has found peace at its shore. The protagonist of the story, Dick Prosser, suddenly faces up to a matter that can awaken in him someone we have not discovered. Racism, and discrimination are what that have followed, and afflicted Dick since he has been able to find himself as someone darker than the men who have enslaved him, and all his African ancestors. Insulting behavior and contemptuous reaction of the people who find their identity in believing in color, and race trigger Dick the monster he has tied so far.

One day when driving his master to the town church, Dick is insulted and beaten harshly and unconscionably by a drunken white man. People there witness how Dick’s eyes redden through anger, and how fury wipes away their white color. Clearly something unknown in Dick is at the verge of erupting. Another scene confirms that Dick is undergoing a deteriorating metamorphosis which gives birth to a devil out of an angel. “...there were those who saw it who remembered later how the eyes went red”. Dick has bought, and concealed a gun accompanied with a lot of ammunition. When confronted by the astonished children having discovered the ammunition in his room, his visage goes red; his eyes lose their color. “There he was on us like a cat. He was there like a great dark shadow before we knew it...his thick lips bared above his gums, his eyes gone small and red as rodents”. It is as if a monster woke up in him, and looks out from the windows of his eyes. He loses his temper, but immediately calms down as if nothing had happened. Justifying what has surprised the children, he announces that he is going to present the white men the abilities he has; he wants to show them what an eagle-eyed shooter he is. He adds that at Christmas night he

will surprise all the white men. To make the boy's promise him to remain silent, and not to tell anyone anything about his gun, Dick says that he will give the boys the chance to shoot by his gun at that night. Nevertheless, the boys are still a bit flabbergasted because they do not realize what he exactly mean by the surprise he promises.

The pious Negro man is seemingly indifferent to women. Despite his completes, and the resulting sexual appeal he has, he has not been seen or heard to be engaged with any woman. The negro woman, Pansy Harris, who is the Sheppertons' cook, despite her attraction, has not managed to catch Dick's eyes. There is no place for surprise that a man who has sunk himself in the ocean of piety should not care about any woman who may distract him from the holy path he follows. The last scene which depicts the gloomy side of Dick appertains to the ominous night when the curtains fall down, and the demon acting behind comes onto the stage. Now the piety evaporates, and the savagery and dismay awaken the deep-rooted devil having haunted Dick Prosser. The narrator of the story who is a teenager who has witnessed the whole accidents since Dick's coming to the town explains how the world becomes numb, and how it withdraws into thrilling isolation. He runs a blood bath, and kills every person standing in his way. Several men having attempted to control him are killed. He escapes in a snowy night into the surrounding jungles, but eventually he becomes surrounded by angry men who are thirsty for revenge. Dick Prosser fights to the last moment of his life, though he knows the bullets know nothing but flesh, and blood. However, he stands, and does not escape his fate.

Dick Prosser was a phantom that came from nowhere land, without any clear past. Nobody knows where he came from, and where he has been before coming into the town. Many gossips whirl around him. Some say he has been in army before this; many say he has been fired from army, and has spent a while in prison. Some believe that he has committed a murder while in prison. Nobody knows for sure who he was, what he had come for, why he got insane, and how he could cause a massacre.

Men debated and discussed these things a thousand times— who and what he had been, what he had done, where he had come from—and all of it came to nothing. No one knew the answer...he came from darkness. He came out of heart of darkness...he came by night, just as he passed by night. He was night's child and partner, a token of the other side of man's dark soul...a symbol of man's evil innocence, and the token of his mystery, projection of his own unfathomed quality, a friend, a brother and a mortal enemy, an unknown demon, two worlds together—a tiger and a child.

Many critics have aimed at justifying a puzzling character like Dick Prosser. Many have tried their hands at foisting on Dick their peculiar method of analysis. Some might consider him the combination of Freud's famous sketch of id, ego, and superego. They assert that Dick can be counted as an id which has been suppressed for a long time. He is in an interminable challenge with his ego, and the superego. He takes refuge to moralities and spiritualities by praying, and reciting the biblical hymns. He aims at blocking his id; however, the id is strong enough to blow down the ego, and opens its way into the superego which is imposed, and vindicated by social laws, and orders. Apparently Dick Prosser unleashes his id when he starts murdering the people standing in his way. It should be noted that the present essay does not determine to handle voraciously different approaches that can relate to the individuality of Dick Prosser. Surely studying psychoanalytically the motives that give rise to the creation of a person like Dick Prosser can not be contained in this essay, and another full essay is needed to elicit the reasons why Dick puts away his piety, and rushes into rage and savagery.

Methodology

The Definition and Origin of the Byronic Hero

This essay as stated earlier decides to demonstrate the affinities that exist between Dick Prosser, and the typical Byronic hero who has repeated himself frequently in many literary works as well as film directed throughout the world since invented by Lord Byron, the English romantic poet. What we have to take into account prior to embarking on this analogy is to have at our side a comprehensible view of the Byronic hero.

Results and Discussion

The French Revolution

The Byronic hero in many ways has nothing in common with the compassionate and righteous heroes depicted, and propagated in classical dramas since the ancient Greece to Shakespeare's era. When Lord Byron was thinking on his heroes, the manipulated, innocent, and infallible heroes have lost their attraction to the modern ears. Now, the social and political changes along by the philosophical movements of the time could not allocate any time to the gloomy, dull, and cliché heroes. The Romantic Movement had come on stage, and had stabilized itself throughout the entire continent. The tastes practiced during the Neo-classicism now could not satisfy the people who have beheld changes blowing down all aspect of life.

The French Revolution (1789) could have a massive impact on the entire continent. The Republic came to replace the aristocracy which for centuries had presided upon the people. Now the oppressed community could take the aristocratic family down the throne. People needed a government that could respect their rights, and give them a voice for the kind of government they chose. People who were angry for the suppression and suffocation they had been imposed on for centuries gave King, and his family to the guillotine. Such an action was appraised by many throughout the continent, especially the English writers who believed the suppressive family and their defenders had rightfully been punished. Some also insisted that the same punitive measurements should be taken in England. The aristocracy was condemned for exploiting and enslaving the community (Abrams, 2000).

The instant reaction of the literary circles of that time was changing their focus from the aristocratic and royal families with their affairs to the common people who had been too inferior and trivial to appear in literature. Prior to this, many writers had been reproached or at times counted inept for writing about the common people. The dominant literary mood of the time, Neo-classicism, had devoted itself solely to grave and significant subject matters mainly taken from the royal issues which accordingly must have been written in highly decorated language, a language not understandable to the vulgar community. The common people engaged with their common and trivial affairs made their way into the literature. Some Romantic writers moved even further, and found their heroes among more outcast groups and classes such as the incarcerated criminals captured in prisons, and the insane men kept in lunatic asylum. Exotic and unknown men, no matter from the refuted groups, won the attention of the day. People enjoyed reading about the corners of life not having been beamed earlier. The bizarre and eccentric feelings and passions that people had not been given the chance to taste and experience became the vogue. Some writers found appealing using drugs to have access to the experiences which could not become revealed to them in sanity.

In addition to the prevalent romantic taste of the time, Lord Byron has certainly been under the impact of some writings that could help him in laying the foundation of his substantial achievement, the Byronic hero. The most deep-rooted of all is the story of Prometheus. This story affected Byron massively because Prometheus had been sympathized by previous writers as well as Byron's contemporary poets. Prometheus transparently depicts a hero who has been wrongly judged

and castigated. Prior to his failure, he has had a high rank among the gods of Greek mythology. He naturally has won the sympathy of many philosophers and writers since appeared in the Greek sequence of gods and titans. He victimized himself solely at the foot of mankind, and closed his eyes to the high position he possessed for the security and existence of mankind. The sentence Zeus chose for him was not fair at all. He was kept isolated from the community. Lord Byron copied Prometheus, and designed his new type of hero based on the story of Prometheus. Byron's hero is a man of extraordinary capabilities, misjudged by many, has chosen to stand aloof from his nation which has not appreciated him as he deserves. This type of hero likes his people; he is not an enemy of his nation; however, the nation wrongly accuses him of what he has not committed. Naturally this hero can be attractive to the readers because his life is replete with many unexplored and obscure corners. The reader inclines to question why he has not been welcomed by his people despite the fact that he has done his best to vindicate them against some hazards. While the nation rejoices, and enjoys the benefits the hero has had a hand to bring to home, the doomed hero strays, and suffers what he does not deserve, or bears the blames wrongly put on him.

The Greek Myth of Prometheus

Prometheus in Greek mythology is reputed as the creator of mankind; he made man out of the clay, and defended him against the conspiracies plotted by malicious and envious gods. His name is a tantamount to a well-wisher who devoted himself to the prosperity, and felicity of mankind. He is said to have deceived Zeus, the supreme god, when in a great sacrifice held up he did not give Zeus the share of meat he deserved. Instead, he bestowed on mankind the most delicious parts. Having notified the cheating, Zeus got irritated and furious, and determined to take his revenge on Prometheus, and all mankind (Kaufmann, 1969). Through rage and spite, Zeus deprived mankind of the blessing of fire. Once more Prometheus hastened to guard mankind against Zeus's revenge. He managed to thief fire from the gods, and gave it to human. Realizing that he had been entrapped for one more time, Zeus got provoked, and created Pandora who married Prometheus's brother, and she set loose all the evils of the world from the pandemonium. It is also said that Zeus to penalize Prometheus, chained him to a mountain where an eagle had been committed perpetually to devour Prometheus's liver, which regenerated every night so that he could suffer the same torment the next day.

A mythological character like Prometheus is in an interminable suffering for the heroic action he has done against gods' malicious intentions. He can coherently arouse the sense of pity and sympathy in readers. Instead of being admired and appraised, he becomes sentenced to punitive measurements issued by gods. He has been frequently mentioned by poets throughout the history. Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is an example that esteems the adventures that occurred to Prometheus (Abrams, 2000). Contemporary to Shelley, Byron seems that he has been affected by his work when working on his own Byronic hero.

The Miltonic Depiction of Satan

Another mythological character whose origin returns to the Bible is Satan. Byron seems to have studied all the writings related to this rebellious angel, especially the one composed by John Milton in his *Paradise Lost*. Byron as well as his contemporary writers has notified that the Satan having been illustrated in the *Paradise Lost* does not correspond to the stereotyped and familiar Satan depicted in the Bible and many other stories where a fallible Satan is shown. Milton's Satan inculcates in readers that in his encounter with God, he has been righteous, and the previous writers have gropingly blamed him for disobedience to God's will. The writers of the 18th and 19th centuries, who had made godforsaken prisoners as their novel heroes, could not find a better opportunity to create a super hero out of Satan. These writers believed that Milton unintentionally and unknowingly has shed light on a part of Satan's story that no other writer or philosopher had ever

noticed. The pious Milton as a renaissance puritan inadvertently shows a kind of Satan who is not only righteous, but also unfairly mistreated by God. Milton's Satan has tried to defend the matter of free will, which God has given to the creatures capable of reasoning (Linn, 86). He has wanted to use this gift, and evaluate what has been urged to do, to bow down before mankind. Satan makes an objection to this issued divine fiat when he asserts that his intellect coherently prevents him from bending before mankind. In Satan's deduction, mankind does not merit such applause, and approval having been dictated by God. What Satan, in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, has wrongly been accused of is that he has not wanted to be flatteringly and lugubriously appraising mankind, a creature who in Satan's view equals any other creature in rank, and significance. Satan openly refrains from any sophistry, and cajolery. Besides, he uses his free will to warn God against mankind, a creature who in no time betrays God, and engenders crime, and despair.

Satan in *Paradise Lost*, sounds to have been misunderstood and misjudged by God, whom Milton unwittingly has depicted tyrannical rather than fair and equitable. Satan for his frankness, blunt prognostication, and ultimate free will is sentenced by God's decree to leave the paradise, and run his life as a stray. He is sent to exile in a world far from the legendary paradise. He suffers this sentence, but what penalizes him most is the way he is treated; he misses his previous rank, and position; however, he has to defend his assertions, and keep his pride. He is told he can return to the paradise provided that he repents of his arrogance, and obeys what he has escapes doing before; he is obliged to appraise mankind, and bow to him. Still, he refuses to repent, and chooses to continue his rebellious life in place of returning to paradise as a belittled and minimized creature, who has been absolved, and then introduced as a penitent who has left his pride, and fame behind the paradise' gates.

Now, Byron has in front of himself a new portrait of Satan, a hero who has determined to bring to home his word, and nothing can make him reluctant, or hesitant in pursuing his goals. The entire world, and its elements if mobilized can not cause him eat his words. He might tolerate to live in exile, he might have people's curse, and hostility and he might be suffering the most detestable circumstances, but is bound to what he has been born for, his goal. Such features are unquestionably appealing to Lord Byron who finds himself at the verge of presenting the world an impressive sort of hero. His hilarious hero is charming, uncompromising, and fully devoted to his promises. Byron has the honor of designing a hero that is qualified enough conquer the stories written hereafter. The Byronic heroes who we have seen eagerly in films and stories are indeed an amalgamation of traits defined by Lord Byron. The most frequent features which heroes have shown since introduced by Lord Byron himself in other writers' novels, and in filmmakers' movies, as M. H. Abrams indicates, are as follows:

- The hero rebels against conventions or the society.
- He has low tolerance for societal norms and social institution.
- He is isolated, or has chosen isolation from society.
- He is not impressed by rank or privilege.
- He has supernatural and larger-than-life abilities.
- He is suspected of committing a crime, or has been cursed for a crime he has committed earlier.
- He has a tendency to be self-destructive.
- He wanders aimlessly and perpetually.
- He is an outsider who does not care about himself.
- He is remorseful for an earlier mistake, but he refuses to repent.

- He is involved with cynicism, and emotional moodiness accompanied by a permanent past trauma.
- He is sexually attractive and mysterious.
- He is exiled emotionally and physically from the world.
- He fights injustice, and discrimination.
- He never wins his goals, although depicted supernatural.
- He has a hidden curse or crime.
- He is certain of his self-identity.
- He is at times nihilist and unbeliever in God and his orders.
- He has a guilty memory of some unnamed sexual crime.
- He intertwines love, and hatred.
- He has a fatal flaw that eventuates in death, and falling into oblivion.
- He is good looking, callow, sturdy, and charming because he has to be strong enough to fulfill his role.
- He is determined in pursuing his aims.
- His punishment is always greater than his crime.
- He is faithful to the causes he rebels for to the last moment of his life (552-4).

After we realize who the Byronic hero is, and where he has originated from, Dick Prosser, the hero in the story of *the Child by Tiger* can be examined more vividly. A lot of affinities and correspondences are traced between Dick Prosser and the typical Byronic hero discussed so far. However, we have to keep track of the fact that all the features mentioned above are not necessarily found in a character like Dick Prosser. Nevertheless, Dick Prosser has proven qualified enough to be counted as a Byronic hero.

Dick Prosser, as a Byronic hero, suffers from a hidden curse or crime. Studying his personality, we see that he is involved with an unsolved complex which endlessly afflicts him. He has come from nowhere land, and nobody knows for sure anything concerning his past; however, what is unquestionable is that he has his own private and unuttered reasons for standing aloof from the public. Children frequently have witnessed that he has left his room with red eyes resulting from crying. He always croons some lines from the Bible, and the content of these lines indicate a man who seeks God's forgiveness and pardon.

Sometimes...his speech would be made up of some weird jargon of Biblical phrases, of which he seemed to have hundreds, and which he wove together in this strange pattern of his emotion in a sequence that was meaningless to us, but to which he himself had the coherent clue. "Oh young white folks," he would begin, by moaning gently, "de dry bones in de valley. I tell you, white folks, de day is comin, when He's comin' on dis earth again to sit in judgment...de Armageddon day's a-comin', white fokes, an' de dry bones in de valley" (Perrine, 1974).

Some rumors ambiguously appertain to the time when Dick has been in army. Murder, disobedience, and escape from army are what Dick is accused of. Perhaps they are the crimes Dick feels responsible for, and persistently prays to God for pardon. As a Byronic hero, Dick Prosser has some extraordinary and outstanding capabilities which clearly distinguish him from the ordinary men. These abilities are collected amazingly at one center incarnated in Dick. He is a great shooter, an excellent farmer, a brilliant soccer player, and a powerful character with great physic that causes other people's astonishment. The boys and adults as well, express their amazement at seeing Dick Prosser doing his tasks with an exemplary skill. The Byronic hero in the story has to possess such capabilities in order that he can attract the people's attention. In view of the fact that he is a strong character, accordingly he has great potentialities.

Dick Prosser is also an exiled person. He belongs to no place, and he has not come to the town to stay, and stagnate. Nobody knows where he departs to after here. He innately is not bound to any limitation. He is free like the wind that blows every place. Such a freedom from boundaries makes him not depend on anyone or anything. He has a wandering personality that causes him to take solace just in moving and traveling. At the end of the story, the narrator who talks on the writer's behalf tells that the whole city could not find any response to the questions that concerned Dick Prosser's origin and destination

There were a dozen stories, a hundred clues and rumors; all came to nothing in the end. Some said that Dick had come from Texas others that his home had been in Georgia. Some said that it was true that he had been enlisted in the Army, but that he had killed a man while there and served a term at Leavenworth. Some said he had served in the Army and had received an honorable discharge, but had later killed a man and had served a term in a state prison in Louisiana. Others said that he had been an Army man, but that he had gone crazy, that he had served a period in an asylum when it was found that he was insane, that he had escaped from this asylum that he had escaped from prison that he was fugitive from justice at the time he came to us.

Of the predominant features that manifest itself in Dick is the sense of rebel that is felt all over the story. Rebel exists in Dick's body and soul. It is said that he left the army for disobedience, or that he has murdered somebody, and we may guess that his crime might have been a rebellious reaction to some affliction. The arrogant and pugnacious behavior in Dick reveals that he can not control himself when confronting tyrannical and authoritative elements in society. One of the most influential and simultaneously most afflicting powers stems from race-discrimination. Being a colored farm worker, Dick has to wrestle with the imposed discrimination which authorizes the white to enslave and vilify the colored men. This social disorder has always been annoying Dick Prosser, and once more he is beaten by an intoxicated white man when driving his master to the town church. Dick realizes that his skin is what makes all the differences that worsen his condition in society. The white never stop teasing him as long as he is alive. The series of murders he commits in the town can be interpreted as the eruption of a volcano nourished by suppressed wrath and accumulated humiliation.

Another fact that connects Dick to Byronism is his refusal to repent of some earlier sins, though remorseful at heart. People feel that he has committed murder when in army; however, we behold that his ascetic life and nightly tears do not prevent him from hastening into much crime. In reality, Dick Prosser endeavors to do penance, and take appeal to the Bible when faced by problems. He surely suffers some trauma and complexes that have their roots in his past life; however, when opponent forces return, and put him under their pressure, the sinister spirit of savagery emerges in him once more. The new rage that controls him is in clear contradiction to the pious life he has chosen to have. Not with standing, the sense of pride and dignity is what a Byronic hero like Dick valorously seeks, and cannot ignore. He vindicates his reputation even at the expense of the sanctimonious procedure he practices in facing the rushing problems. Dick Prosser might have tolerated any sort of exploitation, he might have got used to working cumbersomely in the farm; however, when the matter of pride and dignity is at stake, nothing can have meaning to him. Easily he breaks all the vows he has made; the borders he has defined for himself collapse one by one.

The insults he takes from the white drunk guy awaken in him the monster he has chained since he has stepped the town. Faithfulness to the causes that have made him take tragic actions is another property that attaches Dick Prosser to Byronism. However, Dick Prosser knows well that he has to pay costly for his faithfulness, and it eventually results in his death. We all know that a real hero has to remain firmly determined in pursuing his goals, even though there are formidable obstacles blocking his way. Dick Prosser can not think of being glorified as valorous hero unless he

sticks to the goals he has set the whole town on fire. As a perfect hero, he can realize what comes out of his actions; however, he does not hesitate to fulfill he aims at doing. Majority of people we live with cannot attain to the state of heroism, because they lose their hearts as they confront the potential outcomes of their performance (Zizek, 1992). Dick Prosser has decided to take his revenge on the people who have ridiculed him for many years. He perceives the situation well, and he can foresee that death is the finality awaiting him. Nevertheless, he does not turn his back to his goals.

Conclusions

It is conscionable to ask how a legendary man like Dick Prosser has not been seen or reported to have had an affair with a woman. Still, it can be guessed that a mysterious man like Dick can logically be capable keeping his affairs concealed from the public eye. The sequence of events in the short story seemingly admits that he does not have any way with any woman. Pansy, the Sheppertons' cook is a woman who might become Dick's sexual target. Analyzing the accidents taking place at the end of story in Pansy's room, we can come across with a shocking corner of Dick's life which has not been realized by anyone in the whole town. Surely Dick's presence at Pansy's home logically justifies what he has gone for at that ominous night. We can guess what has made Pansy's husband lose his temper when confronting Dick and Pansy at his home. Now Dick Prosser irritated by this sudden and unwelcomed emergence, unleashes his rage on Pansy's husband, and opens his gun's fire on every man standing in his way. Even when encircled by his enemies he does not escape and instead he welcomes the bullets coming out of merciless guns. The real hero takes the responsibility of what he does because in advance he knows what awaits him, and he knowingly embarks on committing his nefarious crimes.

This essay made an attempt to bring out some conceptions that enable us to regard Dick Prosser, the protagonist in Thomas Wolfe's *The Child by Tiger*, as a Byronic hero. The origin of this specific kind of hero, and the elements that have put their impacts on Lord Byron when creating his hero were discussed. The story of Prometheus in Greek mythology was explored, and considered a good platform for Byron in achieving his desired hero. John Milton's *Paradise lost* was introduced as another helpful source that has enabled Byron to create his favorite sample of heroism. Satan was depicted as an ideal hero that can be counted as a good precedent for Byronic hero. We witnessed that Dick Prosser has the qualification to be a modernized heir of Prometheus and Satan, in spite of the fact that he is devoid of some features attributed to Byronic hero. However, Dick Prosser could unquestionably behave bizarrely and eccentrically enough to have the fame of a real Byronic hero.

References

- Abrams, M.H. (2000). *The Romantic Period in The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Seventh ed., second vol. London: W.W. NORTON AND COMPANY.
- Grimall, P. (1999). *A Dictionary of Archetypes in Greece and Rome* trans. Ahmad Behmanesh. Tehran: Amir Kabir Publication.
- Kaufmann, W. (1969). *Tragedy and Philosophy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Linn, B. (2000). *Cliffs Notes On Milton's Paradise Lost*. New York: Wiley Publishing, Inc.
- Perrine, L. (1974). *Literature, Structure, Sound and Sense*, Second edition, New York: HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH, INC.
- Zizek, S. (1992). *Enjoy your symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*, New York: Routledge.