The **Byronic hero** is an idealized but flawed character exemplified in the life and writings of poet Lord Byron, characterized by his ex-lover as being "mad, bad, and dangerous to know.” He first appears in Byron's semi-poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (*1818).

The Byronic hero typically exhibits many of the following characteristics:

* a strong sense of arrogance
* high level of intelligence and cunning
* a troubled past
* sophistication and education
* self-critical and introspective tone
* mysterious, magnetic and charismatic personality
* struggles with integrity and morality
* power of seduction and sexual attraction
* social dominance
* emotional conflicts, bipolar tendencies or moodiness
* a distaste for social institutions and norms
* existence as an exile, an outcast or an outlaw
* disrespect of rank and privilege
* jaded, world-weary
* cynical attitude
* self-destructive behavior
* a good heart in the end

Classic Byronic Heroes:

Darth Vader

Batman

Jack Sparrow

Batman

Lestat

Edward Cullen

Erik (Phantom)

Heroes:

Prevail in difficult circumstances

Show morality and courage

Have clear purpose

Sacrificial

Villains: Truly bad at heart

Hannibal Lecter

Norman Bates

Wicked Witch???

Dark Heroes can be admirable and powerful but cannot exist in normal society

Must be rehumanized, exiled or destroyed—then we can sympathize with them