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A revived life in a reviving culture: the Chinese reception of Byron in the short story magazine in 1924

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University of Iowa

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A REVIVED LIFE IN A REVIVING CULTURE: THE CHINESE RECEPTION OF
BYRON IN *THE SHORT STORY MAGAZINE* IN 1924

by

Zheng He

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts degree
in Comparative Literature
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Maureen Robertson

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Zheng He

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts
degree in Comparative Literature at
the May 2012 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____

Maureen Robertson, Thesis Supervisor

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Eric Gidal

To My Parents

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

No, he was not a god. He was a mortal, a mortal who was more fearsome and more adorable than a god. When he was alive, he was bathed in the violent waves of the secular world, his body awash with their stains. Finally, he set foot on the crest of the wave, revealing his flawless skin under the sunshine. His pride, strength and glory are the worries of Zeus and Cupid in heaven.¹ (Xu 1924, 2)

This passionate praise was dedicated to Lord George Gordon Byron one hundred years after the poet died in Greece by a famous Chinese poet, Xu Zhimo 徐志摩, in his essay “Byron” 拜倫 (“Bailun”). Xu contributed this essay to the memorial issue to the centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine* 小說月報 (*Xiaoshuo Yuebao*), in memorial of Byron’s death in 1824. *The Short Story Magazine* was one of the most influential literary periodicals advocating new literature during the 1920s, which was controlled by one of the most influential literary societies during this period, namely, the Literary Association 文學研究會 (*Wenxue yanjiu hui*).

The centenary issue contains the richest material and most thorough treatment of Byron’s life and poetry that Chinese readers in the early 20th century had ever known. Besides Xu Zhimo’s essay, six critical biographies and critical essays on Byron’s poetry written by English, Danish, Greek and Japanese critics were translated into Chinese. Chinese intellectuals who had already established their reputations as pioneering modern writers, literary critics and translators published thirteen essays of their own. Chinese intellectuals also translated ten of Byron’s poetic works. Byron’s complicated personality, his poetic works, his problematic personal life, and his

¹ In this thesis, I offer my own translations of all the original writings of Chinese intellectuals published in Byron’s centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine*.

heroic fight for the independence of Greece were discussed comprehensively and in depth by Chinese critics.

It seems that this ambitious project of presenting and studying almost every aspect of Byron's life and poetry accomplished by Chinese intellectuals in this centenary issue is almost as impressive as Byron's own charisma and his poetic achievements under their study. The authors in this centenary issue offer rich material for our own understanding of Byron's influence on Chinese literature, his Chinese reception and translation and the relationship between Western literature and the development of modern Chinese literature in the early 20th century. We may be curious to ask: what are some differences and similarities between Byron's image in its Chinese reception and in other nations? How did Chinese translation of Byron's poetry develop in the 1920s? What insights can study of this centenary issue provide into these topics?

What I would like to do in this thesis, however, is basic, and to me also fundamental to future research on the Chinese reception of Byron in the 1924 centenary issue. I will examine the perception of Byron as a historical and literary figure, the Chinese opinion on the most prominent attributes of his personality and life, the characteristics of his poetry, and the translation of Byron's poetry. Accomplishing this task requires perhaps most of the work to be devoted to the collection, organization and summary the information contained in the centenary issue. I intend to produce a descriptive analysis of the centenary issue as the first step toward future investigation.

Nevertheless, this kind of scholarship dealing with "what" and "how" needs a "why" to bring more sense to it. Standing behind the Chinese reception and translation of Byron's life and poetry was one of the most consequential sociopolitical movements in modern Chinese history, namely the May Fourth Movement. It began on May 4th, 1919, when Chinese students in Beijing took to the streets, demonstrating their discontent and opposition to Peace Treaty of Versailles the end of World War I. As a matter of fact, scholars usually consider the May Fourth Movement in a broad

sense to have been initiated by Chinese intellectuals nearly three years earlier than the May Fourth incident, around 1915 or 1916. The three to four years before 1919 served as an intellectual and spiritual preparation for the May Fourth incident and had an even more long-lasting influence on modern Chinese society than the incident itself. The social and intellectual movement that occurred around 1915 or 1916 and lasted for ten years until 1926 is usually called the May Fourth New Culture Movement, which promoted a brand new literature as well as a brand new life. Especially because of the New Culture Movement's advancement of the new Chinese literature, its iconoclasm of the traditional Chinese literary ideas and its redefinition of the concept of "literature," it is also considered to be the beginning of modern Chinese literary history.

In the process of social and literary reformation, foreign—especially Western—literature played a crucial role. Many Western literary works and figures were regarded as models by Chinese intellectuals in their literary study and creative writing. Some foreign literary figures were also admired as examples by Chinese intellectuals and were presented as examples for Chinese people to follow in real life. Byron was one of these prominent literary figures. Consequently, the introduction and translation of Western literature during the May Fourth Movement assumed not only a literary but also a social significance. So did their reception of Byron. More importantly, as Chinese critics acquired more knowledge and deeper understanding of Western literature during the late 1910s, they developed their own literary approaches and translation principles, integrating Western theories with considerations for the social realities of China. Starting in 1920, Chinese intellectuals began to produce literary writings following whichever foreign model that they found most appealing and relevant to Chinese literary and social conditions, applying their literary ideas to their study of Western literature. In Chinese literary works composed from this point on, one can see not only how Western literature and literary figures influenced Chinese literature, but also how they were treated as a case study by Chinese intellectuals, to the analysis of which they applied the literary ideas they had learned

from the Western literature. Byron was the first English poet who was introduced by Chinese intellectuals as an example for new Chinese literati and youth (Ma 2006a, 222), and who was later studied by Chinese intellectuals in terms of their new literary ideas and translation theories.

In the centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine*, Byron's life and poetry were consequently praised as a model for new Chinese literature and literati and simultaneously treated as a test case for Chinese intellectuals to practice their developing modern critical theory and translation principles. An examination of what these literary ideas are and how they affected the Chinese reception of Byron is indispensable to the attempt to answer the question of why Byron's life and poetry were presented in one way instead of another. As was mentioned above, the Chinese reception of Byron occurred in terms of both literary and social concerns. Therefore, in order to better understand the formation and social consideration of Chinese intellectuals' literary ideas as well as their treatment of Byron, a certain amount of knowledge of the larger historical and social picture of the late 19th and early 20th century China is necessary. Besides the descriptive scholarship, I will constantly bring the social and historical background of China in the early 20th century and the critical approaches adopted by Chinese intellectuals into my study of the centenary issue, using this information to provide an explanation for the nature and significance of Byron's Chinese reception in the centenary issue.

Now that my aims are thus clarified, I would like to provide some contextual information: first, a brief account of the historical and social background of late 19th century and early 20th century China, second, a discussion of Western literature's influence on the educated readers in Chinese society, and third, a summary of the Chinese reception of Byron before the centenary issue came into being. This will serve as a general background for the study conducted in this thesis, creating a sense of continuity for the Chinese reception of Byron, starting in 1902, and will also be used for the purpose of comparison with his reception in 1924.

The modern history of China began with severe social crises, following upon which Chinese nationalist consciousness and patriotic sentiments were awakened and the introduction of Western science and technology and later philosophy and literature took place. The First Opium War² (from June 1840 to August 1842) struck China with a nearly fatal blow to its old social, political, economic and cultural institutions from the rapidly modernizing Britain. Western colonial forces began to compete with each other for control of Chinese natural resources and markets and influence over Chinese territories, subjecting China to severe national crises, such as the incursion of foreign colonial forces, domestic military conflicts, disruption to the economy, loss of territories and natural resources. The Qing government attempted to maintain its reign by importing Western technology, which initiated the industrialization of China (Yu and Xie 2006, 49). However, the traditional institutions and corrupted imperial reign proved to be a stubborn obstacle rather than a useful aid to the modernization of China.

After the attempt of the Hundred Day's Reform³ (beginning on June 11th, 1898 and ending on September 21st 1898) failed, it dawned upon many Chinese

² Since late 1810s, Britain began to imported opium which was grown in the British colony of India into China, hoping to reduce the deficit in their trade with China and make profit. Led by the Chinese official Lin Zexu 林則徐, Emperor Daoguang 道光 (1782-1850) and the Qing government decided to resist British importation of opium by burning the opium China had at present and closing up the trading ports Guangzhou and Zhujiang. In reaction to the loss of the Chinese market, the British government attacked and defeated Chinese navy. This conflict was called the First Opium War. It ended with the Nanjing Treaty, which besides reparations demanded the Qing government to open up five ports including Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo and Shanghai to trade with Britain. Hong Kong Island was also given to British governance. Becoming unsatisfied with these benefits, British government started the Second Opium War in 1856. China lost its control of Kowloon to Britain and a large part of its northeastern territory. See Jiang Tao 姜涛 and Bian Xiuyue 卞修跃. 2006. "Jindai Zhongguo de kaiduan (1840-1864)." Vol. 2 of *Zhongguo jindai tongshi* 中国近代通史, edited by Zhang Haipeng 张海鹏 and Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院近代史研究所. Jiangsu renmin Press. 44-90.

³ The Hundred Days Reform was supported by Emperor Guangxu 光緒 and led by Kang Youwei 康有為 and his student Liang Qichao to reform the old political system and direct the Qing dynasty to constitutional monarchy. It ended with the interference of Dowager Empress Cixi 慈禧太后, imprisonment and execution of the reformist, the confinement of the emperor. See Ma Yong 马勇. 2006. "Cong Wuxu weixin dao yihetuan (1840-1864)." Vol. 4 of *Zhongguo jindai tongshi* 中国近代通史,

people that pushing forward economic and political reformation would be impossible without ridding the country of the monarchy along with its corrupted political system. As it became clear that the Qing ruling elites wanted nothing but to maintain its sovereignty based on the corrupted political and cultural customs and even to the point of collaborating with the foreign colonial forces, Chinese revolutionaries turned away from reformation and became determined to end the dynastic reign with revolution (Zhang and Li 2006, 181). In 1911, the Xinhai Revolution 辛亥革命 broke out under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen.⁴ In 1912, the last Qing Emperor, Xuantong 宣統, abdicated, announcing the nominal end of dynastic reign in China and the Republic of China was established in the same year. (465-167)

However, foreign threats and domestic crises did not lessen but continued to worsen rapidly. The following several decades witnessed China's continuing struggle for social and political stability (Wang 2006, 70). Foreign military and colonial forces from Britain, France, Russia, Japan and the United States entered into rivalry with each other over influence and control of Chinese territories, resources and markets, further endangering China's sovereign integrity. The Republic established in 1912 was founded on a shaky ground. Its existence was first endangered by Yuan Shikai's

edited by Zhang Haipeng 张海鹏 and Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院近代史研究所. Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe. 257-258, 335-343.

⁴ First a medical student and throughout his later life an enthusiastic promoter of democracy and national independence, Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (1866-1925) was known and praised as one of the most important leaders in modern Chinese revolutionary and political history. He is the founder of the first Chinese political organization Revive China Society (*Xingzhong Hui*). It developed into Chinese United League 中國同盟會 (*Zhongguo tongmeng hui*), which under the leadership of Sun overthrew of Qing dynastic reign by Xinhai Revolution and established the Republic of China in 1912. In the same year Tongmenghui was reorganized and renamed as Chinese Nationalist Party 國民黨 (*Kuomintang*). Sun was recognized as the founding father of the Party and the Republic. He served as the temporary President of the Republic. Sun was also known for his political insistence of "San-min Zhuyi" 三民主义 ("Three People's Principles"), which promoted nationalism 民族 (*minzu*), democracy 民权 (*minquan*) and the People's Livelihood 民生 (*minsheng*). See Zhang Haipeng 张海鹏 and Li Xizhu 李细珠. 2006. "Xinzheng, lixian yu Xinhai geming (1901-1912)." Vol. 5 of *Zhongguo jindai tongshi* 中国近代通史, edited by Zhang Haipeng 张海鹏 and Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院近代史研究所. Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe. 143-145, 173-174.

袁世凱 (1859-1916) attempt to restore monarchy (94), and by constant military conflicts between warlords after Yuan's death. Also, the old bureaucrats and gentry imposed barriers to the social, political and cultural reformation. The long-repressed grievances against foreign forces and the ineffective government finally burst out in 1919 (Chow 1967, 84). In this year, China's appeal at the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles to recover its sovereign rights in Shandong Province was denied, while Japan was granted the control of it with all the rights stipulated in the Twenty-One Demands⁵ that had earlier been agreed to by the Japanese government and the Chinese government which was under Yuan Shikai's control (92). On May Fourth, 1919, students in Peking took to the streets to demand that the government must oppose the signing of such an unequal and unjust treaty by Chinese representatives at the peace conference and demand that the national traitors in the government who

⁵ As Japan proceeded on its way to industrialization and modernization, it set its eyes on China regarding it as a rich source of raw materials. Aiming at gradually taking China into its control, the Japanese government sent twenty-one demands to the nominal government of the Republic of China, insisting on all kinds of exclusive benefits from China such as the control of Shandong Province, the influence along the coast line of Shandong peninsula, construction of domestic railway system, influence of the area around the railways, coal mining, the control of Manchuria and Mongolia, etc. In order to attain support from the Japanese for his plan to become the next emperor of China, Yuan Shikai signed the Twenty-One Demands with the Japanese government in 1915, consenting to their incursion and expansion of the sphere of their influence in China. The Twenty-one Demands not only violated Chinese territorial integrity but also began to damage severely Chinese economy. This treaty and the social crises it brought to Chinese society immediately after it was signed provoked Chinese intellectuals to react with strong patriotic sentiments and to effect and direct Chinese people through writings published in new periodicals that they established. The year 1915 is therefore marked as the actual start of the May Fourth Movement as the historical event which triggered later happenings in 1919 took place and the nationalist sentiments began to grow. See Wang Chaoguang 王朝光. 2006. "Minguo de chujian (1912-1923)." Vol. 6 of *Zhongguo jindai tongshi* 中国近代通史, edited by Zhang Haipeng 张海鹏 and Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院近代史研究所. Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe. 84-88.

planned to give in to the unfair clauses in the Versailles treaty be punished (107). In the following months, students all over the country went on strikes in support of the students (131). The Chinese representatives in France finally refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles, though in reality the government failed to retrieve its sovereignty of Shandong from the Japanese (116).

In this historical context, Western civilization played a complicated role in influencing Chinese culture from the end of the 19th century through the early 20th century. First of all, the incursions of foreign forces were found to be the immediate cause of the beginning of Chinese national crises. The antagonistic sentiment toward them evoked the nationalist awareness and passion of Chinese people, especially Chinese intellectuals. At the same time, however, it was through gradual acquaintance of Western culture that the Chinese patriots were exposed to possible models and solutions of the national problems. The modern Western civilization brought a painful but possibly helpful disillusionment. For the first time in history the eyes of China were opened to see how much it had fallen behind the rapid development of other modernizing countries. Consequently, Western civilization was seen equally as much the cause of deteriorating social condition as it was a source of an antidote to China's social crisis.

Social and literary reformation usually goes hand in hand, which was certainly the case in early twentieth-century China. Chinese intellectuals were motivated both by their recently broadened vision and their never extinguished spark of curiosity to take up the responsibility of establishing a new culture, which they thought would be absolutely necessary for the survival of their motherland. Western science, philosophy, politics and literature presented a brand new vision through which Chinese intellectuals looked forward to an understanding of the cause and solution to national crisis. Simultaneously, the tradition that dragged China back into the muddle of ignorance must be left behind with the help of Western ideas and praxis, no matter for how many hundreds of years it had been controlling the lives of Chinese people. But

the decision to embrace Western culture did not exclude the desire for national independence and identity.

Ever since the late Qing period, Chinese intellectuals had engaged themselves in the introduction of Western literary works, laying a foundation for future development of the Chinese reception of Western literature. As the Qing dynastic reign began to reach to its end after the two Opium Wars, Chinese intellectuals began to lose or voluntarily gave up the old ways of living and writing. Some intellectuals who served in the corrupted bureaucratic system also chose to leave and become free-lance writers. Some Chinese students were sent abroad by the Qing government to study foreign languages and technologies in Britain, the United States, Japan and France. A certain portion of war reparations received by foreign countries from the Qing government was also used as study funding for Chinese students. After coming back from their study in foreign countries, many of the students engaged themselves in the translation of foreign works encompassing scientific, historical, economic, political, philosophical and literary fields. The growing number of translated works formed a translation trend around the end of the Qing dynasty.

Among the many translators who emerged at the early stage of Chinese introduction of Western works, Yan Fu 嚴復 (1854-1921) and Lin Shu 林紓 (1852-1924) were the two most influential figures who made great contribution to the development of Chinese translation of foreign writings. They laid the groundwork for the development of Chinese translation and study of Western philosophy and literature. In the field of translation of Western literature, Lin Shu's works were perhaps more relevant, as his translation of English, French, American and Spanish novels started the history of modern Chinese translation of literature (Wu 2010, 119). His translation works, such as *David Copperfield*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Don Quixote*, and *La Dame aux Camélias*, were the favorites of Chinese readers for decades after they appeared. Many of the active literary figures in the May Fourth Movement such as Zhou Zuoren 周作人 (1885-1967) and Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936) received their early impressions of Western literature through their reading of Lin Shu's translations.

Thanks to the efforts of these pioneer scholars and translators, a new generation of Chinese intellectuals began to grow and mature. This generation received not only the traditional education of Confucian classics but also began to be influenced by Western ideas through these translated Western writings, as well as also through study abroad experience for some. They gradually accumulated enough knowledge and theory during the sociopolitical transition from the late Qing to the early Republican period to bring about a literary reformation. A group of new intellectuals came into being, determined to leave the old ways of living and writing behind and to bring into being a new Chinese literature and society. Confucian moral and political values were to be replaced by Western ideals of science and democracy, whereas Confucian literary values were to be replaced by a new literature, which regarded Western literature as its model. The unified effort of Chinese intellectuals to advance the sociopolitical and literary reformation starting around 1915 or 1916 and extending into the late 1920s formed the most important period in modern Chinese history, namely the May Fourth New Culture Movement.

Ever since the late Qing period, while many novels were introduced to China, much less foreign poetry was translated (Ni 2008, 11). Poetry finally began to absorb equal attention from Chinese intellectuals beginning around 1900. Byron, as mentioned above, was the first English poet whose life and poetry attracted the attention of Chinese intellectuals (Ma 2006a, 222). In the following section, I would like to give a brief account of major translations of Byron's poetry and studies of Byron's biography from 1902 to 1920. It will create a sense of continuance of the Chinese reception of Byron and also serve as the context for the discussion of his reception in the 1920s.

The earliest translation of Byron's poetry appeared in Liang Qichao's novel *Records of the New China of the Future* 新中國未來記 (*Xin Zhongguo weilai ji*) which was published in 1902. Short excerpts from *The Giaour* and *Don Juan* (the first and third stanzas of the famous "The Isles of Greece") were translated into Chinese in

the form of song lyrics 曲 (qu).⁶ The latter was titled by Ma Junwu' 馬君武 (1881-1940) as "Song of Mourning for Greece" 哀希臘歌 ("Ai Xila ge"), while Su Manshu 蘇曼殊 (1884-1918) and Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) titled it as "On Mourning for Greece" 哀希臘 ("Ai Xila").⁷ The latter became the name by which this poem was known and referred to by Chinese writers and readers later on. It continued to be the most well-known and most popular representative poem by Byron in China.

Ma Junwu's translation, which was published in 1905, is the first complete translation of the sixteen stanzas of "The Isles of Greece." In 1908, Su Manshu published two translation collections: *Literary Destinies* 文學因緣 (*Wenxue Yin Yuan*) and *Selected Poems of Byron* 拜倫詩選 (*Bailun shi xuan*). In *Selected Poems of Byron* he included four poems in addition to "On Mourning for Greece," namely "On Departing from my Leaving the Homeland" 去國行⁸ ("Quguo xing"), "Praise of the Ocean" 贊大海⁹ ("Zan Dahai"), "A Poem in Response to the Beauty who Sent Me her Bandeau" 答美人贈束髮幔帶詩¹⁰ ("Da meiren zeng shufa man dai

⁶ 曲 (qu) is a type of verse for singing. It emerged in the Southern Song (1127-1267) and became popular in Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

⁷ Su's translation of "The Isles of Greece" was first published in *Selected Poems of Byron* 拜倫詩選 (*Byron Bialun shi xuan*) in 1914. See Li Minjie 李敏杰, and Zhu Wei 朱薇. 2011. "Su Manshu yu Bailun de 'wenxue yinyuna'" 苏曼殊与拜伦的 "文学因缘." *Zuojia pinglun* 作家评论, 2011. 116-117.

⁸ *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto I, verse XIII, "Adieu, adieu! My native shore." See Byron, George Gordon No ð, Baron. 1975. *The Poetical Works of Byron*. Cambridge Edition, revised and with a new introduction by Robert F. Gleckner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 5-6. All the Chinese titles of these translated poems were given by Su Manshu.

⁹ *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, verse CLXXIX, "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll." Byron, George Gordon No ð, Baron. 1975. *The Poetical Works of Byron*. Cambridge Edition, revised and with a new introduction by Robert F. Gleckner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 81-82.

¹⁰ "To a Lady Who Presented the Author with the Velvet Band Which Bound Her Tresses." Byron, George Gordon No ð, Baron. 1975. *The Poetical Works of Byron*. Cambridge Edition, revised and with a new introduction by Robert F. Gleckner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 128.

shi”) and “The Stars and the Mountain Summit are all Lifeless” 星耶峰耶俱無生¹¹ (“Xing ye feng ye ju wu sheng”). In 1911, Su Manshu published another translation collection named as *Sound of the Waves* 潮音 (*Chao Yin*), in which “The Isles of Greece” and “Roll on though deep and dark blue Ocean--roll” were published again together with Su’s translation of poems of Shelley, Burns, Howlitt and Goethe.¹² In 1914, Hu Shi, one of the leaders of the May Fourth New Culture Movement and the initiator of the Vernacular Literature Movement translated “The Isles of Greece” in the style of *sao* 騷¹³. He decided to translate this poem again because he thought that “[Ma] Junwu’s translation failed due to its misunderstanding, while [Su] Manshu’s version failed due to its obscurity” 君武失之訛，而曼殊失之晦 (Hu 1986, 180). Although early translations were highly selective and focused only on short poems, they helped to increase Byron’s popularity among Chinese readers and enlarge Chinese knowledge of Byron’s works.

At the same time that the translations of Byron’s poetry emerged, a general introduction to Byron’s life and a brief study of his poetry also emerged. Lu Xun’s “On the Power of the Mara Poet” 摩羅詩力說 (“Moluo shi li shuo”) was published in 1908, in which the author offered a brief biography of Byron’s life and his observation of the “Mara”¹⁴ spirit of his poetry. The essay written by Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), “A Brief Biography of the Great British Poet Byron” 英國大

11 *The Corsair*, verse XIV, stanza 1-4. Byron, George Gordon Noel, Baron. 1975. *The Poetical Works of Byron*. Cambridge Edition, revised and with a new introduction by Robert F. Gleckner. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 343.

12 See Su Manshu 苏曼殊. 2007. *Su Manshu quanji* 苏曼殊全集, edited by Liu Yazhi 柳亚子. Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House. 45-56.

13 Short for “Li Sao” 离骚, a poem written during the Warring States Period (about 475 B.C.-221 B.C.) by the poet and statesman of the Chu State 楚国, Qu Yuan 屈原. The style of this poem was adopted by later poets, which is called or “sao ti” (“the style of sao”).

14 “Mara” 摩罗 (mo luo) means “demon” in Sanskrit. In Buddhism, Mara is the embodiment of the opposite of the Buddha. Lu Xun used this word to refer to what later Chinese critics called 恶魔 “e mo” which means “demon” or “devil,” and 撒旦 “sa dan” which is translated directly from the pronunciation of “Satan.”

詩人白衣龍小傳 (“Yingguo dashiren Baiyilong xiao zhuan”) provided information about the fact that Byron came from a family of aristocratic lineage, his relationship with his mother, his marriage, his self-exile from Britain and his heroic fight and death in the Greek War of Independence (1821-1832). Wang also pointed out the passionate attribute of his personality and poetry, which continued to be admired by later critics: “Byron is... a man of warm blood,” and the passion in his poetry “cannot be defamed; though his word seems violent and crazed, in fact it [the passion] comes from his heart” (289).

As national crises continued to worsen after the late Qing period, Byron was introduced by Chinese intellectuals with a strong nationalist sentiment. He was presented as a selfless “hero” who sacrificed his life for the independence of Greece. As a poet, he wrote poetry to encourage the people to fight for their freedom as he did; “The Isles of Greece” was the best example of this. Both his person and his poetry were regarded as exemplary by Chinese literati in their literary career and real life. The comments made by the translators of “The Isles of Greece” on this poem most clearly revealed their intention behind their repeated translations of this poem. One of Liang’s characters in the novel *Records of the New China of the Future* offered the following comment after hearing another character recite “The Isles of Greece”:

Liberalism is most loved by Byron. Together with his literary spirit, it seems that he has a long-standing connection with Greece. Afterwards, because he helped Greece to become independent, he even joined the army and died. He should definitely be considered as a great hero in the literary field. This poem of his is composed to inspire the Greek people. But as we hear it today, it seems to have been composed for China (Liang 1999, 5631).

Liang Qichao recognized two things in Byron’s life that appealed to him most: Byron’s love for liberty and his heroic deeds in the Greek War of Independence. These two things were considered by Liang to be the most relevant to the Chinese condition, which was most troubled by its rapid loss of independence and want of great heroes like Byron to solve the problem. Ma Junwu said sadly in his preface to his translation of the poem that “Byron mourned for Greece, while nowadays I am so busy mourning for myself [that I do not have time to mourn for other’s misfortune]”

(Ma 1991, 439). He frequently altered Byron's original text to express his own intention to advocate democracy and national independence (Wang 1987, 101). Ma's eagerness to present Byron's poetry as a call for patriotic endeavor of people whose motherland was endangered by foreign repression exemplified the general nationalist sentiment of Byron's early Chinese introducers. Lu Xun in "On the Power of Marat Poet" complimented Byron as the "forbearer" of the poets belonging to the "satanic school," including Shelley, Pushkin, Lermontov, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Petofi. He considered them especially admirable because they "intended to rebel and ended by taking action" 立意在反抗, 旨歸在動作 (liyi zai fankang, zhigui zai dongzuo) (Lu 2011, 47). It is noticeable that Byron's life and his poetry were equally important to Chinese emphasis on his love for liberty and his rebellious spirit. Life and poetry remained inseparable as the Chinese reception developed from the 1900s to the 20s. While early study was simply motivated by Chinese intellectuals' interest, later studies in the 1920s were guided by the Literary Association's insistence on "literature for life's sake," which viewed literature as a reflection of life.

Compared to the "heroic" public image of Byron in the Chinese vision, the poet's problematic personal life was generally ignored by early studies. Nevertheless, Chinese intellectuals also explored defects in Byron's personality and the lack of refinement of his poetry. Wang Guowei touched upon and criticized the problematic personality of Byron. He thought Byron had "a contracted heart" 心胸甚窄 and "wanted endurance and self-control" 無忍耐力自製力 (Wang 1993, 288). Also, Wang Guowei and Hu Shi pointed out the flaws in Byron's poetry, which they thought went hand in hand with his passionate nature. Wang thought his emotions "wanted wisdom," as "his wisdom is not sufficient to control his emotions" (289). In Hu's opinion, Byron's poetry fails in its "roughness and lack of restraint" (Hu 1986, 180). These observations characterize the study of Byron's poetry on the "literary" level before the 1920s.

As was mentioned earlier, the May Fourth New Literature Movement began to influence the thinking of Chinese people and the development modern Chinese

literature. The major force behind it was the new Chinese intellectuals who were exposed to Western science, philosophy, history, language and literature. As many of them had the opportunities to receive systematic language training and education in foreign literature, this new generation of Chinese was enabled to envision the future of China and Chinese literature in a larger global context. Motivated by their nationalist sentiment and concerns for national crises, which were similar to their predecessors, these new Chinese intellectuals undertook to inaugurate a new literature based on their understanding of the development of Western literature and their expectation of a new Chinese literature which would be formed following the Western example.

In 1915, *Le Jeunesse*, or *New Youth* 新青年 (*Xin Qingnian*), a magazine advocating science, democracy and new literature, was created by the leading figure of the May Fourth Movement and one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1897-1942), who returned from Japan to China in 1914. The establishment of *New Youth* started the literary phenomenon in modern Chinese literary history: periodicals came to be used the primary medium by new Chinese literati to advance their literary ideals and to develop their literary critique and creative writing. Especially after 1911, publications greatly increased in number, though the freedom of press and speech was severely restricted under the control of the warlords (Chow 1967, 46). An epoch-making periodical fever began in 1919 and continued into the 1920s (180).

Literary figures who were crucial to the May Fourth Movement such as Hu Shi, Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren also returned to China during the second decade of the 20th century. The years 1916, 1917 and 1918 consequently witnessed the publication of several important articles in modern Chinese literary history: Chen Duxiu's "On Literary Revolution" 文學革命論 ("Wenxue geming lun"), Hu Shi's "Some Modest Proposals for the Reform of Literature" 文學改良芻議 ("Wenxue gailiang chuyi"); Zhou Zuoren's "Literature for Humanity" 人的文學 ("Ren de wenxue") and the first vernacular Chinese short story "The Diary of a Madman" 狂人日記 ("Kuangren riji") written by Lu Xun. These works pointed to the direction in which the new literature

should head: literati should treat literary writing as a serious labor in service of the people, not a spare-time entertainment; they should pay attention to the real life of the common people; vernacular Chinese should be applied in writing; Western literature should be regarded as a model for new Chinese literature. Zhou Zuoren's essay "Literature for Humanity," which laid the foundation of modern Chinese literature and of the Literary Association's belief in "literature for life's sake" influenced indirectly the Chinese reception of Byron's life and poetry in the centenary issue.

After the New Literature Movement was well established by the end of the 1910s, Chinese intellectuals began to pursue their respective literary interests in the 1920s, and literary societies were formed. They published their writings in the periodicals which emerged during the May Fourth New Cultural Movement, intending to influence their readers through their translation and studies of foreign literature, as well as through their creative writing. One of the most important societies was the Literary Association, which was established in 1920 by twelve intellectuals, including the most accomplished literary scholars, translators and writers during the May Fourth New Culture Movement such as Zhou Zuoren, Shen Yanbing 沈雁冰 (1896-1981), Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) and Wang Tongzhao 王統照 (1897-1957). Later, the Association expanded to include more than 170 members. It was known for its purpose of "studying and introducing foreign literature, rearranging China's old literature and creating new literature" (Chow 1967, 296) and its literary belief that "literature is for life's sake."

In 1924, the Association dedicated the April issue almost exclusively to Byron's centenary. Because national crises continued to worsen after 1915, the Chinese reception of Byron's life and poetry still preserved a strong national and social consciousness. The poet was constantly praised for his selfless devotion to the independence of Greece. Recognition of the passionate character and rebellious spirit of his poetry was visible in every article written by Chinese critics. However, as Chinese intellectuals acquired more knowledge and deeper understanding of Western language and literature, they extended their study to cover other topics, such as

Byron's relationship to the Romantic literary tradition, the image of the Byronic hero, the psychological energy behind Byron's poetic career. Biographies and literary criticism written by Danish, Japanese, English and French literary scholars were translated, occupying almost one-third of the articles published in the issue, which helped the Chinese critics to develop their own studies.

More importantly, Chinese critics did not simply open up new horizons in their exploration of Byron's life and poetry, but they also assimilated their interest in the poet's experience and works into the literary ideas developed in the May Fourth New Culture Movement. In this memorial issue, the Literary Association's opinion that "literature is for life's sake" offered a literary approach for the Chinese critics in their study of Byron's life and poetry. In this opinion, they insisted that the nature of literature is a reflection of human life. Consequently, writers should create works to reflect real human life, and literary scholars should study literary works taking their social, historical and intellectual background and the personality of the author into consideration.

Therefore, the formation of the images of Byron and study of his poetry in China received more influence from the May-Fourth spirit and the Literary Association's literary perspective than vice versa. Byron's biography and his poetry, to some extent, both became literary works which could be analyzed with the Association's literary ideas. In this work, I intend to examine how Byron's life and his works were treated by Chinese intellectuals in the *Short Story Magazine's* memorial issue. Because the ideas of the May Fourth New Literature Movement and the Literary Association dominated this process, I will situate my exploration of this issue in the context that they provided. What the general literary ideas emerged during the May Fourth New Culture Movement were, how they influenced the Chinese reception of Byron's life and works, and how the Literary Association literary idea that "literature is for life's sake" had built up a solid framework for their study of Byron will be the major questions I will endeavor to answer in Chapter II.

CHAPTER II
 THE BASIS FOR THE CHINESE PRESENTATION OF BYRON:
 MAY FOURTH NEW LITERATURE, THE LITERARY ASSOCIATION, AND
THE SHORT STORY MAGAZINE

In the introduction, terms such as the May Fourth Movement, the May Fourth New Culture Movement, the Literary Association, and *The Short Story Magazine* were established as important components of the historical and intellectual background of the Chinese reception of Byron in 1924. In this chapter, I will try to provide some observations and answers to the questions I proposed at the end of the introduction. They are as follows: First, what were the general literary ideas of the May Fourth New Culture Movement that influenced Chinese intellectuals' understanding of Byron's life and poetry? Second, based on these general literary ideals, what literary opinions were developed by the Literary Association? Third, how did these literary ideas influence the Chinese reception of Byron in the centenary issue? Answers to these questions will help clarify the context in which Byron's life and works were studied by Chinese critics, which will be the major content of the following two chapters. The focus of this chapter is to clarify the theoretical basis formed by the May Fourth literary and social thoughts for the Chinese reception of Byron in the centenary issue. I will also present a general picture of how Byron and his poetry were treated by Chinese intellectuals. Detailed discussion will be given in the third and fourth chapter of the thesis.

Let us begin with the larger intellectual context provided by the May Fourth New Culture Movement. As was mentioned briefly in the introduction, the promotion of new Chinese literature is central to this Movement, and the emergence of new Chinese literature during this period is consequently regarded as the beginning of modern Chinese literary history. Understanding what makes this "new literature" so special, or, more accurately, understanding the May Fourth Chinese intellectuals'

differentiation between the “new literature” and the “old” Chinese literature, must serve as the starting point.

In order to offer a comprehensive answer to this question, many aspects of the Chinese definition of “new literature” would have to be brought into detailed discussion. My focus in this section is determined by my observations on the connection of “new literature” with the Literary Association’s literary insistence on a realistic literary approach and the Chinese reception of Byron. Nevertheless, many of these literary or social ideas lie at the core of Chinese intellectuals’ expectations of new Chinese literature, and some of them became the theoretical basis for the development of the Literary Association’s literary opinions.

The first literary idea developed by Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth period I would like to discuss is the most important and well-known one, i.e., the idea that “literature is for humanity” 人的文學 (ren de wenxue). This term came from Zhou Zuoren’s essay “Humane Literature,” published in *The New Youth* in December, 1918. Many scholars recognize “literature for humanity” as the “trademark” of the May-Fourth new Chinese literature, because the first sentence in Zhou’s article was put as such: “The New Literature that we must now promote may be expressed in one simple term, ‘humane literature’ 人的文學, and what we must reject is its opposite, ‘inhumane literature’ 非人的文學 (feren de wenxue)” (Denton 1996, 151).¹⁵

During the May Fourth period, a new generation of Chinese intellectuals who received education in Western languages, literature and philosophy claimed that the old literature, or “inhumane literature,” treats human nature in an “inhumane way.” It always replaces the voice of the author and of the people with the voice of Confucian sages, and real life and real human nature with Confucian moral judgment. It was

¹⁵ I use Ernst Wolff’s translation of Zhou Zuoren’s essay, which is included in *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writing on Literature 1893-1945*, edited by Kirk A. Denton. 151-161. According to the source noted in Denton’s book, this translation was previously published in Wolff, Ernst. 1971. *Chou Tso-jen*. Boston: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 97-105.

thought to “conceal” 瞞 (man) what is natural to human nature and human life to Chinese people and “deceive” 騙 (pian) them into abandoning their individuality and following Confucian ideology for hundreds of years (Xu and Zou 2008, 157).

New literature—or “humane literature”—must oppose the old literature—or “inhumane literature”—as Zhou pointed out in his article, which means that new literature must acknowledge the value of the individual 個人價值 (geren jiazhi) and personal freedom 個人自由 (geren ziyou) by recognizing human nature as “good” and “beautiful.” It best represented the new generation of Chinese intellectuals’ expectation of modern Chinese literature and their critique of old Chinese literature.

We acknowledge that man is a living being which, in its outward signs of life, does not differ at all from other living beings. We therefore believe that all man’s vital faculties being naturally endowed are beautiful and are good, and should find their complete satisfaction. Anything contrary to human nature, unnatural customs and institutions, should be condemned and amended. (Denton 1996, 153)

Zhou’s understanding of human nature was based on Renaissance literature. Zhou, himself, pointed out that this idea took root in Western literature beginning in the fifteenth century (Denton 1996, 152). As one can observe from this paragraph, Zhou thought that the new literature should respect and appreciate real life and real human nature, regarding what is “natural” to humanity as “good” and “beautiful,”—aspects that should be emancipated—instead of regarding such life and human nature as “evil” and “ugly” and in need of suppression. Consequently, new literature not only allows but also dictates the author to reveal real life and real human nature, instead of covering them up or suppressing them with moral judgment. In words, Zhou seems to suggest that the “individuality” of a person must find “complete satisfaction,” both in literature and in real life. The new Chinese literati, therefore, must endeavor to create a new literature that emancipates human nature and respects individuality.

Although Zhou did not contribute any writing to Byron’s centenary issue, his idea shaped the basic attitude of Chinese critics in their studies of Byron’s life and poetry. Chinese intellectuals fully explored and appreciated Byron’s personality and

his behavior. Every aspect of Byron's personal life, including his sexual desire, love affairs, drinking habits, and so on were not covered up but were fully explored by Chinese critics, because they considered these behaviors to be "natural" to human beings. More importantly, although the critics didn't approve of his problematic life style and stated that Chinese youth should not emulate it, they never criticized Byron on the grounds of moral ethics and viewed his "immoral" behaviors with considerable tolerance. The faithful and understanding attitude of the Chinese intellectuals toward Byron's life can be considered to be an attack on the old literature which "deceives" and "conceals." Therefore, their studies of Byron's biography also belong to the "humane literature" they promoted.

The last sentence in the quotation revealed another aspect of "literature for humanity," i.e., people should oppose the "unnatural customs and institutions" of their beautiful and good human nature. It points to the second idea I would like to discuss about "literature for humanity," i.e., in the opinion of the May Fourth intellectuals, individuals must rise up against the old customs, institutions, and moral ethics that repressed free expression and the realization of their individuality. New Chinese intellectuals also regarded the new Chinese literature's mission as to encourage people to confront the corrupted social and political system with daring expressions of their individuality in real life as much as in literature.

One of the reasons why Romanticism became one of the most influential literary trends during the May-Fourth period lies in its promotion of daring self-expression and individuality, which was congenial to May Fourth literary and social ideas. Accordingly, in their study of Byron's life and poetry, Chinese intellectuals were especially attracted by his "passion" 熱情 (reqing), which indicated his impulsive personality, and, more importantly, the candid expression of his unique character in his life and his poetry. Byron's courageous self-expression in his poetry was also admired for its ardent features and sincerity because both aspects constitute the poet's fighting against "hypocritical" society—a society that accused him of living and writing "immorally." Chinese intellectuals also emphasized Byron's

rebellious spirit 反抗精神 (fankang jingshen) in his life and poetry, which critics regarded as originating from his passionate personality. They thought that this rebellious spirit reflected the poet's courageous confrontation with 19th-century British society, which desired to annihilate his individuality. As a “passionate rebel,” Byron became a representative of the Romantic spirit—an example for Chinese people in their confrontation with “unnatural customs and institutions” and for the new Chinese literati in their creation of “humane literature.”

In the former discussion, I tried to point out the important role played by the May Fourth Chinese intellectuals' insistence on emancipating human nature and individuality in their promotion of the new Chinese literature and their treatment of Byron's life and poetry. Now I would like to discuss how Chinese intellectuals consciously put their promotion of “individuality” 個性 (gexing), sometimes called “individualism” 個人主義 (geren zhuyi), through the temperament of either their humanitarian ideas or their emphasis on the individual's social responsibility.

This choice of the Chinese intellectuals was based on their deep concern for China's social crises during the May Fourth period. Some Chinese intellectuals, Zhou Zuoren, for example, hoped that the foreign threats China faced would gradually lessen, if everyone in the world respected other people's individuality and benefits as they did their own. Some, such as Hu Shi, emphasized that Chinese people who were awakened to see their individuality and the backwardness of old Chinese society must actively apply their insistence on “personal freedom” to their endeavors in creating a new China. Only in this way, as Hu asserted, could the individual contribute to the formation of an environment in which both his or her own individuality and that of others would receive respect and emancipation.

The influence of humanitarianism on the May-Fourth promotion of individuality came from Zhou Zuoren, which was also presented in “Literature for Humanity.” Before composing these two articles, Zhou read the play *The Dream of a Youth* 一個青年的夢 (*Yige qingnian de meng*)—written by the Japanese scholar Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路實篤. Zhou was especially encouraged by

Mushanokōji's humanistic and pacifist ideas, and integrated them into his composition of "Literature for Humanity" (Pan 2011, 121). Consequently, while claiming that the needs and wills of the individual should be respected, Zhou also pointed out what the ideal relationships between individuals were so that everyone could live in a humane and harmonious society. In Zhou's opinion, "man should live a life of benefiting self while also benefiting others, and of benefiting others while also benefiting himself," both in material moral aspects; "realization of such a humane, ideal life would actually benefit every single person on earth" (Denton 1996, 154). These ideas constituted what Zhou Zuoren called "an individualistic ideology of basing everything on man" (154). These ideas of Zhou Zuoren's represented Chinese intellectuals' belief in humanitarianism (Pan 2011, 119), which continued to influence their writings and introduction of foreign literature into China. As Zhou hoped, because a person wants a "humane" life for him or herself, he or she must also regard it necessary for other people to have the same life. Therefore, as Zhou expected, while people are trying to benefit themselves, they should also endeavor to benefit others.

Zhou Zuoren's belief in individualistic humanitarianism was representative of some Chinese intellectuals' (Pan 2011, 119). It also influenced some Chinese critics' introduction of foreign criticism of Byron's poetry. In the centenary issue, the effect of humanitarian belief on the Chinese reception of Byron was mainly implied rather than explicated by Chinese critics' praise of Byron's selfless sacrifice for the independence of Greece. Nevertheless, one translated foreign critical essay, namely "Bailun de kuaile zhuyi" 拜倫的快樂主義 ("The Hedonism of Byron"), was written by the Japanese scholar Kimura Takataro 木村鷹太郎 and translated by the Chinese literary editor and scholar Fan Zhongyun 樊仲云 (1901-1989).¹⁶ In his essay, Kimura argued that Byron's hedonistic life style, reflected by Byron's poetic drama *Sardanapalus*, though frequently criticized as "immoral" by Byron's contemporaries,

¹⁶ I owe my knowledge of the Japanese pronunciation and Romanization of 木村鷹太郎 to Chiaki Sakai, the Japanese Studies Librarian of the University of Iowa Library.

especially his British fellowmen, was actually “humanitarian” in two aspects. First, to live up to the goal of “joy” 快樂 was actually natural to human nature. Not only should Sardanapalus’ way of life be appreciated, in ideal circumstances, everyone should follow his example. Second, on realizing that the goal of life is “joy” instead of “glory” won by killing his enemies and repressing his subjects, Sardanapalus became a true humanitarian who refused to bring war on his people. Because Kimura regarded Sardanapalus as a literary embodiment of Byron, he transported his interpretation of Sardanapalus to his understanding of Byron’s life. Therefore, Chinese readers were presented with the image of Byron as a humanitarian, not as a “passionate rebel” or a “war hero.” Kimura’s unique perspective was not prevalent in Chinese critics’ writings or in foreign critical works introduced by Chinese intellectuals in the centenary issue. Nevertheless, this article displays how the humanitarian belief was still affecting Chinese intellectuals, and how they continued to absorb this idea from Japanese intellectuals.

Yet, Byron’s “humanitarian” aspect did not attract as much attention from the Chinese intellectuals as did his identity as a “rebel” and “revolutionary.” Not only was Byron represented by Chinese intellectuals as an “individual” of daring and passionate self-expression and rebellious spirit, these attributes of his personality and his poetic works were always considered to have the effect of a “model” for Chinese literati and Chinese people. In this way, the “individualistic” insistence on personal freedom and personal authority of Byron were also extended to human beings in general. More importantly, Chinese intellectuals always added that his fight for personal freedom was connected with “social” significance; they either emphasized the representativeness of his resistance against repression or they praised how he made his belief in personal freedom a reality in his fight for the independence of Greece. These emphases of Chinese intellectuals in their studies of Byron’s individualistic tendency demonstrate that the Chinese focus seems to be on the social significance of individualism.

The article I would like to bring into the discussion regarding how May Fourth intellectuals emphasized the social significance of their promotion of individuality is Hu Shi's essay "Fei Geren zhuyi de xin shenghuo" 非個人主義的新生活 ("The New Life of Non-Individualism"), a lecture which Hu first gave in the symposium held by the Tianjin Student Union 天津學生聯合會 (*Tianjin xuesheng lianhehui*), in 1920.¹⁷ It was recorded by Liu Zhanqing 劉贊清 and later published in *Shishi Xinbao* 時事新報 (*New Times*) in the same year. In his writing, Hu clearly distinguished "true individualism" from "egoism" 為我主義 (*wei wo zhuyi*) and "self-concerning individualism" 獨善的個人主義 (*dushan de geren zhuyi*).

As Hu pointed out, different from "egoism" and "self-concerning individualism," "true individualism" is personal insistence on one's "individuality." It has two features: one is "independent thinking," which "refuses to regard other's ears, eyes, and brain as one's own"; the other is "taking full responsibility for the consequences of one's ideas and beliefs, not fearing authority and confinement, recognizing only the truth and not worrying about personal benefits" (Hu 1981, 467). A person of true awareness of his or her individuality must also realize that "the individual is formed by numerous social forces," "the reformation of society must begin with the reformation of the social forces that form the individual," and "to reform the society is to reform the individual" (474). The "true individualism" in Hu's theory is related to society in two ways. First, it puts the individual in opposition against "authority," which would perhaps remind us of "unnatural customs and institutions," in Zhou's words. Second, it motivates the individual to assume responsibility to reform society, so that the reformed society would provide social forces that would create new individuals of true individualistic awareness.

In the centenary issue, Chinese intellectuals' reading of Byron's individualism reflected their position on the issue, which was similar to Hu Shi's. Though Chinese intellectuals recognized the "selfish" aspect of Byron's individualism, they spared no

¹⁷ I offer my own translation of Hu Shi's essay.

effort in recognizing its value in social reformation. The word “individual” 個人 (geren) was usually used in expressions such as “individual freedom” 個人自由 (geren ziyou) and “individual authority” 個人權威 (geren quanwei). On the one hand, though Chinese critics considered Byron to be a natural rebel more than a conscious social reformist, they still thought that his rebellion against social norms and moral ethics was of great social influence and significance. At least for Chinese people, Byron’s individualistic insitencies manifested in his life and poetry encouraged people to challenge “unjust authority” and “unnatural customs and institutions.” On the other hand, Byron’s heroic deeds in Greece never failed to give Chinese intellectuals a reason to praise. It continued to serve as the best example for them to explore how he expanded his “individual” pursuit of liberty to his selfless fight for another country’s independence.

In summary of the former discussion, the literary and social ideas of Zhou Zuoren and Hu Shi advanced and constituted the development of new Chinese literature and Chinese reception of Western literature, including Byron. First, their ideas represented Chinese intellectuals’ mainstream thinking during the May Fourth period, which influenced the formation of new Chinese literature and the Chinese introduction of Western literature. From the brief discussion of the centenary issue’s presentation of Byron’s life and poetry that I have given above, it can be sensed that to some extent, Byron was portrayed as a British “May Fourth youth.” In order to understand why Byron was portrayed this way, it is necessary to trace back to the original social and literary ideas of Chinese intellectuals before they provided their studies of Byron in 1924. Second, the ideas of Zhou Zuoren developed in “Literature for Humanity” were crucial to the Literary Association’s belief that “literature is for life’s sake” (Pan 2011, 121). Because the centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine* was accomplished almost solely by members of the Literary Association, how their literary insitencies—which seem to be quite uniform—influenced their approach in their study of Byron’s biography and poetry must be explored. Zhou’s

writing and ideas consequently can be read as the basis of the Literary Association's literary ideas and its understanding and presentation of Byron's life and poetry.

In the following section, I will concentrate on the discussion of how the Literary Association's insistence on promoting "literature for life's sake" 為人生的文學 influenced their study of Byron's biography and poetry. Whereas Zhou and Hu's social and literary thoughts influenced later intellectuals' attitudes toward Byron, the Association's idea determined the critical approach taken by critics in their study. More specifically, Byron's biography and poetry were examined from a "realistic" perspective, from which Chinese critics explored the environment, epoch, and personality of the poet as the basis of his literary career. Accordingly, his poetry was read as a reflection of these factors. The passionate features and rebellious spirit revealed in his works find their roots in his experiences and personality.

Before this discussion, I would like to offer some background information on the Literary Association and the periodicals they used to express their literary thoughts.

After attaining general success in their joint advocacy of new literature during the mid-1910s, Chinese intellectuals split into different groups, beginning in the 1920s, according to their respective literary interests (Chow 1967, 283). From then on, literary groups constituted the major force in the May Fourth New Culture Movement. About forty literary groups were established and around one hundred literary periodicals were published from 1921 to 1923 (Zhu, Zhu and Long 2010, 34). These groups were formed by writers and scholars who shared similar literary interests and ideas, and they either created their own periodicals or reformed old periodicals for their own use in expressing these ideas.

The Literary Association was one of the most influential literary organizations among those active at the time. It was founded by twelve Chinese intellectuals—Shen Yanbing, Zheng Zhenduo, Zhou Zuoren, Wang Tongzhao, Zhu Xizu 朱希祖, Jiang Baili 蔣百里, Xu Dishan 許地山, Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶, Sun Fuyuan 孫伏園, Geng Jizhi 耿濟之, and Qu Shiyong 瞿世英—all active in the May

Fourth New Culture Movement for several years (Hockx 1998, 56). Shen, Zheng, Wang, and Geng all contributed important essays to the centenary issue. Opposing both the idea that “literature is used to convey the Dao of Confucian sages” and the attitude that literature was for fun and entertainment, in its manifesto and later practice, the Association proposed that new Chinese literature ought to be a serious form of labor for humanity’s sake (Chow 1967, 296). Following its inauguration, the Association reformed the old, entertaining literature magazine, *The Short Story Magazine*, and used it as the major periodical in which they published their literary studies and creative writing, which advocated new Chinese literature. Later, the supplement issue to the *New Times*, which was called *Literature Trimonthly* 文學旬刊 (*Wenxue xunkan*), became the journal of the Association (Hockx 1998, 60). Literary essays concerning critical study, translations of foreign literature, and creative writings of the members were published mainly in these two periodicals.

The Association regarded the introduction of Western literature as the core of its self-assigned mission. As was displayed in its manifesto written by Zhou Zuoren, the Association’s mission is defined as “studying and introducing world literature, rearranging old Chinese literature, and creating new literature” 研究介紹世界文學, 整理中國舊文學, 創造新文學 (Chow 1967, 296). Right after its reformation in 1921, translation and study of foreign literature gradually became central to the activities of the Association and its major organs (Liu 2006, 19). According to statistics, 804 literary works from 39 countries and 304 authors were introduced in *The Short Story Magazine* from 1921 to 1926 (17). Nevertheless, considering the number and quality of the articles published in the centenary issue, Byron was certainly the one who received special attention from Chinese intellectuals.

“Literature is for life’s sake” provided a realistic approach for Chinese intellectuals’ reception of Byron in the centenary issue. This approach was rooted in the envisioned new Chinese literature, which had already emerged in Zhou Zuoren’s article, “Literature for Humanity.” Shen Yanbing’s essays, “Wenxue he ren de guanxi ji zhongguo gulai duiyu wenxuezhe shenfen de wuren” 文學和人的關係及中國古

來對於文學者身份的誤認 (“The Relations of Literature to Man and Ancient China’s Mistaken Ideas on the Position of Man of Letter”), published in 1921, and “Wenxue yu rensheng” 文學與人生 (“Literature and Life”), in 1923, further developed Zhou’s idea and prescribed a “realistic” realm for the development of “literature for humanity.” Again, it is necessary to point out that Zhou did not write about Byron in the centenary issue and that Shen’s essay did not develop an in-depth discussion of Byron’s life and poetry using this realistic approach. He simply marked out the “good” Byron—the one the Chinese youth should emulate—from the “bad” Byron—the one the Chinese youth should avoid. However, the literary ideas these authors developed formed the basis for the Literary Association’s reception of Byron and were reflected in that reception.

Based on his understanding of human nature and the ideal life for human beings, Zhou Zhuren, in “Literature for Humanity,” pointed out two types of literature that he considered to be “literatures for humanity.” One is “the description of man’s ideal life, or writings on the heights of advancement attainable by men”; the other is “description of man’s ordinary life, or his inhumane life, which can also contribute to the purpose of study” (Denton 1996, 154). The first kind seems to be related to Zhou’s hope for an ideal relationship between individuals, which he expected would someday exist in China, while the second tends to deal more closely with the usually unsatisfactory realities in Chinese society during the 1920s.

In the two essays mentioned above, Shen Yanbing clearly demonstrated his preference for the second type of “literature for humanity,” which revealed his deep concern for Chinese social reality in the 1920s. The second type concentrated on the “ordinary” and “inhumane” life of common people, which were much more “realistic” to the Chinese than the “ideal life” that exists mainly, if not completely, in the imagination of early twentieth-century Chinese society. In “Literature and Life,” Shen Yanbing, who wrote under his penname Mao Dun 茅盾, states, “although it cannot be denied that included within literature are some works that transcend normal life and some that create idealized worlds, literary works of this kind can be very good

indeed, but all such works lack a social context” (Denton 1996, 192).¹⁸ The kind of literature that he proposed was the one that reflects social context, because, as Shen put it, “literature is a reflection of life” (191).

In “The Relations of Literature to Man and Ancient China’s Mistaken Ideas on the Position of Man of Letters,”¹⁹ published in *The Short Story Magazine*, January 1921, Shen wrote:

The purpose of literature is to reflect human life comprehensively; no matter in a realistic way, or in a symbolic or metaphoric way, its aim is always to reflect life and expand the happiness and compassion of humankind, using the characteristics of the epoch as its background. Literature is now a kind of science. It has its own object, i.e., life—modern life; it has its tools, i.e., poetry, drama and fiction... The life that is reflected by the literati should be the life of the whole of humankind, reflected using artistic methods, having not the slightest bit of selfish motives and subjectivity. Naturally, characters in literary works also have ideas and emotions. But these ideas and emotions must belong to the populace, to humanity, not the person of the author. This kind of literature, no matter if it is romantic, realistic, expressional or mystical, in one word, it is literature for humanity—the real literature. (Shen 1921, 1)

The most important sentence in this paragraph seems to be the first and the last one, in which Shen clearly pointed out the purpose of literature is to “reflect human life,” which makes it the “literature for humanity—the real literature.” The “epoch,” “modern life,” and “humanity” provided materials for literati to create this kind of literature, and the literati were simultaneously required to maintain an “objective” and “selfless” instead of “subjective” and “selfish” attitude in their creation of this kind of literature. Shen’s forbidding the authors to replace the ideas and emotions that “belong to the populace, to humanity” may seem impossible to literary composition.

¹⁸ I use John Berninghausen’s translation of Shen Yanbing’s writing. See Denton, Kirk A., ed. 1996. *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature 1893-1945*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. 190-195.

¹⁹ This title is translated by Chow Tse-tsung. See page 442, note 57 in Chow, Tse-tsung. 1967. *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press. Nevertheless, I offer my translation of Shen Yanbing’s writing, as Chow did not translate the text.

Nevertheless, his opinion that it is the real and not the ideal life that should be reflected in the new literature was clearly and emphatically expressed.

Shen's argument helps to explain why the Chinese intellectuals who contributed to the centenary issue treated Byron's biography and his poetry as literary works reflecting human lives. From the former, Chinese critics observed the real life of Byron; from the latter, they tended to view Byron's ideas and emotions as representative of the Romantic era and congenial to sentiments of the people—especially the Chinese people. The ideas and emotions of “excessive individualism” reflected in Byron's works, which drew criticism from Western scholars, was presented by Chinese critics as “universal.” It seems that Byron's works were judged by their positive effects—which, like all enduring literary classics, transform what belongs to the author into what finds empathy in the readers—instead of being judged by the motive of his literary composition, which might not be as “universal” as Chinese critics desired.

From the former quotation, it seems that Shen treated “realism” as a general literary attitude rather than a strict literary approach. However, the following paragraphs from the article “Literature and Life” suggested that Shen developed his earlier theory a step further, creating the “realistic” framework, which many of the Chinese critics such as Wang Tongzhao used in their study of Byron's life and poetry.

As we now consider the relationship between literature and life, it does not suffice to merely illustrate the “social context.” We may discuss this further by subdividing it into the following four items:

(1) Race...

(2) Environment... Each era has its own environment and also has its own literature belonging to that era and environment... contemporary ideological trends, the political situation, social customs, and practices all go into the environment of a given period. The influence of his environment is constantly and stealthily at work upon any writer...

(3) Era. ... The sense of the English word, Epoch, even includes the intellectual trends of the times, the social conditions, etc... The Zeitgeist governing politics, philosophy, literature, art, etc., is as inseparable from them as a shadow from shape...

(4) The writer's personality... The works of a major author, albeit influenced by the era and environment, will inevitably be imbued with the

author's personality. In this vein it was the French writer Anatole France claimed, "Any work of literature, strictly speaking, is the autobiography of the author. (Denton 1996, 191-194)

This paragraph explicitly demonstrated the detailed elements constituting the realist approach that Shen suggested Chinese writers and scholars practice in their writing and literary study. Also, it pointed out the elements they should attend to in their study of literary works, including Byron's biography and his poetic works, namely "race," the "environment," the "era" or "epoch," and "the writer's personality." While the first element did not play an important role in Chinese critics' study, the latter three were extremely important. When studying Byron's biography, Chinese critics traced the factors that help to form Byron's personality back to his parents' personalities and the familial and social environment in which he grew up. Byron's personality and the social environment, precisely the British society and post-Waterloo Europe, were treated as the context of his poetic works. The author's passionate personality was especially regarded as the source of the candid feature and rebellious spirit in Byron's poetry, which could be explained by Shen's agreement of Anatole France's idea that any work of literature is the author's autobiography. Accordingly, Byron's poetry reflected his character and the influences of environment and epoch, both positive and negative. By situating Byron's life, character, and poetry in the larger social and historical context, Chinese critics characterized Byron as a representative of his time and his poetry the reflection of an era, instead of a person and poet who was excessively preoccupied with his own ideas and emotions. Moreover, although they acknowledged that Byron's poetry was infused with his personal feelings, he was still presented as an exemplar whose daring self-expression was considered to represent the "Zeitgeist" of the Romantic era.

Compared with the first introduction of Byron offered by Liang Qichao, the literary ideas developed by Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth period

provided a clearer literary approach for the Chinese reception of Byron's life and poetry. As Chinese intellectuals of the Literary Association applied their idea of "literature for life's sake" to their reading, they treated Byron and his works as a case study. Using the literary theories they developed, they explored the future of new Chinese literature. Because of this feature of the Chinese study of Byron, I will firstly offer observations on Byron's images that emerged during Chinese representation in Chapter III, and then the reception of his poetry in Chapter IV, and lastly Chinese translations of Byron's poetry in Chapter V.

CHAPTER III

BYRON'S LIFE: A LEGENDARY HERO AND A REAL PERSON

Ever since Byron became known in China, his life and personality had continued to attract attention from Chinese intellectuals. Chinese critics who contributed to the centenary issue, however, were not simply “interested” in these topics; they considered a comprehensive study of them to be crucial to deepening their and their readers’ understanding of what kind of person Byron had been, what kind of life he led, and most important of all, what kind of basis had been created by them for Byron’s poetic career. In this chapter, I will explore the outcomes achieved by Chinese critics in their study, which was marked by their constant emphasis on the two most prominent features of Byron’s life and personality, i.e., his passion character and rebellious spirit.

First of all, we need to clarify what material was available to Chinese critics in their study. A significant enrichment of Chinese acquaintance with foreign biographies and criticism contributed greatly to the development of Chinese knowledge and understanding of Byron’s life and personality. Although general biographical information, including Byron’s birth, his childhood, self-exile from Britain and death in the Greek War of Independence, became known to Chinese critics and readers, Su Manshu and Wang Guowei also began to notice the impulsive and reckless character of the poet before the centenary issue was published, Byron had been characterized primarily as a hero who sacrificed his life for the freedom of the Greek people. It was not until the 1920s that Byron was presented as a real person, a complex character who had made mistakes and had been as troubled by life as any ordinary people. One could attribute these developments partly to the fact that more foreign biographies and critical studies of Byron became accessible to Chinese intellectuals during the 1910s and 1920s. Also, as more Chinese literary scholars and critics received systematic language training and literary education during this period,

they were more adequately equipped with the tools and knowledge with which they could conduct their research and study.

The bibliography titled “An Introduction of Important Works about Byron” 關於拜倫的重要著作介紹 (“Guanyu Bailun de zhongyao zhuzuo jieshao”) written by Xu Diaofu 徐调孚 (1901-1981) under one of his pseudonyms Pu Shao 蒲梢, exemplifies Chinese intellectuals’ increased knowledge of foreign scholarships on Byron’s life and poetry. The works mentioned by Xu in this bibliography include: seventeen complete poetic works, eight miscellaneous works, forty-two individual collections of Byron’s poetry and drama published from 1807 to 1886, seven poetic selections published from 1828 to 1881, five collections of Byron’s correspondence with friends and family, and seventy-one biographies, critical biographies, literary history and criticism concerning Byron’s life and works. Especially noteworthy are works by several Western critics, whose comments were frequently quoted by Chinese critics. Some of them were also translated almost in full by Chinese critics. They include: Matthew Arnold’s *Essays in Criticism*, A. Autsin’s *A Vindication of Lord Byron*, Mazzini’s *Life and Writings*, H.A. Taine’s *Historie de la Litterature Anglaise* and Georg Morris Cohen Brandes’s *Main Currents in 19th Century Literature*, volume four on Naturalism in England were quoted or mentioned in Chinese biographies and critical essays. Xu gave the names of the books, periodicals and essays both in Chinese and English, along with the date, place and name of publisher. The size of the page, whether they were illustrated or not and Xu’s own comments on the quality of the books were also included.

Judging by Xu Diaofu’s work, one could be ascertained of two facts: first, the works contributed by Chinese critics to this memorial issue were developed based on a good knowledge of Byron’s life and work as well as how he was received by Western scholars; second, because only few of these works were translated into Chinese, it is very likely that the Chinese critics accessed the majority of them mainly in their original languages. They read some works, for example Taine’s and Mazzini’s works, in their English translations. Under these circumstances, Chinese critics were

exposed to bibliographic information greater in amount and better in quality than during the 1900s and 1910s. Also, foreign critical studies helped to deepen Chinese critics' understanding of Byron's life and personality. Therefore, it might not be too farfetched to say that Chinese critics owed their achievements in their study to with the help of good foreign scholarship.

As the Western sources of Byron's biographical information are clarified, I therefore continue my discussion of Chinese treatment of these topics. There are two points that I want to clarify, a good understanding of which will be helpful for facilitating further discussion. They are: first, what general attitude was held by Chinese critics in their analysis of Byron's life and character, and second, what major features of them became the focus of Chinese critics in their exploration because of this attitude they maintained.

Though they characterized Byron as a real man of complex and contradictory character and paid attention to almost every aspect of his life, Chinese critics constantly praised the selfless, courageous, candid and rebellious Byron and criticized or understated the egotistical and dissolute one. Shen Yanbing's "The Centennial Memorial of the Death of Byron" 拜倫百年紀念 ("Bailun bainian jinian") exemplifies this perspective. Shen expressed his hope that his readers would distinguish between the Byron whose admirable character and heroic deeds they should learn from and the Byron whose life-style they ought to avoid:

There were two Byrons: one was violent, dissolute, selfish and sensuous; the other is generous, gallant and noble. The former represented Byron in the first half of his life; the latter the second half.

If Byron still deserves people's memorial a hundred years after his death, perhaps it is because of this [Byron fought to the death in Greece]; China is now in need of the kind of person who has the rebellious spirit and [writes] literature of tempestuous character of Byron to save the dying hearts of the people, while the violent, dissolute, selfish and sensuous Byronic way of life is what Chinese society must abstain from;

The Byron-mania has already passed. Now we memorize him because he is a poet full of rebellious spirit. Byron in his earlier life did not intend to do [the dissolute deeds], while in his later life—though his life was so short—he was penitent. (Shen 1924, 1-2)

The binary in Shen's writing is quite explicit from the beginning. Shen pointed out that the reason why this centenary issue was brought into being was that Byron was a hero who died for the independence of Greece and a poet of rebellious spirit. On the other hand, Shen asserted that the "Byronic way of life" marked by "violent, dissolute, selfish and sensuous" features must be completely avoided, though he did not suggest that it should remain unexplored in Chinese study of Byron's life and personality.

The influence of this attitude toward Byron's life and character is visible throughout the centenary issue. First, because the principle of "literature for life's sake" promotes a "realistic" presentation of an individual's experience and personality, Chinese critics probed into Byron's daily life and even sometimes his dissolute lifestyle either by translating foreign biographies or by giving their own account of it. This not only helped to present Chinese readers with a vivid picture of Byron's life but also reflected Chinese critics' realistic approach which was applied to their study of Byron. Second, while trying to be as faithful as possible to the reality, Chinese critics also avoided mentioning certain details in Byron's life, especially when they tried to explain why Byron's wife left him and why he chose to leave Britain and never returned. In this way, they managed to keep the heroic image of Byron free of others' doubts about his personal integrity. Third and most importantly, in acknowledging that Byron was a complex man, Chinese critics commented on his life and character with a special stress on the passionate characteristic and rebellious spirit. In this way, the dominant position of the heroic image of Byron was not endangered by too many "scandals" and maintained its heroic status in the representation. In the opinion of Chinese critics, Byron's life could be summarized as his life-long confrontation with the external suppression of his unique character and his personal freedom, and therefore, also as a lifetime's manifestation of his passionate personality and rebellious spirit. These two features were considered by Chinese critics to be essential constituents of Byron's life and personality, and Byron's poetry a "reflection" of them. In comparison, Byron's daily life and dissolute lifestyle did not play an important role in Chinese reading of Byron's poetry.

Because the Chinese introduction and study of Byron's life and character were shaped by the binary attitude and the emphasis on passionate personality and rebellious spirit, and the outcome of Chinese analysis of these two features was crucial to the Chinese reception of Byron's poetry, it seems to be an effective strategy here to focus mainly on how the passionate and rebellious image of Byron was presented by Chinese critics both through translation of foreign works and original critical essays. At the same time, I will also explore how other characteristics of Byron, for example, his melancholic and depressed temperance, and his problematic life-style were fitted into or stand distinct from these two major features. After this major mission is accomplished, I will provide a brief observation of how Byron was presented in his daily life. In this way, I intend to lay the ground-work for the discussion of Chinese study of Byron's poetry in the next chapter.

It can be observed from Chinese critics' original essays and their translation of foreign critics' works that Byron's passionate personality was regarded as the origin of other characteristics of Byron and a source of the inexhaustible energy of Byron's life. This interpretation was formed by the understanding that passion was a natural disposition of Byron, inherited by him from his impetuous mother and his reckless father. Brandes's work, which was translated, summarized, and titled as "Brandes's Essay on Byron" 勃蘭兌斯的拜倫論 ("Bolanduisi de Bailun Lun") by Zhang Wentian 张闻天 (1900-1976), pointed it out most clearly to the Chinese readers. "Uncontrollable passionateness, differing only in its manifestations and its force, was thus characteristic of both Byron's parents" and thus "the poet had wild blood in his veins" (Brandes 1906, 284).²⁰ Wang Tongzhao, in his essay "Byron's Thoughts and Comments on His Poetry" 拜倫的思想及其詩歌的評論 ("Bilun de sixiang jiqi

²⁰ This article was a translation of Brandes's observations of Byron's life and poetry in *Main Currents in 19th Century Literature*, volume four "Naturalism in England." Zhang did not translate the entire writing, but selected parts he thought most interesting and important. Other parts were omitted or briefly summarized. Nevertheless, because the greater part of what Zhang translated is quite faithful to Brandes's original writing, I choose to quote Brandes's original writing instead of translating Zhang's translation.

shige de pinglun”) noted that the “warm-hearted nature” 熱心的性質 (rexin de xingzhi) of Byron “mainly came from his mother” (Wang 1924, 3). This passionate nature also made Byron a selfless and energetic man. As Wang put it: “None of the people who study Byron’s deeds talk about his courage and warmhearted attitude without approval.” Wang mentioned two examples to support his argument: Byron stood against a bully for his friend when he was in Harrow School, and later in his life, he assisted Italian revolutionaries in fighting for the independence of their country. Wang then praised: “How great is the fact that he put his ardent ideas into practice” (Wang 1924, 3). It seems to Wang as well as many other Chinese critics that the passionate personality of Byron led directly to his resistance to oppression and love of freedom. As Chinese critics keenly observed, Byron became a hero who died for Greece not simply because he “felt” for their misfortune, but more importantly he put his ideals into action.

While the energetic aspect of Byron’s passionate personality was well-acknowledged, many critics noticed the melancholic and depressed side of it. William Joseph Long’s study of Byron’s life and poetry, which was translated by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 (1902-1985) and titled as “A Critical Biography of Byron” 拜倫評傳 (“Bailun pingzhuan”), reminded the reader of Byron’s poetry to keep in mind that he was a “disappointed and embittered man” both in his personal life and his literary career (Long 1919, 408).²¹ Gan Naiguang 甘乃光 (1897-1956) in his writing observed that Byron was on the one hand “full of emotions” 富於情感 (fuyu qinggan), while on the other “born with a sorrowful root” 生帶愁根 (shengdai chougen) (Gan 1924, 1). To some extent, Chinese critics suggested that the depressed and melancholic side of Byron’s temperance resulted from the confrontation between his ardent and energetic emotions and the apathetic and cruel external environment of

²¹ Zhao selected William Joseph Long’s discussion on Byron’s life and poetry in Long’s book *English Literature: Its History and Its Significance for the Life of the English-Speaking World*. Zhao’s translation, though sometimes inaccurate, preserves the original meanings of Long’s work. Therefore, I quote Long’s original writing directly, instead of translating Zhao’s translation.

the 19th century European society. For example, Brandes pried into complex psychological cause of Byron's choice to be a dissolute, regarding it as a result of Byron's suppressed passionate personality:

Byron's excesses did not proceed from too high spirits. He was oppressed, not only by the melancholy which attacks most youths of remarkable ability when they find themselves, with their untried powers, face to face with nothing but questions, but, in addition to this, by the melancholy which was a result of his passionate character and his upbringings. (Brandes 1906, 263)

Fan Zhongyun 樊仲云 implied that the “pessimistic and melancholic” 悲觀失望 (beiguan shiwang) mentality of Byron (also of the Romantic literature in general) resulted from the “springing liveliness in his heart and personal impulse” which was “suppressed” and “disappointed” by the social and political circumstances, including the conservative British society and the failure of the French Revolution (Fan 1924, 3). The melancholic side of Byron, as Chinese critics claimed in their own essays and in the translated foreign biography, also resulted from his passionate personality.

The co-existence of the “energetic” and “depressive” aspects of Byron's personality and the conflict between Byron as an individual and the 19th century European society made Byron relatable to the Chinese readers, especially youth, and Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth Movement. On the one hand, the new generation of young people was enthused with the desire to break free from the old live to pursue a new life according to their own ideals and wishes, especially to marry whom they chose instead of following their parents' arrangements. On the other hand, rather unfortunately, realities proved to be disappointing to them. The old family was not easy to escape easily, especially when the youths were at a loss about what they could do to survive financially after cutting off their connection to the family. To Chinese critics, the gap between ideas and realities also brought a general spiritual gloom around 1924 (Xu and Zou 2008, 101). On the path leading toward the new moral value and personal freedom, backwardness in every aspect of Chinese society posed a great hindrance (100). They began to see how difficult it was for their social and political ideals to be realized during the 1920s. During this period, social and

political stability and progress were frequently disturbed by wars among the warlords. Foreign incursions produced great economic crisis and seriously imperiled the integrity of Chinese territory and sovereignty. The corrupted government supported itself by submitting either to the warlords' influence or to foreign colonial forces. Consequently, it was not difficult for Chinese intellectuals and youth to find in Byron a great resemblance. They had enough reasons to regard themselves as equally enthusiastic about personal and national freedom and independence, and equally disappointed by realities as Byron. In this sense, Byron was not just a "hero" who could not be discouraged. His Chinese admirers found that he could be as disappointed and depressed as ordinary people when faced with cruel realities. Therefore, one could say that the Byron was characterized by Chinese critics and imagined by Chinese readers not simply as a dauntless hero, but a real person of not only energetic and passionate but also depressed and melancholy sentiments.

Nevertheless, Chinese critics seemed more eager to present Byron as an encouragement for their readers as well as themselves than to stop at the point of portraying Byron as a real man. Though Byron's disposition was under the shadow of depression and melancholy, he was obviously not to be read as a helpless victim of his misfortune. For this purpose, Chinese promotion of Byron's rebellious spirit produced the most desired effect. As implied by Chinese critics in their writings, this characteristic also originated from the Byron's passionate personality. The "wild blood in his veins" always stimulated him to fight back against the repression imposed on him by an external environment. As Wang Tongzhao noted of Byron's deeds in Harrow School and in Italy, it was Byron's passionate personality inherited from his parents that led him to manifest his rebellious nature in response to whatever imposed restraints and suffering on him. When this "rebellious spirit" was aroused into action, Byron's passionate disposition is much enlivened and directed toward the positive side, away from the shadows of depression and melancholy.

Because Chinese critics thought Byron was born as a passionate child, the rebellious spirit was also considered by them to have manifested itself since his

childhood, as it was considered to be a product of Byron's personality. This reading of Chinese critics demonstrated their sincerity and eagerness to present Byron as a courageous hero for Chinese people to admire and follow. Support for their argument was found in Byron's resistances to the mistreatment of his impetuous mother, his famous tearing apart his coat in front of the nurse who scolded him for smearing it, his standing up for his friend in front of the bully in Harrow School. These became favorite anecdotes among Chinese critics such as Wang Tongzhao and Zheng Zhenduo and received great compliments from them. Consequently, Byron's later confrontation with the British society was regarded as a continuance of his childhood resistance. For example, Gan Naiguang thought that Byron's heroic actions in Italy and Greece were manifestations of the Byron's "gallant spirit" which had already revealed its power in his childhood experience (Gan 1924, 2). Lafcadio Hearn in his lecture,²² which was translated and titled by Chen Bo 陈搏 as "Comments on Byron" 评拜伦 ("Ping Bailun"), also traced Byron's later antagonism to British society back to the poet's childhood: "From childhood he had been a fighter, and he was not in the least afraid to fight society. For the remainder of his short life he struck back at that which had struck him, and struck very effectively" (Hearn 1926, 113).

One exception to this serious treatment of Byron's childhood rebellions, however, could be found in Xi He's translation-summary of F. W. Moorman's study

²² Lafcadio Hearn's lecture was selected from *Interpretations of Literature*, a collection of Hearn's lectures, given by him in English to his Japanese students in the University of Tokyo when Hearn worked as a faculty there, and recorded and compiled by the students. Chen Bo accessed Hearn's work from Ryuji Tanabe's *Koizumi Yakumo, Lafukadio Herun*, which is a collection of Hearn's critical essays translated into Japanese. See Liu Anwei 刘岸伟. 2007. *Xiaoquan Bayun yu Jindai Zhongguo* 小泉八云与近代中国. Wuchang: Wuhan University Press. 86-88. I found four different editions of Ryuji Tanaba's collection, one published in 1911 and three in 1914. I am not certain of which edition(s) Chen used. Also, as I have no reading knowledge of Japanese, I am not able to compare Chen's translation and the Japanese text he translated, even if I have found the exact source. However, Chen's translation is faithful, complete and quite accurate, compared with the English text recorded by Hearn's Japanese students. Therefore, I quote the English text instead of translating Chen's translation.

of Byron's life and poetry.²³ Unlike the essays of Gan Naiguang, Wang Tongzhao and Zheng Zhenduo, Moorman's work suggested that Chinese readers should take Byron's childhood rebellion with less seriousness. It pointed out that the wild temperament of Byron was beyond his mother's control. She "treated him with carrot and stick" 恩威并施 (Xi He, 1924, 1). Byron was thus portrayed more as an intractable child than a hero in the nascent state. As a result, this essay also made no serious connection between Byron's childhood rebellions and his heroic deeds in adulthood.

If one compares these two kinds of treatment of Byron's childhood rebellion, it could be observed that they did not form a serious controversy affecting Chinese appreciation of Byron's rebellious disposition. Only the former way seems to take Byron's childhood rebellion more seriously, because in this way Byron could be considered to act consciously according to his insistence on personal authority and freedom ever since he was a child. Judging from overall comments in the centenary issue, Chinese critics tended to lead their readers to interpret these childish resistances as a sincere display of Byron's rebellious spirit and a preparation for his later heroic resistance and rebellions against the social misjudgment and repression imposed on him. In this way, they not only emphasize their opinion that the poet's rebellious spirit stemmed from his impassioned nature but also devoted their high regard to it.

Nevertheless, a stronger presentation and praise of Byron's rebellious spirit was to be found in Chinese studies of Byron's encounter with the 19th century British society in his adulthood. Not only is there more biographical material for Chinese critics to work on, but also there is less doubt of the seriousness and sincerity of

²³ Several parts of Xi He's writing seem to base on Moorman's observations on Byron, given in Volume XII "The Romantic Revival" of *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in Eighteen Volume*. However, Xi He omitted a significant part of Moorman's work and made a great deal of change to it. In addition, Xi He, unlike Zhang Wentian and Zhao Jingshen, did not point out that he was summarizing or translating a foreign scholar's work. It seems that he treated this essay as his original writing, though he may have integrated Moorman's writing into his own. I choose to translate Xi He's Chinese translation instead of to quote Moorman's original writing.

Byron's rebellious actions. Two incidents in Byron's life, i.e., his participation in the Greek War of Independence and Byron's self-exile from Britain attracted most attention from Chinese critics. The former received commendations from Chinese critics without hesitation, as it presents the "good" Byron—selfless, courageous, and generous—which, in Shen Yanbing's opinion, was the side of Byron that deserved Chinese people's commemoration. Also, it is the best and last example of how Byron actively put his belief in freedom, his resistance against oppression and his rebellion against authority into action. More admirably, this time he fought not only for himself, but for the Greek people.

Chinese critics' admiration for Byron's fight and death in Greece seems to be a continuance of the sentiments of Chinese critics such as Liang Qichao, Lu Xun, Wang Guowei, Su Manshu and Hu Shi at the earlier stage of the Chinese reception of Byron. The only difference between the centenary issue's and the earlier presentation of this heroic deed is that more exciting details of Byron's experience in Greece were added by Chinese critics to their narration in the centenary issue. Again, this development was owed to the influx and translation of foreign biographies of Byron into China during the 1920s. Therefore Chinese readers were presented with a picture of Byron spending his own fortune generously to equip the Greek army with weapons and medicine, trying to remedy his lack of military experience with his energy and courage and suffering on the sickbed. After his death, he received the highest compliment and honor from the Greek people. Because of these details, a more vivid portrayal of Byron's last days became available for his Chinese admirers.

As was mentioned, this heroic action of Byron was regarded by the Chinese critics as the sole reason for them to memorize him: "Now we memorize him because he was a poet full of rebellious spirit, a poet who attacked the old conventions and moral ethics, a poet who joined the army and revolution..." (Shen 1924, 2) At the end of Zheng Zhenduo's essay "Poet Byron's Centennial Memorial" 詩人拜倫的百年祭 ("Shiren Bailunde bainian ji)," which was written under his penname Xi Di 西諦, he praised Byron passionately: "Byron is in the hearts of the Greek people, in the hearts

of all the Near-East peoples and in the hearts of the repressed nations all over the world!” (Xi Di 1924, 4) Similarly, Hearn offered his praise as follows:

He...went to Greece to place his fortune and all his abilities at the disposal of the Greeks in order to help them obtain their liberty. He worked for them arduously, faithfully, and unselfishly, and died for the cause which he had espoused. Whatever may have been the faults of his life, his death was unquestionably the death of a hero. (Hearn 1926, 114)

Another incident which attracted Chinese critics’ attention, i.e., Byron’s self-exile from his country, was much more complicated and was not simply admired, as it revealed to a certain degree Byron’s dissolute lifestyle. At this point, Chinese critics’ treatment of Byron’s dissolute lifestyle started to form an interesting relationship with their emphasis on Byron’s rebellious spirit as one of the most admirable aspects of Byron’s personality and life. Chinese critics were aware of the fact that Byron had decided to leave Britain and never returned because his wife had left him without revealing the real problem of their marriage. It consequently aroused people’s suspicion, which put Byron under all kinds of accusations, such as adultery, incest, sodomy, etc. Some of them may be true, but, nevertheless, the poet was perhaps treated by the public with too little tolerance and goodwill.

But how should his Chinese admirers read these accusations then? Did they find the fault somewhat in Byron? Did they even mention these accusations in detail? Judging from their essays and translations of foreign biographies, it seems that many Chinese critics avoided devoting too much attention on many of the problematic aspects of Byron’s life. For example, his love affairs with several British ladies, his suspicious relationship with his half-sister Augusta, and his sexual orientation all remained understated or unexplored in the centenary issue. The reason why Chinese critics made these choices in their analysis of Byron’s dissolute life-style is that they desired to maintain the heroic image of Byron instead of harming it with too much evidence that may marred him with the doubt of his rectitude.

At the same time, they blamed British society and Byron’s wife for judging wrongly Byron’s character, if not his behavior. Without digging too much into the

facts, Chinese critics displayed great sympathy for Byron's choice to leave his country forever and criticized British society and Lady Byron for being unjust and unfeeling. In this way, Chinese critics also offered an apology for Byron's dissolute lifestyle. It seemed to them that to behaving in the immoral ways that society had accused him of is Byron's extreme expression of his discontent and his challenge to a hypocritical society. Therefore, many of his immoral behaviors could be assimilated into Chinese emphasis on Byron's rebellious spirit, and thus his heroic image.

Now that the general treatment of Chinese critics of the rebellious spirit and the dissolute lifestyle of Byron is clarified, I would like to discuss it in further detail. First of all, for the sake of Byron's heroic image, the 19th century British society was presented by the Chinese critics in their own writings and their translation of foreign biographies as a society of rigid conventions, hypocritical insistence on conventions, injustice and apathy, almost a European twin of 1920s China. As Gan Naiguang said, British society in the 19th century was a "hypocritical society haunted with ghosts" (Gan 1924, 1). Sociopolitical and intellectual achievements accomplished during the 18th and 19th century found no place in Chinese accounts of the social conditions which had wronged their admirable hero, Byron. Lady Anne Isabella Byron was blamed together with the British society. Brandes thought Lady Byron to be a "spoiled" heiress and jealous wife and described her overreaction to Byron's behavior in an ironic tone (Brandes 1906, 285). Gan Naiguang's view is a little more favorable to Lady Byron, as he thought Lady Byron to be "following the moral ethics and unfeeling" and "could not possibly do anything wrong," but she was certainly "unforgiving," just like British society (4). Hearn's characterization of Lady Byron is the least favorable among all other versions of this story. He treated her as a female embodiment of the unfeeling and unjust society, portraying her as "cold, unsympathetic, unforgiving, and prudish to an extraordinary degree" (Hearn 1926, 113). The society, however, sided with the wife and "had condemned him [Byron] without even listening to his story. They had only listened to his wife, and she had never been able to say why she had left him. She represented in herself all the

convention and cant and hypocrisy of her age; and Byron naturally hated those characteristics of society which were impersonated in his wife” (113).

Chinese critics in this way portrayed the social environment of 19th century Britain in which they thought Byron could not be judged with justice, understanding and tolerance. As a result, he had to give vent to his repressed emotions in an extreme way, as Chinese critics asserted. Shen thought Byron “moaned because he suffered” 有病呻吟 (youbing shenyin): “He had no choice but to live a dissipated life and became cynical” (Shen 1924, 1). Similarly, Fan Zhongyun also commented that Byron in his nature was not a profligate person. He only “treated every day lightly and neglected the time” 玩日愒歲 (wanri kaisui) because he was “pessimistic” 悲觀失望 (beiguan shiwang) and “bored with life” 厭世 (yanshi) as the conservative British society disappointed his revolutionary spirit (Fan 1924, 4). It needs to be noted that this kind of explanation is consistent with the Chinese emphasis on the passionate personality of Byron. As was mentioned, many critics traced the cause of Byron’s depressed and melancholic mentality back to the conflict and gap between Byron’s passionate personality and the unfeeling external environment. To submerge himself in a sensuous way of living helped Byron to temporarily divert himself from his misfortune.

While this interpretation of Byron’s choice to live as a dissolute explores the cause in his mentality, another explanation treated Byron’s dissolute lifestyle as an extreme manifestation of his rebellious spirit:

For the remainder of his short life he struck back at that which had struck him, and struck very effectively. He attacked all the conventions, all the hypocrisies, all the moral commonplaces of English society in his poetry; he made heroic crime appear more attractive than cowardly virtue, and he even boldly ridiculed the religious beliefs that excused or sheltered social falsehood.

Unfortunately he did not content himself with attacking social shams in his poetry; he set an example of reckless living which appeared to more than justify all the bad things about him. Byron’s position was like this: ‘You said I was immoral when I tried to live decently. Now I shall be immoral, and you can do as you please about it. (Hearn 1926, 113-114)

Hearn's analysis of Byron's motive for living a dissolute and "immoral" life seems to suggest that Chinese readers should adopt an opinion in their treatment of the "bad" Byron, which is slightly different from Shen's binary approach. If they were to follow Hearn's reading, Byron's selfish, wild, and sensuous aspects would seem to demand more understanding and even a certain degree of recognition from them, because it displays the poet's "heroic" challenge of hypocritical society. Indeed, Chinese critics such as Zheng Zhenduo also praised Byron's "repulsion for and resistance to the hypocritical, vulgar society which tries to cover up everything with the mask of moral ethics and rituals" (Xi Di 1924, 2).

However, as Zheng offered this comment without relating the story of Byron's dissolute lifestyle, whether or not he would also judge Byron's problematic lifestyle with a similar attitude remained ambiguous for his readers. Hearn's comment, which deals directly with this issue, consequently helps Chinese readers more than the Chinese critics' works to understand the complexity of Byron's life and personality. However, Hearn and Shen's essays do share a similarity. Although Hearn suggested that it was understandable that Byron manifested his anger by challenging social norms and moral ethics with his immoral behaviors, this way of life was still regarded by Hearn as "shameless" (Hearn 1926, 114). Therefore, Chinese readers would sense that Hearn did not intend to promote Byron's lifestyle as an example for them to follow, about which Shen clearly warned his readers.

From my former analysis, I drew two conclusions of the Chinese treatment of Byron's spirit. First, Chinese critics intended to build up Byron's heroic image as a model and encouragement for Chinese readers, and perhaps also themselves, in their own confrontation with backward and ineffective sociopolitical institutions in 1920s China. To this purpose, Chinese critics considered Byron's fight and death in Greece to be an excellent example of heroism for the Chinese people. Second, Byron's rebellion against hypocritical society is also demonstrated by his dissolute lifestyle. Through their own essays as well as in translations of foreign critics' works, Chinese critics allowed their readers to interpret Byron's immoral behavior in different ways.

Nevertheless, their promotion of the “heroic” Byron and criticism of the “immoral” Byron still maintained dominance in Chinese analyses of Byron’s life.

Up to this point, I have offered my observations on Chinese critics presenting Byron mainly as a passionate and rebellious hero. As mentioned heretofore, Chinese critics considered passion and a rebellious nature to be the most important characteristics of Byron’s poetry. This argument was based on their emphasizing these two aspects of Byron’s life in their study of his biography. In the following section, I will offer a brief observation of how Chinese critics also portrayed the writer as an ordinary person, which helped to paint a vivid picture of his life for Chinese readers of the centenary issue.

Chinese presentations of Byron in his “ordinary life” are indispensable to the May Fourth interest in the real life of common people. The observation of how a person lives his or her life manifested what Zhou Zuoren listed as the second type of “literature for humanity.” In this sense, Byron’s biography was also regarded as material from which Chinese critics could draw in their realistic approach to literary study. However, to some extent, even Byron’s “ordinary life” was described as “extraordinary,” partly because it is still associated with his most prominent identity as “hero,” partly because China’s situation in the 1920s—wars between warlords, economic problems, incursion of foreign forces, political and social instability, to name some of the difficulties—made common people’s simple hope to live an “ordinary life” seem extravagant. Byron became an idol because he could live a life that the youth could only dream of in the reality of social conditions in 1920s China. Also, Byron lived his life according to his own will, which was regarded as a candid and courageous expression of his individuality—what Hu Shi considered to be “true individualism,” which was encouraged among the new generation of Chinese youth. Therefore, Chinese critics explored Byron’s personal life, including some dissolute details, with great curiosity but few moral judgments. Chinese critics also characterized Byron’s personal life favorably, though the image of the poet as a common person was granted with less praise than his heroic identity.

Several essays, including original Chinese works and translations of foreign biographies, contain rich information of Byron's daily life. Details such as his dieting, his love for his dog, and his skill at using weapons were presented to Chinese readers. The essays of two Chinese critics are particularly interesting and most revealing of Chinese attitudes toward Byron's personal life.

First, Zi Yi 子贻²⁴ offered his readers brief translations of short episodes from Byron's journal and letters with his own comments on them. Unlike certain Chinese critics, such as Shen Yanbing, Zheng Zhenduo, and Wang Tongzhao, Zi Yi did not intend to analyze Byron's personality and life in search for manifestations of his inner nature. As he himself said, he chose to translate Byron's journals simply because he found them "interesting" and "full of his characters" (Zi 1924, 1). Consequently, Zi Yi informed readers not of Byron's heroic deeds, but of his more mundane activities and thoughts: what the poet liked to read, how he felt about his writing, his admiration for his friend Lord Dudley, his communications with his lovers and attitude towards love and marriage, his reflections on his birthday, and so on. Because these facts came directly from Byron's own record of what was going on in his life, they brought him closer to Chinese critics and readers than foreign critics' biographies on the poet. Byron's image as a real person was thus made more vivid by this essay than any other work in the centenary issue, whether translated or written by Chinese critics.

Gan Naiguang's "Romantic Quality of Byron" 拜伦的浪漫性 ("Bailun de langman xing") also translated short excerpts from Byron's journal. What attracted Gan's interest was Byron's dissolute lifestyle. Although Gan, in the beginning of his essay, said that he dared not compliment Byron's immoral behavior, he suggested that the "frankness" 直率 (zhishuai) reflected by such behavior should still be noted by Chinese critics. Therefore, Gan selected parts from Byron's journal where the poet

²⁴ This name seems to be a penname of a certain author. I have not found his or her real name.

daringly expressed his love for Mary Duff Margaret Parker and his sexual desire. In this way, Gan's essay did not simply present Byron as an amiable and relatable figure to Chinese readers, as Zi Yi did in his translation. More importantly, he portrayed Byron as a person who refused to varnish over his desire by covering up what could be regarded "unrespectable" by social norms. Thus, Byron's "individuality" was more fully presented by Gan than by Zi Yi. The most interesting part of Gan's essay is his comparing Byron with Li Bai and Su Manshu. The former was a great poetic talent during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), known and admired for his special preference for drinking; the latter was a modern admirer of Byron and one of the earliest translators of Byron's poetry who "imitates Byron in everything he does" (Gan 1924, 3). The dissolute aspects of Byron's lifestyle that could suffer from accusation were consequently presented as eccentric hobbies that every great man should be allowed to enjoy, along with candid self-expression.

Zi Yi and Gan Naiguang's essays revealed the "private" side of Byron to Chinese readers, which was portrayed with more admiration for his unique character than criticism of his problematic behavior. Again, it is necessary to reiterate that all Chinese critics, including Gan Naiguang, who were interested in the poet's dissolute lifestyle, found it necessary to limit their discussion of Byron's personal life. In Chinese critics' essays, there was no information about Byron's love affairs with Lady Caroline Lamb, Jane Elizabeth Scott, and Claire Clairmont, for instance, and no mention of his suspicious relationship with Augustus Leigh. Byron's questionable relationship with a young man named Richard Westall and his sexual orientation were not mentioned at all. Chinese critics also kept silent on the matter of Byron's illegitimate children. Brandes's critical biography of Byron, which was selected by Zhang Wentian for translation—the only one that mentions these scandals—treats most of the so-called offenses as false accusations and intentional slanders. It revealed the constant effort of Chinese critics in their writing and translation to keep Byron's heroic image free from doubt of his moral integrity.

Compared with Byron's heroic deeds, his private life seemed much easier to imitate in some privileged young people's daily life. However, in the opinion of many Chinese critics, Byron's lavish and dissolute lifestyle, if followed by Chinese youth, would bring more trouble than benefit for Chinese society. Therefore, Chinese critics warned readers of "Byronic mania" and encouraged them to follow the poet's "heroic" deeds. Observing the present and potential problem, Shen Yanbing criticized an attempt at imitating Byron's lifestyle, because he thought that many of the poet's Chinese imitators did not have reason to imitate him:

...but there are many youth—especially youth of letters—misunderstand Byron's original intention, competing with each other in imitating Byron's dissipated impulsive behaviors. They have not suffered from the partial judgment of the society and they are originally doing their own business very well, but they intentionally follow Byron's example to tour around south Europe, wine-and-lady-wisely starting to degenerate. He had no choice but to live a dissipated life and to be cynical, but they think this is the life required of geniuses. He moaned because he suffered, but they think moaning is "beautiful," so that they moan without suffering. If we want to know the negative influence of "Byronism," this is probably it. (Shen 1924, 2)

In this paragraph, Shen on the one hand implied his understanding of Byron's choice to "live a dissipated life" and to be "cynical," considering the misfortunes the man was forced to suffer, while on the other hand, he clearly pointed out to his readers, especially "young men of letters" that they did not have the right to follow Byron because society had not mistreated them in the way that British society had mistreated Byron. Although social realities in 1920s China caused people great disappointments, the most important thing to do, in Shen's opinion, was to fight as Byron had. "Young men of letters" should follow Byron's passion and rebellious spirit, both in their literary careers and in their real lives, instead of wallowing in self-pity. Though the "violent, sensuous, dissolute, selfish" Byron may have had deep-seated reasons for his behavior, Shen Yanbing did not recommend him as a good model for Chinese youth.

The comprehensive and faithful representation of Byron's personality and life, with an emphasis on his passionate personality and rebellious spirit, laid the

foundation for Chinese study of Byron's poetry. As one may infer, because the Literary Association, especially its leading figure Shen Yanbing, thought literature to be a reflection of the author's personality, epoch, and environment, Byron's poetry should be distinguished by its fervor and rebellious spirit. More importantly, Chinese critics portrayed Byron as a lover and promoter of freedom and independence, they read his poetry as "revolutionary songs" 革命之歌 (geming zhi ge). In the next chapter, this opinion will be proved by the majority of Chinese readings. Nevertheless, Chinese intellectuals also endeavored to combine a "literary" perspective into the "social" emphasis, demonstrating the development of literary scholarship during the May Fourth Movement.

CHAPTER IV

BYRON'S POETRY: AN EXEMPLAR OF PASSION AND REBELLIOUS SPIRIT

In Chapter III, I tried to point out that Chinese critics presented Byron as a person of “passion” 熱情 (reqing) and “rebellious spirit” 反抗精神 (fankang jingshen). In their studies of Byron's poetry, Chinese critics continued to emphasize these two attributes as the two most prominent features of Byron's poetic works, which they considered to have “reflected” Byron's character. In this chapter, I intend to offer some observations on Chinese critics' exploration of Byron's poetic characteristics, especially on how they presented the two features mentioned above. In addition, I will also explain how Chinese critics treated the melancholic and satirical attributes of Byron's poetry, which they considered to have a less important or less attractive role to play in their evaluation of the poet's works. Moreover, Chinese critics' emphasis on “passion” and “rebellious spirit” also influenced their observations on the 19th-century, especially the post-Waterloo, British and European society, which they regarded as the context of Byron's poetry, and the literary trends Byron's poetic works was associated with, i.e., Classicism and Romanticism. Consequently, I will also discuss Chinese treatments of the social and literary backgrounds in their studies of Byron's poetry.

First of all, I would like to clarify which works of Byron were under Chinese study and translation. Generally speaking, Byron's works seem to have been divided into three major categories by Chinese critics: narrative poems, drama, and short lyrical poems. In the first category, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Don Juan* and *The Corsair* particularly generated interest from Chinese critics. Though the former two were generally recognized as the most important works in Byron's literary career, study devoted to them was no more than other works. Complete translations of them did not appear until the 1950s, which could be explained by their length. Byron's drama received more attention from Chinese critics and translators. *Manfred* and *Cain* were frequently mentioned together with *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*

as representative of Byron's works. *Manfred* was the first drama and the longest poetic work translated into Chinese, and it remained so for three decades. Finally, short lyrical poems had been favored by translators since the early 1900s, though there was little study of them. There were altogether fourteen poems translated during the 1920s. Ten were published in *The Short Story Magazine* in 1924 and three in *Literature Trimonthly*.

Since Byron's passion and rebellious spirit were most emphasized in Chinese study of his poetry, I will organize my discussion around how these two attributes were explored by Chinese critics.

As "passion" was seen as the essential characteristic of Byron's personality by Chinese critics in their study of Byron's biography, it was accordingly regarded as the origin of Byron's poetic energy in their study of his poetry. This was displayed in the translated foreign critical works and in Chinese critics' original critical essays. For example, in Zhang Wentian's translation "Brandes's Essay on Bryon," Brandes pointed out that the *Edinburgh Review's* unintended contribution to Byron's poetic career was that it

for the first time drove all the young man's passionate, scattered emotions into one channel, and made of them one feeling, one aim. With obstinate determination he set to work; he slept during the day, rising after sunset in order to be less disturbed, and for several months worked every night and all night long at his first famous satire. (Brandes 1906, 261)

Wang Tongzhao's in the first section of his essay subtitled "Ardent Impulse" 熱情的衝動 ("Reqing de chongdong") asserted:

Naturally, among the people who read Byron's poetry, there are none who do not sense his passionate, as if burning personality. . . . How mighty his passionate ideas are manifested through his actions and how it makes people feel as if it is spritely living. (Wang 1924, 3)

Wang quoted the third stanza of "The Isles of Greece" as a good example of Byron's passion, and he continued:

Poems like this, other poems lamenting a nation of reduced territories, and works talking about feelings and discussing love display his courageous and upright mind and spirit everywhere. (ibid., 3)

Wang's own writing also bursted into enthusiastic praise of Byron, and he called for a new generation of Chinese poets when he reached the end of this section. The grammar of his writing is disturbed as he tried to intensify his description of Byron's passion by adding adjectives and adverbs.

From this we can see, if we ought to have poets, we should have passionate poets like Byron who do not know to be cautious, humble, and submissive, but only to contribute his poet's innocent childlike heart, to sing, and to express, finally making his ardent, irrepressible temperament burn like fire and erupt freely, like a fountain, in a flame of light, exciting the scattering, flying water. Must it be that people who are not tolerated by common people become poets? Or is it the case that in the world's unfeeling treatment, they [the poets] are finally not tolerated? (ibid., 4)

While Wang emphasized the passion of Byron's poetry, the last sentence implies another aspect: the depression and melancholy that a passionate individual like Byron was destined to suffer from because the world was apathetic or even hostile to him or her. Because of the clash between the poet's personality and the environment and epoch he lived in, the passionate and depressive sides of Byron's personality and poetry go hand in hand.

In William Joseph Long's essay, which was translated and titled by Zhao Jingshen as "A Critical Biography of Byron," Chinese readers were reminded by Long that Byron was a "disappointed and embittered man, not only in his personal life, but also in his expectation of a general transformation of human society. . . . [He] is the most expressive writer of his age in voicing the discontent of a multitude of Europeans who were disappointed at the failure of the French Revolution to produce an entirely new form of government and society" (Long 1919, 408). Some Chinese critics, such as Fan Zhongyun, also regarded the "depressive and melancholy" and "morbid quality" as the most notable feature of Byron's poetry and Romantic literature in general (Fan 1924, 3). The difference between Wang's and Long and Fan's observations goes hand in hand with their dissimilar interpretations of the mentality of the post-Waterloo European society. I will continue to discuss this issue

as a context for Chinese presentation of the rebellious spirit in Byron's poetry, as the two are closely associated with each other.

At this point, however, I just intend to point out that the passionate character of Byron's poetry elicited more interest from Chinese critics than its depressive features, though both received their attention. Both Byron's life and his poetry were characterized as filled with a fighting energy. The explanation seems to lie in the expectation of Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth period for a new generation of literati. The image of an intellectual in the traditional Chinese standard was one who studied and worked indoors, engaged in purely mental works. Their bodies being frail and their lives waning from lack of energy and action, these "old" intellectuals belonged to the backward Chinese culture and society. After opium was imported into China by the British, the physical weakness of Chinese people aggravated. What modern China and new Chinese literature needed, as Wang Tongzhao suggested in his writing, were passionate, energetic, and strong men of letters like Byron. Therefore, the melancholic and depressive aspects of Byron's personality and poetry, which presented much less robust and active energy, were comparatively understated.

The special attention paid to passion influenced the reading of Byron's poetry. Among the long narrative poems, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was particularly admired for its passion. The rich and vivid representation of natural scenery and adventurous experience in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* received certain appreciation. As Hearn pointed out to readers in "Comments on Byron," the success of this work was "partly due to the subject" (Hearn 1926, 118). However, the passionate expression of emotions was regarded as the crucial energy that made the still immature poetic skill of Byron enchanting. Song Yu 诵虞²⁵ considered that all four chapters are "poems of passionate feelings," and "the latter two chapters are

²⁵ The name Song Yu 诵虞 seems to be a pseudonym or penname of an author whose real name I have failed to find.

especially so” (Song 1924, 2). To Xi He 希和²⁶, it was the “passionate feeling” that freed Byron from simple imitation of Classical literature and enlivened his works with Romantic creativity in this narrative poem:

As for his depressive thoughts and his desolate feelings on leaving his home country, [as] there is no place [for him] to give vent to them, they burst out into the poem. . . . This is the reason why the third and fourth sections, compared with the former two, have more sincere emotions and profound descriptions of human life. Though the copying of Classicism cannot be rid completely of, the whole poem has already been filled with passionate emotions, being different from the former coolness. (Xi He 1924, 10)

The short poems were also appreciated and translated because they exemplify Byron’s characteristic passion. This can be immediately seen in the following selections of Chinese translators: “Maid of Athens, ere we part,” “There be None of Beauty’s daughter,” “Stanzas to Augusta,” “I saw thee weep,” “Oh! Weep for those,” “Farewell to a Lady,” and “All for Love.” Compared to the enthusiastic expression of heroic passion in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, these short poems reveal the delicate, sincere, and tender emotions in Byron’s poetry. Being short and easy to translate and read, these poems offered a window into the poet’s personal feelings and love relationships and were probably more popular than longer narrative poems and dramas among readers. They continued to be the focus of Chinese translation of Byron’s poetry after the 1920s.

Compared to Byron’s passion, the satirical traits of Byron’s poetry were not granted much appreciation. Long commented that “Even in his magnificent passages, in a glowing description of nature or of a Hindoo woman’s exquisite love, his work is frequently marred by a wretched pun, or by some cheap buffoonery, which ruins our first splendid impression of his poetry” (Long 1919, 409). Exploration of Byron’s satire did not occupy much space in the essays written by Chinese critics. Wang Tongzhao only touched on what he called “boyish satire” when he was giving a brief summary of Byron’s early poetic works (Wang 1924, 8). Xi He’s translation of

²⁶ I have also found no record of the author behind this pseudonym.

Moormon's writing recognized *Beppo* and *The Vision of Judgment* as the best two satirical poems (Xi He 1924, 15). *Don Juan* was also regarded as a "satirical poem" by Song Yu, who said the poem expressed Byron's pungent and particularly playful mocking of the hypocrisy of the English society (Song 1924, 6). A possible explanation for why the satirical feature of Byron's poetry did not charm Chinese critics may again be found in the critics' emphasis on the candid and sincere expression of passionate feelings. The humorous and playful tone is usually much less straightforward in expressing emotions as it tends to hide them with a cynical mask.

Though passion was believed to be the origin of Byron's poetic energy, on the level of poetic style and skill it drew both compliment and criticism, as can be seen in Chinese critics' original writings and their translations of foreign critical essays. Hearn commented that Byron wanted the most important thing in a great author, i.e., moral and intellectual "self-control" (Hearn 1926, 116). As Byron was unable to do the "hard works" required by literature, he simply "poured out his poems as a bird pours out its song, almost without any other effort than the emotional expression, the emotional passion of the moment" (117). Hearn also asserted that "it is not to Byron's poetical art that we must look for any explanation of his immense influence" (118). While acknowledging that these flaws of Byron's poetic art resulted from his unrestrained passion, Chinese critics still praised that passion as a charismatic feature of his poetic art. For example, though he pointed out the flaws of Byron's poetry, Wang Tongzhao still said:

No doubt, his works at times failed for being unrefined. They cannot be like Wordsworth's meticulous description and congeniality with nature or Keats's keen observation and tacit language. But [reading] his poems, which are composed by the expression of his hot-blooded, vigorous temperament, is like hearing the mournful flute on the battlefield and torrents rushing down the valley, making people rise up, courageous and to raise their intense and active feelings and in devotion to his instinctive and gentle, intense and sorrowful lines. This is the magic of his works and the undercurrent of his everlasting personality. (Wang 1924, 13)

Probably the most important product of Byron's passion was the rebellious spirit it engendered. Wang Tongzhao and Gan Naiguang both identified passion as the root of the rebellious spirit. The "dauntless and indomitable spirit and the courage to refuse to subdue himself under society blindly . . . originates from the passionate ideas" (Wang 1924, 4). Because Chinese critics found the origin of rebellious spirit in the passion, which in turn stemmed from Byron's passionate personality, it was therefore as an "inborn" spirit, one that was later awakened and intensified by his experience rather than developed by Byron with profound social, political, or ideological concerns:

It is not necessary for Byron to have any "-isms" before poetry, but his ideas and emotions waned with the trend of revolution. Therefore, his poetry which came from his heart, led naturally to the [revolutionary] path. (Wang 1924, 13)

Byron's rebellious spirit played an equally important role in his real life and his poetic career. It was used by Chinese critics to distinguish him from other Romantics. For example, in Wang Tongzhao's opinion, though Byron's poetic art was less accomplished than Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats, his poetry surpassed theirs because it contained the revolutionary spirit which the works of the others wanted (Wang 1924, 5). He thought that while Wordsworth was "absorbed in his meditation on nature" 契冥自然 (qiming ziran), Coleridge was "having his supernatural dreams" 作其超自然的夢想 (zuo qi chao ziran de mengxiang), and Keats was "chanting his praise of beauty" 低吟默誦地去讚頌美 (diyin mosong de qu zansong mei), Byron was an "apostle of revolution" 革命的使徒 (geming de shitu) and a "revolutionary poet" 革命的詩人 (geming de shiren), who contributed *Cain*—a call for "religious rationalism," *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*—"an enthusiastic contribution to the spirit of freedom and democracy," and *Don Juan*—"the gospel for those who reject blind faith" (7).

As they were eager to promote the rebellious spirit of Byron's poetry, Chinese critics failed to point out the real distinction between Byron and other Romantics. In the eyes of many of his contemporaries, the style of Byron's poetry was different

from Romantics not because it was distinctively more “revolutionary” than others, but because it refused to conform to the new poetic standards of “Romantic” and thus was not “revolutionary” enough. Chinese critics’ definition of what was “rebellious” and “revolutionary” in Byron’s works seems to have been based on its content instead of its poetic style. They also concentrated on the social rather than literary significance of Byron’s poetry. This perspective determined how Chinese critics observed the rebellious spirit of Byron’s poetry. The “environment” and “epoch” as the “social” background of Byron’s poetry was given the most attention and clarification, while the literary tradition to which Byron’s poetry was associated was either ignored or misunderstood. This emphasis reflects the influence of the Literary Association’s belief that “literature is for life’s sake” and Shen Yanbing’s realistic approach to the study of literature.

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European society which was deeply affected by the French Revolution was considered by Chinese critics to be the primary historical background to which Byron’s poetry responded. They put two slightly contradictory interpretations on the social and literary conditions of the age. Similar to his presentation of an energetic Byron, Wang characterized European society as progressive and enthused with revolutionary passion:

Byron was born in the heyday of European revolution. Five years before he was born was the time of American Independence. One year the [after his birth], the French Revolution, which shocked the world, began. In the following fifteen years, terrible social current—the advancement of the idea of freedom—was like the sun at high noon; all political turmoil, religious conflict, [and] transformation of literature and art from Classicism to Romanticism spread rapidly, making the whole of European society witness to change. Thereafter, national independence and individual freedom developed significantly, and all became prone to the bright path of freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and democracy. (Wang 1924, 6)

Under the circumstances, in Wang’s opinion, young passionate Byron saw the French Revolution develop and the old social system, institutions, and religious beliefs fall under challenges with “fervent attention” and “ideas of reformation.” He was

therefore called by Wang the “spreader of the gospel of that age” (6-7). Wang further applied this idea to the reading of Byron’s poetry:

From the beginning to the end, almost none of Byron’s poetry is a revolutionary song resisting the repressive power, praising national and individual freedom, and opposing superstition, [regarding religion] and sanctimony and conventional customs. (ibid., 7)

Just like he selected the advancement of the ideas of liberty and democracy attained during the French Revolution while ignoring the social, spiritual, and emotional damage it put European society through, he correspondingly extracted the rebellious spirit from Byron’s poetic works and simultaneously ignored other characteristics. This generalization of Wang’s represents the mainstream interpretation of Byron’s poetry in this issue.

Fan Zhongyun explored another aspect of Romantic literature which may represent the historical and literary atmosphere—especially post-Waterloo—more accurately. Fan noted how the war and revolution failed to create the democratic and free Europe that people had expected, and dampened their revolutionary enthusiasm. Europe in this condition “had no peace and became spiritually and intellectually disconsolate and wanted what it could rely on” (Fan 1924, 2). This provided the context for Fan’s discovery of the “depressive and melancholy” and “morbid” qualities of Romantic literature (3). The historical background and the characteristics noticed by Fan pointed to a major shift in Byron’s poetic career, which was revealed in *Manfred* and the third and fourth chapters of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, in which the author seems eager to explore, through forgetfulness and literary creativity, a way out of the painful memory of the cruelty and failure of the French Revolution (Bone 2004, 120). Unfortunately, he neither applied this observation to further analysis of any poetic works of Byron, nor did his recognition of the depressive and melancholic features replace his emphasis on the rebellious spirit, because to “rebel” was how Byron channeled his dejection and disappointment.

Because of the temporary failure of the French Revolution, people were pessimistic and melancholy. But it was not true that this pessimism could not

bloom flowers of resplendent glory. It was just morbid and lived in the gloom. . . . This literature, which opposed the ossified institutions before the eighteenth century and came into being because of the repression imposed by the reactionary age, is Romantic literature. (Fan 1924, 3)

In Fan's opinion, Romantic literature only transferred the rebellion in the real world to the literary sphere. In this sense, he only portrayed the rebellious spirit with duller colors than Wang did, instead of contradicting Wang's emphasis on that spirit as one of the most prominent features of Byron's poetry.

An important characteristic of Byron's rebellious spirit is individualism. Byron in his life and the Byronic heroes in his poetry were always seen battling unjust social institutions alone. *Manfred* and *Cain*, as Long commented, were known especially for their "excessive individualism" and "rebellion against society" (Long 1919, 409). However, Byron was rarely called an individualist by Chinese critics. They were very careful with their choice of words when commenting on the individualistic aspect of the rebellious spirit. *Individual* was usually used as an adjective, which modified words such as "freedom" 自由 (ziyou), "dignity" 尊嚴 (zunyan), and "authority" 權威 (quanwei). For example, Zheng Zhenduo praised Byron's pursuit of "individual freedom and authority" (Xi Di 1924, 3). Wang also expressed his admiration for Byron's insistence on "individual freedom" (Wang 1924, 7).

Only in Song Yu's comments on *Manfred* could readers find the term "egotism" 自我主義 (ziwo zhuyi).²⁷ However, what Song Yu really meant to point out is still Manfred's insistence on independence, self-reliance, and individual authority over external forces, instead of the selfish obsession of one's desires for material goods and pleasure. Song quoted Manfred's response to the spirit that came to take his life when he was on his death-bed:

²⁷ The author himself offered the word "egoism" in English, which he translated as 自我主義 (ziwo zhuyi). Literarily it indeed is different from 個人主義 (geren zhuyi). It is chosen probably because the author intended to emphasize the word "self" and "I" 自我 (ziwo) and distinguish it from "individual" 個人 (geren). Therefore, I retain this word in my translation; although I think what the author really meant was closer to "individualism" than "egoism," judging by the context of his writing.

Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
 I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
 But was my own destroyer, and will be
 My own hereafter. —Back, ye baffled fiends!
 The hand of Death is on me—but not yours! (*Manfred*, 3.4.397-401)

Song Yu then gave his analysis as the following, pointing out both the depressive and the “egoist” characteristics of this work. This interpretation resembles a great deal of Taine’s comment on *Manfred* and *Faust* in *History of English Literature*, where Taine gave his observation of the “invincible I” in *Manfred*, which was “the sole author of his own good and ill” (Taine 1912, 377).

Manfred regards “I” as absolutely self-reliant, depending not even slightly on any other things. No one can reward, punish, or control “me.” What good and evil I have done, if I myself can judge whether to reward or punish, there is no need to bother the others. Ghosts, gods and people have not the slightest control over me. This is the display of Byronic spirit, which is at the root unsubduable, unlike Goethe’s *Faust* who can attain salvation through a woman and solve his troubles. This is representative of egotism unique to the modern age. Because the extraordinary expansion of the self cannot compromise, [the individual] becomes pessimistic and disappointed, which is a mal de siècle and the illness of skepticism. (Song 1924, 4)

Benefiting from Taine’s study, Song Yu began to notice the individualistic “self” lying at the core of the origin of the rebellious spirit, and almost touched upon the central endeavor that Byron made in *Manfred*, i.e., to seek answers to human suffering not in the transcendental power but internal energy (Bone 2004, 128).

It should not be ignored that the aspect of the self that Song Yu concentrated on is not selfishness and sensuousness, but its “self-reliant” way of existing and the “unsubduable” resistance to whatever repressions imposed on it. As was mentioned in Chapter II, Hu Shi defined “true individualism,” which should be marked by the realization of “individuality,” as opposed to “egoism” and “self-concerning individualism.” From Hu’s analysis, the aim of the May Fourth proposal was to reform the society by granting individuals their right to resist the control of any forms of unjust authority as much as pointing out to them their duty to the progress of society in their pursuit for individual benefits. Hu’s argument represented the mainstream opinion of Chinese intellectuals on the definition of “true individualism”

and its social significance. Influenced by this idea, it seems that what Song Yu really meant to point out was the person's full consciousness of "individuality," "individual authority," and "individual freedom," even though he used the term "egoism."

While Chinese critics' interpretations of the social significance of Byron's rebellious spirit were presented confidently and with reasonable accuracy, they seemed to have been quite baffled by the fact that Byron rebelled against Romantic literature for his preference for Classicism. The fact that Byron refused to line up alongside the Romantics in their attacks on the Classics created difficulty as they attempted to claim that almost all of Byron's works were "revolutionary songs." Partly because of this trouble, most of the Chinese critics therefore avoided the discussion of this topic. Sometimes, Classicism was almost completely left out of their observation of Western literary history. Fan Zhongyun's writing could be read as an example:

During the era of [ancient] Greece, the human world lived according to its worldly quality; after experiencing the long Dark Ages, human beings all aspired to paradise and to become gods. Till the age of the Renaissance—from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century—on the one hand, [human beings] discovered their worldliness; on the other hand, they understood the world by discovering the New World. Every idea of ours thereupon is based on this age. After two to three hundred years, in the nineteenth century, [human beings] discovered the human world completely, i.e., the worldliness was emancipated, and [people] knew that they were individuals and should not be treated as machines and tools. (Fan 1924, 2)

Fan's version of Western literary history was so general that he gave no concrete information of the literary trends of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. How Classicism flourished and was replaced by Romanticism remained unexplored. Fan thus spared himself the trouble of explaining Byron's relationship to this literary tradition.

Some critics turned to the "rebellious spirit" for help when trying to resolve this problem. But the outcome was a misunderstanding of Byron's literary heritage. This could be seen in Gan Naiguang's writing:

As for his art, it is also heavily influenced by the Romantic quality [of his personality]. As Romanticism had already reached its prime, Classic masters such as Milton, Dryden, and Pope suffered curses from numerous people. Byron stepped forward bravely to defend them and to go against the trend of thought of that age—this is totally powered by his rebellious nature. (Gan 1924, 5)

This interpretation seems to be troubled with an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, Gan considered the “rebellious nature” to be an integral part of Byron’s “Romantic quality.” On the other hand, Gan seems to suggest that it makes Byron an exemplary Romantic, one who opposed Romantic literature on behalf of Classic literature. Gan not only failed to dig into the crucial position of Classic literature in Byron’s literary education but also significantly underestimated the seriousness of Byron’s literary preference.

Why did Chinese critics either refuse to probe into this issue at all or look at it in such great confusion? Explanation for this question does not seem to lie in the assumption that Chinese critics were still ignorant of Western literary history. In July, 1920, Shen Yanbing contributed an essay “Classicism, Romanticism and Realism in Literature” 文學上的古典主義浪漫主義和寫實主義 (“Wenxue shang de gudian zhuyi langman zhuyi he xieshi zhuyi”) in *The Short Story Magazine* under the penname Yan Bing 雁冰, which offered a proper understanding of these three literary traditions. More studies devoted to Romantic literature in comparison with other literary traditions emerged in the following four years. Though the Chinese critics mentioned here, namely Wang Tongzhao, Fan Zhongyun, and Gan Naiguang did not contribute any writing regarding this issue, it was likely that they, as active literary figures and especially members of the Association—meaning they had free access to the *Magazine*—had a good knowledge of these works. While the cause for Wang and Fan’s choice not to involve Classic literature into their discussion remains ambiguous, Gan’s contradictory argument probably resulted from his eagerness to emphasize the “rebellious spirit.” However, the consequence was that he misled his readers by over-simplifying or distorting Byron’s relation and reaction to the literary tradition of

his time. Full exploration of the social significance of Byron's poetry was carried out at expense of a possibly more insightful observation of its literary value.

While most Chinese critics did not conduct a "literary" reading of Byron's poetry, Xi He did attempt a survey of the Classicism in Byron's poetry in "Byron and His Works." Like Gan and Wang, Xi He also read the fact that Byron defended Pope and preferred Alfieri over Shakespeare during the time of the "complete success of the Romantic theory" as a manifestation of his "everlasting rebellion" (Xi He 1924, 9). Fortunately, Xi He continued to explore the Classic style in Byron's poetry, especially his early poetry:

The union of Classicism and Romanticism is apparent in Byron's early works, especially *The Hour of Idleness*. The greater part of his lyric poems and elegiac poems imitate the anapestic lilt of Irish Melodies, [and the imitation and the original are] rather alike in spirit. Meanwhile, he seems both reluctant to be nostalgic for eighteenth-century habits and reluctant to lay them aside. "Childish Recollections" is composed completely in Pope's style: for example, the inherited poetic diction, the popular heroic couplet, and the personification of abstractions are all literary habits of the Augustan age.

[In] the two poems *The Corsair* and *Lara*, Byron has already departed from the norm of Scott, but [his poems] have the scent of [the style of] Dryden, as the Octosyllabic couplet became decasyllabic. (ibid., 9-12)

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers was also mentioned as a revelation of Byron's Classicism (Xi He 1924, 9). In his further discussions, Xi He also observed the Classical taste revealed in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *Manfred*, *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth*, *Mariono Faliero*, and *The Two Foscari* (12). The influence of Italian dramatists such as Racine and Alfieri on *Sardanapalus* also received due attention. It was thought the drama was "most in accordance with Classic norms" (13). These comments contain all of the studies devoted to Byron's taste for Classic style. The Chinese critics' treatment of the role played by Classicism in Byron's works points to the fact that the literary study of Byron's poetry still needed development even though it had already witnessed significant improvement.

If, as Shen Yanbing believed, literature always reflects the poet's personality, would the literary character with a passionate temperament and rebellious spirit resemble its creator? The Chinese answered to the question affirmatively. All Chinese critics considered "Byronic heroes" such as Childe Harold, Don Juan, Manfred, and Sardanapalus as literary embodiments of Byron. Though in general Chinese critics showed great admiration for the Byronic heroes, they still acknowledged that it reflected a lack of poetic artistry in Byron's works. As Wang Tongzhao noted, the inseparability of the characters and their creator revealed Byron's want of "the gift of objective characterization" so that "he can only be a poet centering on himself but cannot get away from to create real characters" (Wang 1924, 14). Gan Naiguang disagreed with Wang on this point. Gan thought that the resemblance between the Byronic heroes and their creator had a special charm: "The main characters in his poems—the so-called 'Byronic Heroes'—are portrayals of himself, which have won who-knows-how-many people's worship" (Gan 1924, 5).

As a matter of fact, the term "Byronic hero" was not as frequently used as one might expect. Except Gan Naiguang, no Chinese critics mentioned it in their essays. In its stead, the words "Satan" and "Devil" (sadan or emo) were used by Chinese critics in their writings. The best example could be found in Zheng Zhenduo's essay:

In his works, there is nowhere that he does not display clearly . . . his satanic spirit, his persistent insistence on individual rights and freedoms and his repugnance for the hypocritical, vulgar society which covers up everything with the mask of ethics. (Xi Di 1924, 2)

It seems that the "satanic spirit" mentioned by Zheng Zhenduo and the "rebellious spirit" promoted by Wang Tongzhao are essentially the same, as both are marked by the antagonistic attitude toward the corrupted social system and advocacy of personal freedom. Among Byron's poetic works, *Cain* was praised as the best example of the rebellious spirit. According to Xi He, it is in *Cain* that "the hero in Byron's poetry evolves to the highest level" because "the feeling of the resistance against social authority and creeds is stronger" in this work than in other works (Xi He 1924, 13). Song Yu considered *Cain* the best work in Byron's literary career:

Byron in this poetic drama discussed issues such as evil, death, the soul, destiny, beliefs, and so on, as much as he liked, and he fiercely attacked old religion. No doubt [Cain] originated from that Byron was extremely indignant at contemporary society and politics, so he vented his grievance freely in this work. (Song 1924, 25)

This comment is rather straightforward about the “indignation” and “grievance” held by Byron toward society, which defines the “satanic spirit” by its social significance.

Chinese understanding of the “satanic” or “rebellious” spirit and the Byronic hero was significantly enriched by foreign criticism, especially by translated essays by Lafcadio Hearn and Kimura Takataro, respectively. Thanks to their writing and the Chinese critics who selected and translated them, the exploration of Byron’s “satanic spirit” was greatly expanded.

After a brief introduction to Byron’s life and a general observation of his works, Hearn entered into the most important part of his lecture, which begins with a question: Why did the works of Byron, which are “either cynical, or erotic, or rebellious against everything that was esteemed by the English people—law, order, religion” become so influential and admired (Hearn 1926, 119-120)? Hearn’s explanation is that Byron’s satanic spirit demonstrated an undeniable fact that “there are two kinds of morality believed in by the whole civilized world” (119):

One is a religious morality, framed in words and taught by precept. The other is something very different. . . .

It is the iron law of the universe, older than all religion, and stronger. Whatever you believe, you have to obey that law. I call it a moral law, because it is moral to this degree, that is requires self-sacrifice of a particular kind. Perhaps we might call it the law of nature. Nineteenth century philosophy calls it the law of evolution. (120-121)

In these paragraphs one can sense the influence of Herbert Spencer’s evolutionary theory on Hearn’s reading of Byron’s poetry (Sukehiro 82). Except for its characteristic rebellion against law, moral ethics, and social customs, what is most revealing of the satanic spirit, as Hearn pointed out, is that it exposes the cruel fact that the good and virtuous person could be killed for their weakness and stupidity, while the tough and brilliant person would survive, sometimes by spilling blood

(Hearn 1926, 121). In brief, “this satanic spirit signified a vague recognition of . . . the law of struggle, the law of battle, and the splendor of strength even in a bad or cruel cause” (123). Byronic heroes such as Childe Harold, Lara, Corsair, Manfred, Cain and Don Juan all lead their lives in accordance with these laws (121), and Byron was admired by European readers and critics because of his unconscious exposure of them:

He was not a philosopher; he was not even a logical thinker. Byron forced people to think in a new way. He made them ask themselves whether it was really enough to be good in this world, and whether what we have been accustomed to call evil and wicked might not have not only a reason for being, but a certain infernal beauty of its own. (123)

Chinese critics were not unfamiliar with the confrontation of the “natural law” against the “moral law,” as Yan Fu’s translation of Huxley’s works had already been published in early 1900s. However, few Chinese critics read the satanic spirit as a manifestation of the individual’s desire to survive (Denton 1998, 100). Because they regarded Byron’s passionate personality as the origin of the “satanic” or “rebellious” spirit, it seemed unnecessary to explore other forces underlying this inborn spirit. Under such circumstances, Hearn’s observation, made from a philosophical perspective, helped to deepen the understanding of Chinese critics and readers of this topic. It also set a good example for Chinese critics of how they might also apply their knowledge of Western philosophy to their literary criticism.

Kimura Takataro’s article was titled by the translator Zhong Yun 仲雲 (short for Fan Zhongyun 樊仲云) as “Byron’s Hedonism” 拜倫的快樂主義 (“Bailun de kuaile zhuyi”). Kimura was intrigued by the hedonistic lifestyle led by many of the Byronic heroes, especially Sardanapalus. As Kimura reasoned, hedonism helps Sardanapalus to realize that the real goal of human life should be joy. By this criterion, Sardanapalus refused to base on his glory on violent conquering but indulged himself with daily pleasure. In this way, he intended to not only secure his own but also his subjects’ happiness. As Kimura observed, this simple goodwill of Sardanapalus to his subject, which stemmed from his hedonistic belief, made him not simply a kind ruler

but more importantly a true humanitarian. Also, by revealing the real purpose of living, hedonism led Sardanapalus to embrace his death dauntlessly when he became aware that continuing his life only brought him hardship. Consequently, Kimura thought that the king fought and died a hero, not a coward.

Kimura selected scenes from *Sardanapalus* which helped to build up the humanitarian image of Sardanapalus and avoided too much mentioning the self-indulgent and decadent aspect of his life. He quoted the following episode, in which Sardanapalus criticized Salamenes's insistence on subduing his subjects with oppressive means:

Sar And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?
Sal Our annals say not.
Sar Then I will say for them
Then she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men—the fiercer of the three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is this glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.

(*Sardanapalus*, 1.2.132-139)

The king's rejection of glory through violence was followed by his admiration for the peaceful way of conquering exemplified by the Greek god Bacchus:

There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such—they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,
Who conquer'd this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquish'd. (*ibid.*, 147-151)

As he regarded "Eat, drink and love" to contain the "the history / Of all things human" (*Sardanapalus*, 1.2.248-49), Sardanapalus's political ideal was to create a golden age during his reign, which he supposed should be marked by peaceful and joyful lives.

To me war is no glory—conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. (*ibid.*, 506-9)

I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
 An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
 A green spot amidst desert centuries,
 On which the future would turn back and smile,
 And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
 Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
 I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
 And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
 I took the rabble's shouts for love—the breath
 Of friends for truth—the lips of woman for
 My only guerdon—so they are, my Myrrha. (ibid., 512-22)

By highlighting these passages, Kimura led his readers to view Sardanapalus as a humanitarian and pacifist. His criticism of the military achievements of his ancestor is indeed reasonable, and his social and political ideal is attractive. He was concerned not only with his own joy, but also for the welfare for his people. Kimura reinforced this impression by commending Sardanapalus for his choice:

We would like to ask: Why is morality precious? Why is a virtuous person noble? One should answer: Life's goal is joy, which is absolute pure goodness. As for so-called morality, it is nothing but a needed social requirement. Can it be the goal of the world? (Chen 1924, 3)

Kimura suggested that only by having the right view of life, i.e., recognizing joy as its goal, could one become truly “moral,” “virtuous” and “noble.” According to this standard, Sardanapalus was virtuous. Though Kimura admitted that Sardanapalus is “more or less wrong in the methods,” he did not consider it to be harmful to the humanitarian spirit (Zhong 1924, 4). The critic found a philosophical basis for Sardanapalus's “disposition / to love and to be merciful” in his belief in hedonism:

The reason why the virtuous and the hero, does it truly lie in their ability to make their bodies and hearts suffer?

Their self-sacrifice to keep their virtue intact could not be for the sake of virtue and righteousness, but must be for the sake of the world. What does this mean? (It means that) it should not aim at increasing the pain of the world or at making the whole human race commit suicide, but should be so the people could have joy, happiness, and benefit. (Zhong 1924, 4)

According to Kimura, Sardanapalus is virtuous and righteous according to a moral standard established on high regard of the welfare of human race. If one limits

his or her reading to the excerpts of the drama selected by the critic, it might not be difficult to find support for this argument. However, Sardanapalus' attitude toward the welfare of other people seems more like a complicated mixture of indifference and philanthropy in lines such as these: "I let them pass their days as best might suit them, / Passing my own as suited me" (*Sardanapalus*, 1.2.346-60). This was not pointed out by Kimura for his readers. Moreover, because of the highly selective texts given in the writing, Kimura also avoided Sardanapalus's final decision to react to the rebellion out of consideration for his own life and pleasure, instead of the welfare of any other (Corbett 1988, 88).

Kimura also found an explanation for Sardanapalus's courageous death in his hedonistic belief. He expounded:

The value of life does not lie in the length of years and months [one lives], but in its essence. If one seeks simply longevity, it is better to be unconscious wood or stone. . . . Painful and monotonous life, though it extends through thousands of years, is really not equal to living happily for just one moment.

However, death is not what we desire, when it suddenly befalls us while we are in joy and love. We cannot die in a single moment of thought, but have to suffer from sickness, poverty, hunger, pain, or being abandoned by someone. . . .

Therefore, if one has strong resolve and the ability to control his or her life, aiming only at joy and love, when pain befalls, he or she can cut a tangled skein of jute with a sharp knife and thus die instantly. This can be said to be carrying out Sardanapalus's hedonism. (Zhong 1924, 6-7)

In this passage, Kimura is trying to unite the two extreme aspects of Sardanapalus—Bacchus and Hercules (Corbett 1988, 90)—with the king's the hedonistic values. However, a keener and more proper observation would be to treat these two aspects as components of Sardanapalus's complex and volatile personality. Byron's experiences in Italy, which prepared him for composing *Sardanapalus*, finally resulted in boredom with his dissipated life in Venice. His relationship with Countess Teresa Guiccioli and his later connection with the Carbonari gradually built up his enthusiasm for revolution. Byron considered this opportunity to be a meaningful change to his former dissolute life-style. At the same time, however, this

revolutionary passion was also in conflict with Byron's worry that he might be killed for this heroic cause (Lansdown 1992, 165). These contexts might suggest that it is better to read *Sardanapalus* as both a revelation of Byron's revolutionary determination and an expression of his ambivalent attitude toward this choice which would endanger his life in the near future (166). To critics and readers who take these facts into consideration, Kimura's attempt to attribute both the humanitarian and heroic aspect of *Sardanapalus* to hedonism would appear quite farfetched and partial.

But how would Kimura's essay be received by Chinese critics and readers? Why was it chosen for translation in the first place? What role did the social conditions in early 1920s China play in this choice? How would it modify the image of Byron and the Byronic hero, who were on the one hand praised for their passion and rebellious spirit, but not for their hedonistic lifestyles?

As was mentioned in the second chapter, many Chinese intellectuals during the May Fourth period, such as Zhou Zuoren, absorbed a belief in humanitarianism from the ideas of Japanese intellectuals, such as Mushanokōji Saneatsu and Kimura Takataro. This may be one of the reasons why Fan Zhongyun selected Kimura's essay, which portrayed *Sardanapalus* and Byron as humanitarian for translation.

Chinese translation of Kimura's essay also coincided with the development of anti-war literature 反戰文學 (fanzhan wenxue), for which the Chinese social conditions in the 1920s provided the circumstances for the birth and maturity of this literary theme. After Yuan Shikai died after his failed attempt to restore monarchy and become an emperor, the Beiyang Army—the military force originally subjected to Yuan's order—split into factions. Each faction was headed by a military official who was referred to as “warlord” 军阀 (junfa). Each group controlled a certain part of China. For the sake of nothing but their personal interest, the warlords provoked wars against each other almost every year after 1916. The social conditions were least suitable for the realization of the May Fourth Movement's ideals such as national and personal freedom, social stability and progress, political democracy, and the establishment of new moral ethics. The gap between ideal and reality enmeshed

Chinese intellectuals in a spiritual crisis which culminated around 1924 (Xu and Zou 2008, 101). It also turned Chinese writers' attention to the suffering of ordinary people. The antiwar theme matured into a literary genre around 1924.

Therefore, it can be reasonably surmised that the Japanese origin of the Chinese humanitarian ideal and the development of anti-war literature were two of the reasons why Kimura's article was selected and translated. Though Sardanapalus's hedonism did not provide practical methods to improve the living conditions of the suffering Chinese mass, his wish to live a life of joy and happiness and his repulsion of war had a strong appeal to Zhong Yun and probably many Chinese readers.

Because Kimura identified Sardanapalus as a literary embodiment of Byron (Zhong 1924, 5), the humanitarian image of Sardanapalus may also have influenced Chinese's understanding of Byron's dissolute lifestyle and his heroic death in Greece. In Kiruma's opinion, Byron's choice to die for Greece originated from his wish to live a life of joy. Using Sardanapalus as a literary embodiment of Byron's belief, Kimura seems to suggest that Byron, like the king, fought not for independence and freedom, but gave up his life when he found no joy for his future. This interpretation was unusual among Chinese critics. The most prominent image of Byron was still the dauntless hero who fought for another country's independence supported by his belief in personal and national freedom. The humanitarian image of Byron given by Kimura may be integrated into this heroic deed, as Byron fought out of his concern for another people's benefit. The pacifist image, however, stood out among the mainstream Chinese interpretations of Byron's heroism. Nevertheless, this article may have contributed to Chinese readers' imagination of Byron, as it provided a different—though inaccurate—perspective for them to understand Byron's actions.

It can be seen that the reading of Byron's poetry in *The Short Story Magazine* follows the Association's idea of "literature for life's sake" by situating Byron's works and their Chinese studies within a historical and social environment as well as the author's personality. Chinese critics were attracted to his poetry because of his

passionate expression and rebellious spirit. Though certain literary topics, such as Byron's Classical influences and satire of his poetry were not sufficiently discussed, there were still studies done from comparatively "literary" rather than "social" perspectives, especially in Xi He's work. The literary vision was also much more universal than earlier critics, as foreign criticisms were introduced with Byron's poetry.

The Chinese study of Byron's poetry indeed provided direction for readers. Nevertheless, unlike the members of the Association—the majority of whom belonged to the social elites and could read Byron's poetry and foreign criticisms in the original English—common audiences still had to depend on translated poetic works. One important contribution *The Short Story Magazine* made for the study of Byron's poetry lies in its translated works, especially the complete translation of *Manfred*. To this matter, the idea of "literature for life's sake" could not provide sufficient direction. In the next chapter, I will offer a general study of the translation ideas and principles developed during the May Fourth period. I will also present a study of Chinese translations of Byron's poetry as a practice of those principles.

CHAPTER V
TRANSLATION OF BYRON'S POETRY: A PRACTICE OF THE MAY
FOURTH TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES

If one takes a look at the Chinese reception of Byron during the early twentieth century, one realizes that translation of Byron's poetry played an essential role in this process. This British poet was made known to Chinese readers through Liang Qichao's translation of "The Isles of Greece," a poem Ma Junwu, Su Manshu and Hu Shi each translated. It continued to be influential in the Chinese reception of Byron in the 1920s, which was read as the best example of Byron's passionate character and rebellious spirit. In the centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine*, the translation of Byron's poetry was especially important and underwent a significant development.

Chinese translators contributed translations of ten short poems (two of them excerpts from longer works) of Byron: "Song of Corsair"²⁸ by Xu Zhimo, "Maid of Athens, ere we part" 別雅典女郎 ("Bie yadian nülang") and "There be none of Beauty's daughter" 沒有一個女神的女兒 ("Meiyou yige nvshen de nüer") by Zhao Jingshen, "Stanza to Augusta" 贈渥蓋斯泰 ("Zeng Wo ge si tai"), "I Saw thee weep" 我見你哭泣 ("Wo jian ni kuqi") and "Oh! Weep for those" 唉! 當為他們流涕 ("Ai! Dang wei tamen liuti") by Gu Pengnian 顧彭年, "All for Love" 一切為愛 ("Yiqie weiai") by Xu Diaofu, "There are not a Joy" 煩憂 ("Fanyou") by Huang Zhengming 黃正銘 and "To a Lady"²⁹ 致某婦 ("Zhi mou fu") by Fu Donghua 傅東華. Fu also translated Byron's poetic drama, *Manfred* 曼弗雷特 (*Man fu lei te*), which until the 1950s was the longest of Byron poetic works translated by Chinese literati. These works offered Chinese readers who did not read English more translated poems to read than ever before, helping them to know more about Byron and his work. Through

²⁸ Verse XIV from *The Corsair*. Unlike the other translators, Xu Zhimo did not give his translation a Chinese title, but in its stead used "Song of Corsair."

²⁹ This English title was given by Fu. However, what he actually translated was another poem, namely "Farewell to a Lady."

the translation of the poems, Chinese translators practiced their translation skills and experimented with different translation principles. Finally, the works provided Chinese critics with examples of the contemporary state of Chinese translation theory and writing of poetry, and they suggested potential directions that translators and poets might go.

The number of translations of Byron's poetry was not only an outcome of the centenary issue. It also coincided with a revival of translation of English poetry from 1921 to 1926 (Liu 2006, 41). The Literary Association from the very beginning concentrated on translating Russian realistic literature and the literature of the "oppressed" peoples of Eastern Europe instead of English poetry. Part of the reason English poetry gained an attention from some members of the Association during this time was probably that the progress of new vernacular Chinese poetry 白話新詩 (baihua xinshi) had reached a bottleneck in its development (53). In 1923, Chinese poets began to reconsider their poetic works. While they began to explore possible poetic rules and forms, their productivity decreased (53). They reconsidered the language and style of new vernacular poetry through translation.

In this sense, translation of Byron's poetry did not simply contribute to Chinese understanding of Byron himself, but more importantly represented a great chance for Chinese literati to discover the possibility of new Chinese poetry. In an essay titled "The Question of Translation: Several Suggestions on the Translation of Poetry" 翻譯問題:譯詩的一些意見 ("Fanyi wenti: yi shi de yixie yijian") in the "Double Ten" supplementary issue of *Literature Trimonthly* in 1922, Shen Yanbing, publishing under one of his pennames, Xuan Zhu 玄珠, observed:

I think translating foreign poetry has a positive meaning.
That is: depending on it, we can evoke the reformation of the poetry of our native country. When we open the literary history of other countries, it is often seen that the introduction of translation is the "conducting wire" of new movement in the literary history of the native country. As for the introduction of translated poetry, there should be such an influence at least in the poetic circles.
(Xuan 1922, 1)

This opinion represented Chinese intellectuals' general opinion on this matter. As Shen pointed out, the general aim of translating foreign poetry was not simply to broaden Chinese people's knowledge and enhance Chinese understanding of world literature, but more importantly to create a new Chinese poetry.

To me, what seems most interesting and important is to explore the translation principles or literary ideas represented by the translations of Byron's poetry. I am intrigued by these topics, because they seem to be the most basic questions to ask when trying to understand how Chinese translation and Byron's poetic works interacted with each other in the centenary issue. More importantly, I think in Chinese translation of Byron's poetry, just like in Chinese study of his life and poetry, Byron was treated as a case study by Chinese intellectuals attempting to facilitate the development of modern Chinese poetry. This was especially so when Chinese literati were searching for a new poetic language and style. While Byron's passionate and rebellious personality and poetry were regarded as models by Chinese intellectuals, when it came to translation, they "influenced" Byron's poetry more than they were influenced by him. Under these circumstances, to understand the literary ideas which guided Chinese translation practice is crucial to understanding how and why Byron's poetry was translated in certain ways. Byron's translated poems are the most vivid examples of the theory and practice of Chinese translation in the 1920s. They also illustrate how translation served as a means for exploring the possible poetic forms and language of new Chinese poetry.

Even as Byron's poetry was treated as an outlet for Chinese translators to practice their theory and principles, it also affected Chinese readers' understanding of Byron's personality and his poetry. Therefore, I will compare how Chinese perceptions of Byron—passionate, rebellious, heroic and melancholy—were either reinforced or presented differently in the translations and in Chinese study of Byron's biography and poetry.

Among the eight short poems translated by Chinese literati in the centenary issue, seven are short lyric poems concerning love and the candid expression of

emotion. Only Xu Diaofu's translation of "Oh! Weep for those!" presented Chinese readers with the heroic image of Byron, which in this respect could be considered as an echo of "The Isles of Greece," with the worried hero facing a falling ancient civilization. Therefore, the dominant presentation of Byron a hero in the Chinese study of his poetry was replaced by the portrayal of him as a young aristocrat full of tender and passionate sentiments delicately tinted with melancholy. The passionate individual outshines the passionate hero. Byron's individualistic and rebellious spirit, which was given special attention and praise by Chinese intellectuals in their study of Byron's poetry, was reinforced in Fu Donghua's translation of *Manfred*.

Fu's translation of *Manfred* was the longest translation of Byron's poetic works contributed by Chinese translators before 1950s. It displays Fu's good understanding of English language and fluent vernacular Chinese. He also managed to present the depressed and melancholic tone of this work very well. But what is most important to my discussion in this chapter is Fu's innovative attempt to use the forms traditional Chinese poetry to translate Byron's poetry. Zheng Zhenduo, in "The Last Page" 最後一頁 ("Zuihou yi ye") column of the centenary issue, called readers' attention for Fu's attempt to use verse to translate verse (Liu 2006, 54):

As for the literary circle of China, since it began to introduce world literature, many novels have been introduced. But as for poetry, few have systematically introduced it. All the translated poems are only scattered short poems. Mr. Fu's complete translation of *Manfred* can be counted as a significant work in recent translation circles. Moreover, as for Shakespeare's dramas, recently there are some translations by certain people, only they used prose translation. These are different from Mr. Fu's using verse to translate verse. The difference between these two ways of translation is worthy of our attention. (Zheng 1924, 1)

From Zheng Zhenduo's comment, Fu's translation of *Manfred* might have been the first time that a long poetic work was translated into verse. Fu Managed not only to preserve the musicality of Byron's original work, but also to some extent present Byron's work in a more appealing way. Liang Qichao, Su Manshu, Ma Junwu and Hu Shi all used verse to translate Byron's "The Isles of Greece." But their work was

much shorter than Fu's translation of *Manfred*. Adding to the importance of Fu's translation is that, unlike those four translators, Fu used vernacular Chinese instead of classical Chinese, which was previously inseparable from the traditional Chinese poetic style. Zheng probably did not mention this because it had already been widely recognized that vernacular Chinese should be used in literary writing and translation at this point of the development of the new Chinese literature. But to us this characteristic of Fu's translation is equally important and intriguing to explore.

It seems that Fu had already formed his understanding of whether and how traditional poetic forms would survive in modern Chinese poetry before he translated *Manfred*. In an article that demonstrates his idea called "The Verses in China From Now On" 中國今後的韻文 ("Zhongguo jinhou de yunwen") was published in the magazine *Literature* 文學 (*Wenxue*) in March 30th, 1924, Fu expressed his belief in that the reformation of a language and literature could not be forced by human will. Consequently, poetic forms that Chinese intellectuals may have considered as "outdated" could still be extant in modern Chinese poetry. Many forms could also be selected for preservation and reformation to benefit the development of modern Chinese literature. Fu pointed out eight general types of verse 韻文 (*yunwen*) that were popular in traditional Chinese literature: *shi* 詩 (verse, including four, five and seven-character types); *fu* 賦 (descriptive prose); *sao* 騷 (the poetic form used by Qu Yuan³⁰ in his work *Li Sao*); *bei ming* 碑銘 (inscriptional writing), *ji wen* 祭文 (funeral oration) and *ai ci* 哀辭 (lament); *ge* 歌 (song); *zhuan ji* 傳記 (biography) and *jian* 箋 (letter); *yue fu* 樂府 (folk songs and ballads); *qu* 曲 (verse for singing); and *ci* 詞 (lyric poetry set to specific song format). As Fu observed, many of these poetic forms were still being used in present poetic writing, and this case would

³⁰ Qu Yuan 屈原 (340 BCE-278 BCE) was one of the most famous poets during the Warring States Period 战国时期 in ancient China. He is believed to have composed many *Chu-ci* 楚辭 (*Songs of Chu*) poems, among which *Li Sao* 離騷 is the best known. This poem became so important in Chinese literary history the word *sao* 騷, besides referring to the poetic style of *Li Sao*, is also used to stand for poetry or literary writings in general.

continue to be because these forms would also suit the needs of future poetic writing. Considering the past, present and future of Chinese poetry, Fu suggested that *shi*, *ge* and *qu* would still survive in modern Chinese poetry. In his translation of *Manfred*, Fu attempted to combine several traditional poetic forms and at the same time use vernacular Chinese as the primary language. Although the majority of Fu's translation is in "free verse" 自由體詩 (*ziyou ti shi*), in order to show the connection between this important essay and Fu's translation of *Manfred*, I will focus on his use of traditional Chinese verse in my study of his translation.

The primary poetic forms used by Fu in his translation were *shi* of five and seven characters and *qu*. In the beginning of the translation where Manfred summons the spirits, *shi* of five and seven characters was applied and used together, sometimes mixed with lines of irregular length close to *qu*. For example:

第四靈	Fourth Spirit.
地震休憩時，	Where the slumbering Earthquake
枕火暫假寐，	Lies pillowed on fire,
炎炎硫磺湖，	And the lakes of bitumen
熱浪正沸騰；	Rise boilingly higher;
復有安第斯諸山，	Where the roots of the Andes
深植根株入地底，	Strike deep in the earth,
其巔矗聳莫可測，	As their summits to heaven
高高直入雲霄里。	Shoot soaringly forth;
此乃我生地，	I have quitted my birthplace,
我今拋卻前來接詔旨——	Thy bidding to bide——
爾之魔力我服矣，	Thy spell hath subdued me,
愿得聞尊意！	Thy will be my guide!
(Fu 1924a, 7)	(Manfred, Act I scene I, ll. 89-100)

The first four lines form a *jueju* of five characters 五言絕句, and the next four of seven characters 七言絕句.³¹ The last four lines, though mixed with two lines of irregular length in the middle, still create a balanced effect as the first and last line

³¹ *Jueju* 絕句 is a type of poem of four lines. If it contains five characters, it is called "jueju" of five characters 五言絕句 (*wu yan jueju*). If it contains seven characters, it is called "jueju of seven words" 七言絕句 (*qi yan jueju*). *Jueju*, like all other traditional Chinese poems, requires poets to follow a strict tonal and rhyme scheme.

both contain five characters. By combining several poetic forms instead of using one poetic form consistently, Fu Donghua on the one hand followed the poetic tradition, while adding diversity to it. Fu did not allow his translation to be bound by strict traditional requirements of tonal and rhyme scheme. However, he still managed to preserve some of the rhyme of the original poem in his translation. For example, in the sixth and eighth lines of the original text, *earth* rhymed with *forth*, and correspondingly in the translation, 底 (*di*) in the sixth line rhymed with 里 (*li*) in the eighth line.

In order to fit the poetic form with a suitable language, the diction Fu employed has a certain kind of formality. For example, “此乃” (“this is”) and “爾” (“thy”) which are expressions used in formal writing, while “這是” (“this is”) and “你” (“you”), respectively, are more frequently used in speech. Similarly, “拋卻” (“having abandoned”) and “愿得聞尊意” (“I would like to be caused by you to hear you honored sir’s intentions”) are poetic rather than colloquial expressions. In some cases, in order to maintain the formality of the language and sentence structure, Fu made some changes to the original in his text. For example, he changed the subject of the sentence “Thy spell hath subdued me” from “thy spell” to “I,” so that the translation became “Thy spell I have submitted to” 爾之魔力我服矣. However, generally speaking, the language can be identified as vernacular Chinese instead of classical Chinese.

If one examines the poetic style of Byron’s original work, Fu’s choice of *jueju* seems to have been a suitable form to be used in translation. The original version contains three and two metrical feet on alternating lines, creating a simple style. Because of the divergent ways in which English and Chinese poetry—and English and Chinese language—construct rhythm, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Fu or any other translators to imitate the trochaic, dactylic, iambic, and anapestic rhythm of the original text. To match the original text with respect to the length of the line or rhyme scheme is perhaps all that Chinese translators could do.

In fact, Chinese intellectuals had long expressed their own opinions on whether it was possible for Chinese translation to preserve the rhyme and rhythm of foreign poetry. In “The Question of Translation: Several Suggestions on the Translation of Poetry,” Shen Yanbing, who published this article under his penname Xuan Zhu 玄珠, said that translated poetry, compared to the original, is only “something better than nothing” 聊勝於無 (liao sheng yu wu). Trying to present exactly what the original is like in translation is a “waste of effort” 白費力氣 (baifei liqi), which only makes the translation “absolutely without merit” 一無是處 (yiwu shichu) (Xuan 1922, 1). To “preserve the spirit and charm” 神韻 (shenyun) of the original poetic work is sole aim of the translation of poetry, Shen asserted (1). He suggested that the “rhyme and rhythm” 韻律 (yunlü) of the poem could and should be sacrificed when the translator needs to grasp its spirit and charm, for the latter is the essence of poetry:

I think the spirit and charm of the poem is the most important part of a poem, which Denham³² referred to as the “vital spirit”... If we do not lose the spirit and charm of the poem, the rest such as rhyme and rhythm could differ [from the original]. Moreover, it is possible to preserve the spirit and charm but impossible to preserve the rhyme and rhythm. (Xuan 1922, 1)

By pointing out the limitation of translation, Shen also permitted Chinese translators greater freedom in their translation practice. Because they did not need to strictly follow the rhyme and rhythm of the original text, they could achieve what was more important to the original text and translation, i.e., the “spirit and charm” 神韻.

As a matter of fact, while the rhythm of English poetry may be impossible to imitate in Chinese, the rhyme can sometimes be realized. In some cases, the rhyme follows the traditional poetic form. Sometimes, a translator could also creatively

³² Shen seems to be referring to Sir John Denham (1615-1669), an English poet and courtier. As Shen did not specify the exact source of his quotation, I can only offer an assumption that he might have found this expression in Sir Denham’s poem “To Sir Richard Fanshaw upon his Translation of Pastor Fido,” which uses the phrase “vital spirit.”

invent a new kind of less restricted rhyme scheme for the translation. Fu Donghua's translation of "To a Lady" as well as Xu Zhimo's translation of "Song of Corsair" both used a certain type of rhyme scheme. Because I neither have a rich knowledge of *qu*, nor do I intend to make it the center of my discussion, I will offer only some simple explanations of the rhyme and use of vernacular Chinese in these poems.

Fu's translation of *Manfred* used *qu* to translate the part in which the spirits were preparing to go to the palace of Arimanes, the ruler of the underworld:

第一運命答歌	First Destiny, answering.
城市睡方甜，	The City lies sleeping;
晨光心內憐，	The morn, to deplore it,
出來時涕淚漣漣；	May dawn on it weeping:
陰慘慘，慢遲遲，	Sullenly, slowly,
黑沉沉的疫病潛來至，	The black plague flew o'er it—
數千人口須臾死；	Thousands lie lowly;
更有十倍數千難得生，	Tens of thousands shall perish;
縱是至親人，	The living shall fly from
也只得將他們拋卻自逃生；	The sick they should cherish;
可憐疫勢駸駸盛，	But nothing can vanquish
縱有威權難肅清。	The touch that they die from.
(Fu 1924a, 23)	(Manfred, Act II, Scene III, ll. 331-342)

The most prominent feature of the Chinese translation is its well-maintained rhyme, though it does not necessarily follow an obvious scheme. The translation's rhymes include "甜" (tian, "soundly," modifying "sleeping"), "憐" (lian, "to pity," used to translate "deplore") and "漣漣" (lianlian, "flowing continuously"); "遲" (chi, "slowly") and "至" (zhi, "to arrive"); "生" (sheng, "life") and "盛" (sheng, "thrive"). The rhyme scheme of the translation also manages to imitate the original text to a certain degree, as with the first and third rhyme ("sleeping" and "weeping"), and the seventh, ninth and the tenth rhyme ("perish," "cherish" and "vanquish"). Fu also created an interesting analogy between the alliteration and rhyme in the line "Sullenly, slowly" and the reiterate locution "慘慘" (cancan, "sullenly") and "遲遲" (chichi, "slowly") in Chinese translation. In this section, Fu not only preserved the "spirit and charm" 神韻 but also part of the rhyme 韻律 of Byron's poetry.

In comparison to his translation of *Manfred*, Fu's translation of "To a Lady" even resembled the traditional poetic form and rhyme more closely. Though it did not strictly follow the requirements of *qu* for the number of characters in each line and for the tonal and rhyme scheme, it did preserve some traditional features of *qu*. The language he used in this poem is half-vernacular half-classical. The number of characters in the lines also has a connection with traditional requirements. The rhyme scheme is more regular than the translation of *Manfred*, though it does not follow any particular traditional rhyme scheme.

致某婦 (To a Lady)

余以春日離英，或詰以故，
作此答之。

假如人，既被摒樂園之外，
兀的是，傍門牆瞻顧徘徊，
便不免觸景憶前情，
覺來生涯叵耐。

When man expell'd from Eden's bowers,
A moment linger'd near the gate,
Each scene recall'd the vanish'd hours,
And bade him curse his future fate.

只若在殊方行邁，
庶能知，沉沉憂思怎生捱；
只索將，往事前塵付之一慨，
借紛來景物排遣胸懷。

But wandering on through distant climes,
He learnt to bear his load of grief;
Just gave a sigh to other times,
And found in busier scenes relief.

恁安排，女子呵！我這便恁安排！
芳容親炙須難再；
為的是，我若再依依芳澤畔，
堪不得一重重影事都兜上心來。

Thus, lady! Will it be with me,
And I must view thy charms no more;
For while I linger near to thee
I sigh for all I knew before.

一走自維無上策，
庶可以，逍遙自在情羅外，
我今無意樂園居，
叫我徒對樂園，怎耐？

In flight I shall be surely wise,
Escaping from temptation's snare;
I cannot view my Paradise
Without the wish of dwelling there.

The rhyme of the poem lies on the vowel "ai" ("外" *wai*, "徊" *huai*, "耐" *nai*, "邁" *mai*, "挨" *ai*, "慨" *kai*, "懷" *huai*, "再" *zai*, "來" *lai*), which largely realizes the aabb rhyme of the original. Expressions such as "兀的是" (abruptly it becomes such as such), "怎生" (in what way), "恁" (such or so), "堪不得" (it cannot be endured), "庶可以" (so as to) and "怎耐" (how to endure) are typical vocabulary belonging to *qu*. Classical allusion is also employed, such as when the lady is referred to as "芳澤"

(fangze, aromatic hair oil), and “親炙” (qinzhi) is used to mean “to get close to and receive instructions from someone.” These classical allusions and idiomatic expressions have no equivalents in English. It seems that Fu used them to keep the diction congenial to the traditional poetic form, rather than to faithfully translate Byron’s original poem.

Generally speaking, the straightforwardness of Byron’s poem is given elegance and delicacy because of the diction and style. But as *qu* is more a popular rather than elevated poetic form, it still manages to suit the simplicity of the original poem. The melancholic tone of the original poem is made more upset and vexed because of rhetorical questions in the first line of the third stanza and the last line of the poem.

One may start to question whether Byron’s personal style was overwhelmed by Fu’s use of traditional Chinese poetic form, which could lead readers to concentrate on the traditional poetic form with which they were familiar. Although Fu made changes to the traditional poetic forms he employed in “To a Lady,” the translation still remains under the requirements of these forms. In this sense, Fu Donghua’s “To a Lady” should receive full credit for its innovative use of traditional poetic form, even though it is not very faithful to the original “spirit and charm” of Byron’s poem.

The last poem I would like to mention in my discussion of the use of rhyme in Chinese translation of Byron’s poetry is Xu Zhimo’s translation, “Song of Corsair.” By 1923, Xu had already been recognized as one of the most talented modern Chinese poets. He and Wen Yiduo 聞一多 as well as several other literary figures established the Crescent Moon Society 新月社 (Xinyue She) and began to develop new rhymed verse 新格律詩 (xin gelü shi). To Wen and Xu, the rules and forms of poetic writing 格律 (gelü) should not be regarded as restrictions but as tools for powerful poetic expression (Denton and Hockx 2008, 285). Wen suggested an extremely regulated form for the poem: each stanza should have equal number of lines, each line should have equal meters, and each meters should have an equal number of characters

(285). This kind of poetic form was called by Chinese literati who preferred free verse with the disparaging name, “dry bean-curd verse” 豆腐乾詩 (*doufugan shi*) (285).

The aim of writing poetry in *gelü* was to create the architectural beauty 建築的美 (*jianzhu de mei*), musical beauty 音樂的美 (*yinyue de mei*), and pictorial beauty 繪畫的美 (*huihua de mei*). In “Song of Corsair,” Xu experimented with this new poetic style while at the same time modifying the “Byronic” passion with his personal style.

我靈魂的深處埋着一個秘密， Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
寂寞的，冷落的，更不露痕跡。 Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
只有時我的心又無端的抨擊， Save when to thine my heart responsive swell,
回憶着舊時情，在惆悵中涕泣。 Then trembles into silence as before.

在那個墓宮的中心，有一盞油燈， There, in its center, a sepulchral lamp
點着緩火一星——不滅的情焰； Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen;
任憑絕望的慘酷，也不能填埋 Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
這孱弱的光稜，無盡的綿延。 Though vain its ray as it had never been.

記着我——阿，不要走過我的墳墓。 Remember me—oh! Pass not thou my
grave
忘卻了這抔土中埋着的殘骨； Without one thought whose relics there
recline:
我不怕——因為遍嘗了——人生的苦痛， The only pang my bosom dare not
brave
但是我更受不住你冷漠的箭簇。 Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

請聽着我最後的淒楚的聲訴— My fondest, faintest, latest accents hear—
為墓中人悻惻，是悲慈不是羞， Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove;
我惴惴的祈求——只是眼淚一顆， Then give me all I ever ask’d—a tear,
算是我戀愛最初，最後的報酬！ The first—last—sole reward of so much love.
(Xu 1924a, 1) (The Corsair, from verse XIV)

Even readers who do not read Chinese may notice that the length of the lines in Xu Zhimo’s translation is quite regular. The number of characters in each line is eleven, twelve, or thirteen. Though the lines are not exactly of equal length and do not have precisely equal numbers of characters, Xu still created a sense of “architectural beauty” in his poetic form. More importantly, Xu imitated Byron’s original poem, each line of which generally contains five feet. Considering the Crescent Moon Society’s interest in creating a uniform poetic form, the regular style of Byron’s poem might be one of the reasons why Xu chose it for translation: his translation and

Byron's poem both demonstrate that the highly restricted "dry bean-curd" poetic style can display as much beauty as free verse, if not more.

Not only did Xu follow the length of the lines in Byron's original poem, he also mostly preserved Byron's abab rhyme scheme, which also created the "musical beauty" of his translation. The first stanza fully realizes the abab rhyme scheme, as "密" (mi, secret) rhymes with "跡" (ji, trace), and "擊" (ji, beat) rhymes with "泣" (qi, cry). In the second and third stanzas, Xu kept the second-and-fourth-line rhymes: "焰" (yan, "flame") rhymes with "延" (yan, "stretch"), and "骨" (gu, "bone") rhymes with "簇" (cu, "cluster"). Although the original rhythm of Byron's poem is impossible to imitated in Chinese, Xu compensated for the loss in his translation. Also, there are usually one or two pauses in each line. These pauses add emotion to and enhance the dynamic of the sentence. For example, in the first line of the first stanza, there is a pause between "深处" (shenchu, "deep") and "埋藏" (maicang, "hide"), and the following line was broken into three parts, i.e., "寂寞的" (jimo de, "lonely"), "冷落的" (lengluo de, "deserted"), "更不露痕跡" (geng bulu henji, "even more, revealing no trace"). Finally, in the third line of the third stanza, a dash clearly marks out the pause within the line. In these ways, Xu helped his readers to feel the rhythm of poetry while reading.

The "pictorial beauty" of the poem deserves even more attention. Xu began to integrate his own interpretation of Byron's poetry into his translation and to influence Byron's style with his own. Without distorting Byron's original meaning, Xu used more concrete images and metaphor than Byron, consequently making the translation more vivid and delicate than the original, but also much less impulsive and candid. The pictorial beauty can especially be observed in the second and third stanza. For example, Xu called the "slow flame, eternal" in Byron's poem as the 不灭的情焰 (bumie de qingyan, undistinguishable flame of affection), which is even more emotional than Byron's original expression. "Relics" was translated into 殘骨 (cangu, remnant bones), which is a more straightforward and detailed way to describe the wasted corpse. The "ray" in the last line of the second stanza was described by Xu

as 光稜 (guangleng, ray of light with corrugations), which gives the intangible “ray” a concrete materiality. In the last two lines of the third stanza, Xu added a metaphor to enhance the vividness of the description of the “pang.” The forgetfulness of the beloved hurts the speaker with its 箭簇 (jiancu, arrows cluster). This metaphor emphasizes the deep and lasting effect of the painful feeling; it is sharper and more active than “pang.” Moreover, Xu’s translation of the sentence could be read as “I fear not—because I have tasted—all the pains in life/ But I cannot bear the arrow cluster of your indifference.” It seems that Xu wanted to form a contrast between “all the pains in life” and the “indifference,” and between the speaker’s bravery before the first and his vulnerability in front of the second. This contrast intensifies the “pang” imposed on the speaker by his beloved’s “forgetfulness.”

It may appear that Xu failed to be exactly faithful to the original attributes of Byron’s poem, because he invested his translation with vivid and emotional expressions, which add a certain degree of gentleness and delicacy to the straightforward and simple style of Byron. However, not only does the “beauty” of his translation successfully capture the passion and melancholy featured in Byron’s poem, but his translation also manages to recreate a significant part of the rhyme and rhythm of the original poem. Because Xu did not use any traditional poetic form in his translation, he worked with more flexibility than Fu. This allowed him to imitate the form of the original as faithfully as possible. More importantly, using Byron’s poem as the basic material, Xu also demonstrated to his readers and many Chinese literati that architectural, musical and pictorial beauty and uniformed poetic form could simultaneously be realized.

Free verse was also used in Chinese translation of Byron’s poetry. Because this poetic form does not have any restrictions of the length of line, number of characters, tone, rhythm or rhyme, the translators were allowed even greater freedom in their translation. Free verse is also very suitable to be used together with vernacular Chinese. Therefore, translations in free verse could more accurately convey the meaning of the original poetic works.

In addition to his creative application of traditional poetic forms, Fu used mainly free verse in his translation. Xu Diaofu, Zhao Jingshen, Gu Pengnian and Huang Zhengming all used this style in their translation. But what I want to discuss in this chapter is only “Oh! Weep for Those” translated by Gu Pengnian, which is a good example because it is short and easy to handle compared to Fu’s translation and more fluent and accurate than the works of the other translators. It also demonstrates Gu’s way of exploring the potential of the new poetic style.

I.

唉，我们当为那些在巴比伦
水濱啜泣的人民流涕，
他们的神龕已是頹廢，
他们的國土已變成夢幻；
我们當為猶太的破
碎的壳的箏篪流涕；
哀悼曾為上帝所居
住的已无上帝居住了！

Oh! Weep for those that wept by
Babel’s stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land
a dream,
Weep for the harp of Judah’s broken
shell—
Mourn—where their God that
dwelt—the Godless dwell!

II.

以色列将在何处洗她流血的足？
郇山的歌何时再将甜醉？
犹太的音调怎能重乐
在天声前跳动的心灵？

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding
feet?
And when shall Zion’s songs again
seem sweet?
And Judah’s melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap’d before its
heavenly voice?

III.

浪徒而心怀疲頓的民族呵，
你们怎将窜避而求靖安？
野鸽有她的巢，狡狐有他的窟，
人类有他们的国乡——
而以色列只剩下荒涼的墓土。

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary
breast!
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
The wild-dove hath her nest—the fox
his cave—
Mankind their Country—Israel but the
grave.

On the level of the content, Gu’s translation is very accurate and faithful to the original. The only mistake of this translation is that the last line of the first stanza “Mourn—where their God that dwelt—the Godless dwell!” was wrongly translated by Gu as “Mourn—where their God dwelt—already no God dwells!” Unlike Xu Zhimo,

Gu also added no personal comments or interpretations into his translation. However, the poetic form, including the number of lines in each stanza and the rhyme, was sacrificed. First of all, the three stanzas of the same length in the original poem are irregular: the length of the first stanza is doubled, the second follows the original, and the third contains one line more than the original. Also, Gu did not preserve the aabb rhyme scheme. But this was perhaps not problematic at all because, according to Shen Yanbing, the rhyme could, and sometimes should, be sacrificed.

An interesting feature of Gu's translation is that he intentionally breaks one word into two parts. For example, 破碎 (posui, broken) and 居住 (juzhu, dwell) are two words which usually appear right next to each other in the same poetic line. Gu placed 破 at the end of the one line and the at the beginning of the following line. It is unconventional to separate them like this in poetry, but it raises no problem in prose writing. This can be observed in his translation of "Stanzas to Augusta" as well. There, Gu even put 的 (de, a particle which does not have semantic meaning but functions as a grammatical element together with a noun) at the beginning of a line. Gu might want to create an occasion of "enjambment," where readers have to "read into the next line" just as they must do when reading some English poems. It is common for English poems to break a complete sentence across several lines; Chinese poetry usually tries to make every line a complete sentence, image, and meaning. By breaking down the "unity" which Chinese readers would be accustomed to, Gu may have wanted to destroy the restrictions of "form."

Gu's translation represents what Chinese poets and translators expected from free verse in their poetic writing and translation. They desired this form to be completely "free" of almost all kinds of formal restrictions. They were writing in a poetic style that promotes "irregularity" instead of the "beauty" of regularity. Chinese intellectuals' invention and promotion of free verse during the May-Fourth period exemplified their urgent desire to free Chinese poetry from the restriction of conventions of Chinese poetry. At the same time, it also seems to have opposed Xu

Zhimo and Wen Yiduo's invention of new Chinese verse, which required a high degree of uniformity in poetic form.

The translation of Byron's poetry, especially the complete translation of *Manfred*, is one of the most important contributions of the centenary issue to the Chinese reception of Byron. Although *Manfred* should be recognized as the most significant development of Chinese translation of Byron's poetry, the short lyric poems were much more popular among Chinese readers, as they were easy to read and provided first-hand material to many readers who were interested in Byron's personal life and emotions. As presented by Chinese translations of his poetry, Byron was a passionate, sentimental, tender-hearted youth, not an impetuous rebel or a hero who was deeply worried by the misfortunes of the people in the world.

More importantly, both the quality and number of the poems translated in the centenary issue displayed a good mastery and understanding of foreign language and the use of vernacular Chinese. Through their translation of Byron's poetry, Chinese translators practiced their translation skills and further developed their ideas of how modern Chinese poetry should progress. Because Chinese language was still experiencing changes and looking for directions in its reforming process, the aim of Chinese translators was not simply to present Byron's poetry as faithfully as possible, but more importantly to accelerate the progress of modern Chinese poetry.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The centenary issue of *The Short Story Magazine* represented the great progress achieved by Chinese intellectuals in their introduction and study of Byron. Translations of Byron's poetry, foreign biographies, and critical essays on his poetry and original writings written by Chinese critics significantly broadened Chinese readers' knowledge and deepened their understanding of Byron. This Romantic poet was portrayed not simply as a hero who fought and died for the independence of Greece one hundred years ago, but also as a real person, who had accomplished heroic deeds, composed good poetry, and also made mistakes in his life. He was regarded as a model by Chinese literati and youth because of his passion, rebellious spirit, and, most importantly, his candid self-expression.

One of the most noteworthy features of the centenary issue is how Chinese intellectuals applied their literary ideas to their reception of Byron. In comparison with the Chinese introduction and translation of Byron during the 1900s and 1910s, in the 1920s, Chinese critics had both clearer literary aims and more mature literary ideas in their treatment of Byron than earlier Chinese literati. The translation and study of Byron's biographies and poetic works were guided by Chinese intellectuals' aim to bring the new Chinese literature into being, which in their opinion would facilitate the reformation of Chinese society and Chinese people. Consequently, Byron was presented as a "May Fourth youth," whose spirit Chinese youth could learn from, and his poetry was treated as a case study on which Chinese literati practiced their critical and translation principles. In this way, not only was Byron integrated in to the formation of modern Chinese literature and the development of Chinese society, but Chinese intellectuals also endeavored to join modern Chinese literature into the dialogue of modern world literature.

However, just about one year after the publication of the memorial issue, the May Fourth New Culture Movement shifted away from its original promotion of

“literary revolution” 文學革命 (*wenxue geming*) to “revolutionary literature” 革命文學 (*geming wenxue*) (Chow 1967, 287). Many Chinese intellectuals began to see that the worsening economic and political conditions and intensifying conflicts among warlords and between China and foreign colonial forces could not wait for the gradual progress that might be brought about by advocacy of personal freedom. Chinese preference for the expression of individualism in literature, which Byron’s work was considered to exemplify, significantly lessened. In their writing of revolutionary literature, Chinese literati pointed out the necessity for individuals to voluntarily repress their individuality in order to be unified under the same revolutionary goals (Xu and Zou 2008, 184). Though conscious of the suppression imposed on individuality by over-emphasis on patriotism, nationalism, and class struggle theory, many Chinese intellectuals finally united in their respective literary practices to serve the rising revolutionary tide. In 1930, the League of Leftist Writers 左翼作家聯盟 (*Zuoyi zuojia lianmeng*) began what they considered a new “literary revolution” (205) by returning to Liang Qichao’s patriotic and nationalist program. China was in need of a unified force of young revolutionaries instead of individuals who either acted on their own impulses or constantly doubted the uniform beliefs of the revolutionary organizations that they belonged to, using their own thinking and personalities as the criteria. Under this context, Byron, who was admired by Chinese intellectuals for his daring expression of individuality, gradually faded from the attention of Chinese literati and Chinese readers, because his heroism appeared to be too “individualistic” to be integrated into the Chinese revolutionary ideals.

In the following two decades after 1930, China experienced the war against Japanese occupation, and the civil war between the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party, successively. Many intellectuals fled from the northern and eastern urban cities which were under Japanese control to the south Western part of China, continuing their literary activities with great difficulties. Others remained in the Japanese-occupied areas, where all kinds of publication activities were hindered by the lack of materials, economic support, and severe censorship. The Chinese

reception of Byron progressed extremely slowly. From 1930 to 1948, only scattered translations of foreign biographies and Byron's poetry and short Chinese literary critical essays appeared in popular magazines, ranging from one to four items per year. M. Andre Maurois's critical biography of Byron was translated by Cao Liang 曹亮 in part, in 1930, and the biography written by Tourumi Yūsuke's 鹤见佑辅 was translated by a certain Wei Jin 魏晋 in 1936 and 1942. Besides short lyrical poems, *The Prisoner of Chillon* was translated by Yang Jing in 1942. Zhu Weiji 朱维基, the most important translator of Byron's poetic works after 1949, published an article comparing Goethe's *Faust* and Byron's *Manfred*, in 1945. The image of Byron as a hero who died for the independence of Greece dominated Chinese presentation during this period. Two news reports dedicated to the American pilot Robert M. Short and the Chinese general Huang Meixing 黄梅兴, both of whom died in the anti-Japanese war, compared these two war heroes to Byron. Though still managing to attract attention from some of his Chinese readers, Byron—the individualistic hero—was forced to move from the center of Chinese literary interest to the margins.

From the destiny of Byron in his Chinese reception, one can observe not only how foreign literature exerted an impact on the development of modern Chinese literature and social thought but also how Chinese intellectuals made use of foreign literature according to the social, political, and literary conditions specific to China in a different historical environment. If one is to claim that the development of modern Chinese literature and thought is a process characterized by “Westernization,” he or she will need to explore more specifically how Western influences are assimilated by Chinese intellectuals into their own literary reformation or revolution, instead of simply pointing out specific “Westernized” elements. In this sense, the exploration of how Byron was revived by May Fourth literary ideas—ideas that come from foreign traditions but are modified by Chinese social and intellectual circumstances—may serve as a useful example.

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