

Byron's *Don Juan* and Nationalism

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Abstract of the thesis entitled:

‘Byron’s *Don Juan* and Nationalism’

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The dissertation explores the discrepancy between critical reception towards Byron as a Romantic poet in contemporary Romantic scholarship and in Chinese historical evaluation (with certain reference to the European Continent). Byronic contradictions pose a problem to Romantic scholars who are engaged to interpret the interplay between Byron the man and Byron-the poet. They share the view that Byron succeeds in manipulating his own personal image to promote his poetical visibility and tend to doubt if his poems could stand alone without the reference to his letters and journals. In China, as in many other countries of European Continent and Asia, Byron is often viewed in a more positive way as the very name has become a byword for liberal nationalism and the rebellion against tyranny.

I propose to comprehend the perceptive gap by focusing on *Don Juan* which best contextualizes Byron in the flow of historicity with the dimension of nationalism. I intend to delve into three structural units of *Don Juan*—digression, narrative, a lyric song—to argue that Byronic contradictions manifest nationalism in its multiple contingencies.

Firstly in digression Byron presents a national reality which gradually displaces his cherished cosmopolitan ideals. Among many other pressing problems of his day, political renegades, the paradox of scientific innovations, the rise of intellectual ladies and the commoditization of marriage and family constitute the tangible part of Byron’s domestic recalling. With retrospective commentaries Byron fulfills the act of imagining native land; and in this regard nationalism is the spiritual support of the expatriate existence.

Secondly by reading *Don Juan* as the quest romance of the individual initiation, I bring the narrative into scrutiny and argue that the hero’s transformation involves an

implicit evolution of the national identification. In terms of subjective consciousness, nationalism embodies the mature vision of masculine selfhood. Don Juan's encounter with both female and male characters, through his repeated border-crossing, illuminates a metaphorical process from rejection to embrace of native roots, from negation to affirmation of national bonds. Juan's rite of passage—sexual initiation, surviving shipwreck, the trial of the exotic love and battlefield and diplomacy—transmits a national subjectivity which corresponds to the Byronic existence of mobility.

Thirdly 'Isles of Greece' adds an alternative yet prospective dimension to perceive the tension between national anxiety and modernity. In English context its meanings vary as the contextual focus shifts from poetical to socio-biographical and to existential level. The theme of the national independence is complicated by its negative elements such as the identity of the songster. In the Chinese context, 'the Isles of Greece' initiates and embodies a myth-making process as it gives vent to the anxiety of modernity faced by Chinese people in the opening of the twentieth century. The individual shaping of the 'Isles' by three Chinese intellectual pioneers symbolizes the simultaneous awakening of Chinese national consciousness and individual consciousness. The extended reading of Byron by Lu Xun, together with his reworking, voices the existential dilemma of modern enlighteners. His invocation of 'Mara poets' is prophetic of the modern intellectuals who possess both vision and willpower to eradicate ignorance and public apathy.

In conclusion *Don Juan* reveals that Byron's participation in the modern historicity of nationalism involves three dimensions—residual cosmopolitan ideals, English national consciousness and the independence of the oppressed nations. *Don Juan* embodies a historical magnetic field where Byron's existence actualizes the potential conflict of the modernity.

论文提要

题目：拜伦之《唐璜》与民族观

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拜伦之《唐璜》与民族观¹

本论文从英国浪漫主义诗人拜伦在二十世纪初的中国引发的影响说开去，旨在说明拜伦式争议体现为其接受的不同态势。在中国以及欧陆等国，拜伦因同自由精神以及民族独立紧密联系，而得到广泛肯定。但对于浪漫主义学者，拜伦的诗歌总在个体传奇的阴影下，很难说自成一统。

我试图通过解读《唐璜》了解此种认知沟壑产生的原因，因为这部作品能最好体现拜伦在以‘民族观’或‘国别性’为维度的历史流中的语境位置。我深入到《唐璜》三种主题结构——夹叙夹议，故事和诗中抒情诗，提出拜伦式矛盾是民族性的多重表现。

首先，拜伦在夹叙夹议部分勾勒出一幅实实在在的‘英国摄政王时期’的社会现实图景。种种紧迫的社会问题逐渐使世界主义价值观边缘化，例如，政治变节者，科学发明的悖论，知识女性地位的提高以及婚姻和家庭的全面商品化构成了拜伦对故国的回忆。流亡生涯给予他的边缘视角使这些怀旧性评论本身成

¹ 将 nationalism 译为‘民族观’而非‘民族主义’，主要是突出这一概念在个体生命认同过程中，潜在的文化指针和认同作用。基于同样的原因，‘民族情节’、‘国别性’或者‘民族性’也可接受。

为一种‘民族性’的举动。在这种意义上，民族观是拜伦流亡生涯的精神支柱，弥漫在他的故国回想之中。

其次，设若将《唐·璜》的故事情节置于‘启蒙’成长小说的叙事框架内，可以发现主人公的转变包含民族认同的潜在过程。从主体意识的角度，民族观体现为男性主人公成熟的个体意识。唐·璜多次穿越边界的举动，通过同女性角色和男性角色的接触，实现了一个对本土根基从拒斥到接受，对民族纽带从否定到肯定的隐喻过程。唐·璜的成长过程—初次性体验、海难、异域爱恋，战场洗礼以及外交官生涯—传递着国别性的主观意识，这也同拜伦的流动经历相呼应。

第三，抒情诗‘哀希腊’体现了民族焦虑同现代性张力之间的另一维度。在英语的原文语境中，随着语境重心从虚拟文本层面迁移到社会传记角度，再提高到生命存在的层面，‘哀希腊’的主题—民族独立和自由—被赋予了复杂的含义，例如歌唱者的可疑身份也引发对作者意图的质疑。在中国语境中‘哀希腊’集中表达了20世纪初中国人面对现代性的焦虑，从而也开始构筑另一个现代性的西方神话和认知误区。三位中国知识启蒙先驱对于‘哀希腊’的再阅读和再阐释说明某种意义上中国民族意识和个体意识的同步觉醒。尤其是鲁迅对拜伦的延展性加工，代表了现代启蒙者的存在困境。‘摩罗诗人’的呐喊，预示着现代知识分子的洞察和意志力必能消除愚昧和冷漠。

总之，《唐璜》揭示了拜伦参与到现代民族历史的三个方面—消逝的世界主义的理想，英国的民族意识和被压迫民族的独立。《唐璜》如同一块历史磁场，不难觉察拜伦的存在和现代性的潜在冲突。

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Table of Contents

Foreword. Byron and his Chinese Audience.....	7
Introduction. Byron's Controversy.....	7
I. A Review of Byronic Studies on <i>Don Juan</i>	12
II. Rephrasing the Issue: its Significance and Strategy.....	28
Chapter I. <i>Don Juan</i> : English Domesticities and Cosmopolitan Ideal.....	45
I. Defining Byron in Romantic Nationalism.....	46
II. His Discontent with a Modern Nation.....	53
III. Jesting with Bluestocking Ladies.....	60
IV. Cosmopolitan Ideal and Gallantry.....	73
Chapter II <i>Don Juan</i> : Masculine Desire and the Evolution of National Vision.....	85
I. The Lure of Beauties and Loves.....	87
II. The Inspiration of Male Individualism.....	108
Chapter III 'Isles of Greece' in Context: the Question of Liberal Nationalism.....	129
I. Reading 'Isles of Greece' in English Contexts.....	129
II. Reading 'Isles of Greece' in the Early Twentieth Century China.....	141
Conclusion.....	159
Works Cited.....	167

Byron's *Don Juan* and Nationalism

Foreword. Byron and his Chinese Audience

China in the year 1924 witnessed the heyday of the 'Byron craze' as it marked the centenary anniversary of Byron's death. In April, the month of Byron's death, more than twenty literary magazines unanimously promoted special issues to commemorate Byron, with biographical stories, critical essays and translated poems. Among many *Fiction Monthly* (《小说月报》), *Creation Monthly* (《创造月刊》) and *Morning Post* (《晨报》) were the most prominent literary publications of the New Literature Campaign. Take *Fiction Monthly* as an example. Its editor-in-chief Zheng Zhenduo (郑振铎) explains why Byron, among many Western poets, deserves special attention.

We love writers of genius, especially great rebels. We praise Byron not only for his preeminent genius but also for his impassioned rebellion which moves us more deeply than his poetry. He is indeed one of the supreme rebels of modern times, rebelling against the devil which suppresses freedom and against all hypocritical and pseudo-moralistic societies (Chu, 1995:47).

That Zheng seems inspired by Byronic heroism has a historical bearing on China's earliest interest in his 'Isles of Greece' and his corresponding deeds in Greece. Mao Dun (茅盾), another key figure of the modern Chinese fiction, warns youths against Byronic decadence and sentimentality.

There are two Byrons: one is imprudent, selfish, and sensual; the other generous, chivalrous, and noble...the former represents the first half of Byron's life; and the latter the second half... What China needs is a literature of revolt; we need thunder and storms like Byron's to save the dying hearts; we must abstain from, the obsessive, selfish and lascivious lifestyle like Byron's... I do hope that the blind craze is over now (Chu: 60).

Mao Dun's classification is not accurate; but he is clearly attracted by the inner split of Byron's behavior and personality and calls for the selective acceptance of Byron. The comments of Zheng Zhenduo and Mao Dun represent Chinese response to Byron in the first half of the twentieth century which stresses the spirit of revolt against national oppression and false morality. Even though being made almost a century ago, their opinions largely build the basic perception of the Chinese intellectuals of Byron

and his place in the English Romanticism. Even today Byron is commonly regarded in China as one of the most eminent writers in the early nineteenth century Europe, being placed alongside Shelley and Victor Hugo. He is still celebrated for his skepticism towards established hierarchy, his radical spirit of individualism and his commitment to liberty. China is not alone in the selective but affirmative perception of Byron and his contribution to the global campaign for national independence since the eighteenth century. European attitudes towards Byron and his literary works shall be briefly presented in the subsequent section.

While Byron's death in the struggle of the Greek independence makes him a figure of the martyr-poet in the eyes of Chinese and Continental revolutionaries, his sacrifice does not much improve the impression on his country fellows. Ever since the nineteenth century, the English public has been more interested in Byron as a libertine than otherwise; and such attention basically implies an image laughable but scarcely laudable. Not only did Westminster Abbey refuse the burial of his body on the ground of his 'questionable morality' but also a critic of today may find ample reasons to discuss at length his theatrical pose and poetic masquerade. The perceived discrepancy, as sketched above, requires one to formulate a question which not only accommodates differences but also seeks to contextualize the viable alternatives.

Introduction. Byron's Controversy

This section shall briefly highlight the comments of some notable critics in the Anglophone world as well as literary figures on the European Continental in an attempt to historicize Byron's controversy and reveal its multiple facets and potential sensibilities.

Byron's controversy comprises dual dimensions. On the domestic level it comes down to the tension between poetic activity and private life. John Morley (1838-1923), English historian and politician, well expressed his concern over the confusion.

More attention is now paid to the mysteries of Byron's life than to the merits of his work, and criticism and morality are equally injured by the confusion between the worth of the verse he wrote, and the virtue or wickedness of the life he lived. (Rutherford, *Heritage*, 1970: 385-6).

Frowning upon the abuse of personal scandals, Morley suggested that, since 'the work is before us, its own warranty', details of the poet's life should only be used to comprehend 'the growth and prominence of a characteristic sentiment or peculiar idea' (387). By asking 'what are the stories of Byron's libertinism to us', Morley presents his version of Byron's controversy—the dual tension between a social being and an idealistic being, between personality and poetry. Morley's observation is a self-conscious moment in which one may discern that Byron, if regarded as a particular case of historicity from 1788 to 1824, brings various kinds of national anxieties to exposure. The reason why I pay special attention to Morley is that his distinction, though being made decades ago, remains highly relevant to observing the overall growth of Byron critique.

Shifting to the more contemporary scene of Byron study, one may find that the tension is visibly alive in the general Anglophone attitudes to Byron. The difficulty to distinguish Byron the man from Byron the poet has captured the attention of many Romantic scholars. That is to say his personality and conduct are constantly interactive with his poetic works. Harold Bloom regards Byron as 'literature's most notorious instance of a writer's life becoming his work, indeed taking the place of it' (2004: 1). Jerome McGann uses two terms—the Book of Byron and the Book of a World—to suggest that 'Byron wrote about himself, we all know, just as we all know that his books, like God's human creatures, are all made in his image and likeness' (2004: 107). Andrew Rutherford gives a sympathetic view to the alleged self-dramatization. 'He projected into fictitious or semi-fictitious heroes his idealized self-portraits, his fantasies of adventure and escape, his pictures of himself as a gloomy, isolated, wronged, misunderstood, evil and suffering creature' (1961:12). The autobiographical nature of his writing is so obvious that certain critics favor the 'text-only' approach to the study of Byron because it is vulgar to lean on his letters and journals to measure his poetic merits. For instance Robert Gleckner urges that 'one must strongly resist the temptation to tie it [poetry] to specific occasions or personal circumstances' (1980:214).

These remarks reveal much anxiety which is evidently generated by Byron's dazzling personality and presence in the Regency world-- 'Byron the great lover, the man not of political but of erotic affairs, the broken dandy of the fast and luxurious world of Regency England' (McGann, 2002: 113-14). His exile subsequent to the uproar kindled by his incestuous scandal seems to confirm the public fear; and his poetry could never be severed from the negative implication of the moral accusation. In a certain way Byron's sexual wantonness publicized during the separation melodrama considerably distracted domestic audience from comprehending the potential political and literary significance which Byron's presence holds to England and Continental Europe. These scandals arouse the vulgar interest in his personal life which displaces the belief that Byron's poetry deserves serious attention since they are theatrical display of his character. Accordingly the positive part of Byron's biographical evidence and its significance has been gradually diminished, negated and discarded. In brief no matter whether in critical evaluation or in popular judgment, Byron's controversy on its domestic level involves what Morley identifies as the interplay between personal demeanor and poetic conscience.

As I state in the opening of this section, Byron's controversy extends into an international dimension. In comparison with its domestic or English dimension, the international views exhibit less concentrated emphasis on the poet's dissolute life. Not only in China but also in many countries of Europe, Byron's dissolute life has been relatively tolerated and neglected because the very name epitomizes the liberal spirit of individualism and nationalism. Though the following comments from Goethe and Brandes should be mainly placed in the nineteenth century context, they largely represent what Continental intellectuals think of Byron in its periods of revolutionary turbulence and their influence can still be strongly felt in today's Continental perception.

Goethe's lavish praise makes Byron stand as high as Shakespeare in his contemporary European Continent.

A character of such eminence had never existed before, and probably would never come again....The beauty of *Cain* is such as we shall not see a second time in this world...I did right to

present him with that momentum of love in *Helena*. I could not make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is the greatest genius of our century. Again, Byron is neither antique nor romantic, but like the present day itself... A treatise upon Byron would be neither convenient nor advisable; but I shall not fail to pay him honor and to allude to him at proper times (Moorhead: 12, 208-11).

Giuseppe Mazzini, the leader of the Italian independence movement, regards the poetry of Byron and Goethe as the poetry of an epoch. He highlights 'the holy alliance of poetry with the cause of the peoples', pointing out a 'union—still so rare—of thought and action—which alone completes the human Word, and is destined to emancipate the world' (Rutherford: 340).

Danish critic George Brandes compares Byron to a true warrior who plants dragon's teeth in nations like Russia, Poland, Spain, Italy and Germany and helps to spread the prophecy of the revolution. In the volume about English Naturism, he devotes seven chapters to the discussion of Byron who, in his eyes, changes the course of European poetry because the smooth flow has been interrupted and this fresh current strikes the most powerful keynote in the literary arena. More than that, Byron's voice shatters the deathlike silence in Europe where crowds of political asylum-seekers, the oppressed and conspirators all gaze at Byron whose very presence, as charming as Apollo and as brave as Achilles, is more overwhelming than the alliance of European monarchies. In an age of degeneracy when shameless gains are the sole concerns, Byron's status as an English aristocrat, sheltering him from authoritative control of each government, makes him the best spokesman of European liberal spirit because he gives vent to the repressed revolutionary zeal.

To sum up, I intend to examine Byron's controversy as a particular kind of receptive discrepancy on dual tracks. On the domestic scale the English public is reluctant to ignore the personal shadow on his poetry while on the international level Byron's poetry tends to be more positively connected with his public engagement. It should be recognized that the biographical interest on both sides has different focuses and manifestations and that the border between private sphere and the public one needs to be specified in this case. While the former displays certain concern about sex and morality, the latter directly refers to Byron's role in the struggle for independence

in Greece. Byron's controversy within my scope should be reckoned as a peculiar cross-national phenomenon which initially arose in the nineteenth century but extended into our present age. It is true that Chinese responses to Byron occurred almost one century later than their European counterparts for obvious historical reasons, but their utterances signify a fresh torrent of cultural impetus representative of China and comparable to that of Europe.

While Byronic egoistical decadence may divert serious attention from his poetic value, his sacrifice to liberty tends to offset the negative influence of the personal scandals on his poetry. My subsequent discussion in the main seeks to juxtapose the different emphases of Byronic interest. In the next section I intend to focus on *Don Juan* and trace the progress of its critique and examine how the binary distinction between Byron the man and Byron the poet gradually comes to the fore. The poetic text offers a contextual locus which can accommodate public perception of Byron with his own poetic utterance.

I. A Review of Byronic Studies on *Don Juan*

I choose to concentrate on *Don Juan* as the main research subject for its significance in the history of English literature has been and will still be substantiated in different perspectives. According to Jerome McGann, *Don Juan* is a major epic which succeeds Milton's *Paradise Lost* ('1667 when it was issued') and precedes Wordsworth's *Prelude* ('1850 when it finally appeared in print'). It occupies a unique position in Byron's writing career because it contains a retrospective narrative of his early experience in England as well as of his other poetic compositions. Given its autobiographical nature, *Don Juan* permits us certain measure of stability with which it is easier to perceive Byron's chameleon nature. According to Byron's chronology, *Don Juan* was composed simultaneously with Byron's *Memoirs*; and Byron mentioned both works to John Murray in a letter dated 10 July 1818 (1986:668). As *The Memoirs* was later destroyed by his well-meaning friends, *Don Juan* may be accepted as the sole extant record, enabling us to peer into the depth of his mental pilgrimage. His final recollection comprises the tangible corpus of the poet's past and

his evolution. *Don Juan* is an extension of his early verses, such as the *Childe Harold Pilgrimage*; and a mature attempt to work with the rhyme scheme ‘*ottava rima*’ experimented earlier in *Beppo*. In many ways *Don Juan* signals Byron’s artistic consummation of poetic utterance and literary techniques, and a moment in which he is able to preserve authorial integrity without too much market compromise. I want to argue that, through *Don Juan* one is likely to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the Byronic transformation. As any writing is an act to historicize, *Don Juan* serves as a database in which diverse elements can be traced, timed and located.

McGann’s contribution to Byron study has been widely acknowledged. In general I feel inspired by his views that Byron occupies an antagonistic place at the center of Romanticism; and that the historicity of the literary text is ‘imbedded in an indeterminate set of multiple and overlapping networks’ (McGann: 204). His discussion of the publication condition and social relations shows his concern with the ‘insincerity—the dark shadow of canonical Romanticism’ (Hopps, 2006:153). By this he means that whether Byron is insincere largely depends on the actual public circumstances and that it might not be the ruling poetic principle of Romanticism. With regard to my current thinking about how *Don Juan* builds on the interplay between Byron’s poetry and personality, McGann’s emphasis on ‘the importance of the historical/biographical dimensions of Byron’s poetry’ (153) helps to reveal that ‘the most persistent subtext [of *Don Juan*] is the myth (or plot) of Byron’s public life’ (McGann, 2002:37). In ‘Private poetry, Public deception’ McGann argues

The thing that most strikes me about the reception history of Byron is that the best readers I think were the readers who were reading him at the time. The reviewers, friends, enemies: they know what’s happening. Many of them hate it, but then they should. Byron calls out that hatred, deliberately (2002: 138).

His comments affirm the role of readers in determining the meaning; and they also convey a sense of anxiety about the possibility to contextualize Byron’s writing and redefine his existence in a reconstructed cosmos. Even so, I hold some reservations about the tendency to pin down the complexity of an individual text within the

frame of materiality. The following literary overview offers an active site where one can investigate the formative description of Byron's controversy.

A. The Nineteenth Century: Disparate Viewpoints and Canon-Making

The publication of *Don Juan* in installments produced the most heated controversy of Byron's time. It provoked the commentators of the diverse backgrounds to an uproar, some notable instances being the famous courtesan Harriette Wilson (1786-1846), Poet Laureate Robert Southey, and John H. Newman (1801-1890) who later became a renowned churchman. All their comments illustrate how the case of *Don Juan* produces a high-profile agitation to the national cultural arena. In line with McGann's grouping of critics, I proceed to highlight critics of three discursive or political fronts and their responses. *Byron: the Critical Heritage*, edited by A. Rutherford, collects divergent reactions to Byron's *Don Juan*.

Wordsworth's and Southey's attacks subsequent to the issuing of the first several cantos implicate *Don Juan* in the contemporary campaign to win control over public taste and national character. Wordsworth, convinced that '*Don Juan* will do more harm to the *English character*, than anything of our time,' wonders 'what avails it to hunt down Shelley, whom few read, and leave Byron untouched' (Rutherford, 1970:163-64). As the Poet Laureate, Southey maps the domestic circulation of a book and utters a similar concern over the corrupting influence exerted by *Don Juan* on general mentality.

For more than half a century *English literature* had been distinguished by its moral purity, the effect, and, in its turn, the cause of an improvement in *national manners*. A father might, without apprehension of evil, have put into the hands of his children any book which issued from the press, if it did not bear, either in its title-page or frontispiece, manifest signs that it was intended as furniture for the brothel... This was particularly the case with regard to our poetry (179-80, italics being mine).

Southey's remarks, stemming from his self-assurance as the guardian of national taste, reveal how British domesticity can be tenderly cultivated by literature to promote a 'clean' and 'unified' national faith. If connected with Southey's less-publicized status as the author of children literature, *The Story of the Three Bears* being one of the classics, the passage quoted above further elucidates the dominant moral didacticism

with which literary production has to comply as Britain is embracing its mature nationhood.

In the eyes of the moralists, Leigh Hunt's status as a political liberal is as outrageous as *Don Juan*. In defense of Byron, Leigh Hunt shows more mental readiness and patience to the 'heterogeneous mixture' of *Don Juan* and demands the attention to the mental growth of Byron the poet. 'His early hopes were blighted, and his disappointment vents itself in satirizing absurdities which rouse his indignation' (176). Recognizing the artistic value of *Don Juan* as an epic satire, Hunt may be one of the early critics to draw the distinction between Byron the lord and Byron the poet. The antithesis between the two is central to understand the marginality of Byron in the canonical Romanticism.

John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854) was a regular contributor to *Blackwood Magazine* and the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott. His prediction of the significance of *Don Juan* to English national culture might still offer considerable insight to critics who are interested in Regency public mindset. Given that *Blackwood* belongs to the Scottish Tories, Lockhart is less biased than other political liners, by ranking Byron equally with Scott. With the recurrent use of 'humbug' he not only teases the poet's masquerade but also enables readers to beware the serious moments in the whole piece of mockery.

By mocking Byron 'the whole of your misanthropy, for example, is humbug,' he seems to fend off the attention from 'Mr. Francis Jeffrey, that grave doctor of morality' (Rutherford: 182, 186). The ironical imitation of Byron's satirical tone is meant more to defend and support the poet's standpoint than to tease the poet and other critics. Lockhart's sarcastic voice may divert moralists from the main argument which is a genuine affirmation of *Don Juan* and encouragement for its author.

Stick to *Don Juan*: it is the only sincere thing you have ever written; and it will live many years after all your humbug Harolds have ceased to be ... I consider *Don Juan* out of all sight the best of your works; it is by far the most spirited, the most straightforward, the most interesting, and the most poetical; and everybody thinks as I do of it, although they have not the heart to say so (183-84).

By paying equal tribute to Byron and Scott, Lockhart gives a humorous turn to the connotation of 'humbug' and maintains that *Don Juan* bears proof to Byron's sincere engagement with the national agenda.

You [Byron and Scott, Baron and Baronet] are good friends, I am told, and I have no doubt you will continue so to the end of the chapter;--first, because you never can be rivals; and, secondly, because if you were rivals tomorrow, you are both *men of the world* and *men of sense*. Your ages are very different; yet talking of you as authors go, you may both be said to be still young men. Some years ago there was a good deal of *humbug* about the Baronet's productions, and now I see scarcely a trace of it; and a few years hence, I don't know what should prevent you from exhibiting a reformation quite as complete. If you meant to do so, it must be by adhering to the key of *Don Juan* ... (188).

The fact that Byron and Scott rank among the most frequently read authors in the Romantic period has been curiously translated into the contrastive acceptance. Canon-makers tend to belittle the artistic value of Byron's writing simply on the charge of populism; or deny him the niche he deserves on the basis of *Don Juan*'s illegitimate circulation.

Lockhart's observation not only has sympathy with Byron's text but also predicts the critical injustice which Byron is not alone to encounter. He proceeds to dwell on how the two men can be related to represent the best spirit of the land.

Scottish poetry numbers just three true geniuses, (and it is enough in all conscience) and their names are Dunbar, Burns, Scott—and they are all of them enemies to humbug. . . Scotland, therefore, is and will remain Sir Walter's. And what, you will say, is mine? I will tell you, Lord Byron: England is yours, if you choose to make it so.—I do not speak of the England of days past, or of the England of the days to come, but of the England of the day that now is, with which, if you be not contented, you are about as difficult as to please as a Buonaparte. *There is nobody but yourself who has any chance of conveying to posterity a true idea of the spirit of England in the days of his Majesty George IV.* Mr. Wordsworth may write fifty years about his 'dalesmen;' if he paints them truly, it is very well; if untruly, it is no matter: but you know what neither Mr. Wordsworth nor any Cumberland stamp-master ever can know. You know the society of England—you know what English gentlemen are made of, and you very well know what English ladies are made of; and I promise you, that knowledge is a much more precious thing, whatever you at present may think or say, than any notion you or any other Englishman ever acquire either of Italians, or Spaniards, or Greeks (189, italics being mine).

For a couple of reasons Lockhart's commentary is worth quoting at some length. For one thing, Lockhart contrives to deliver *Don Juan* from the ferocity of the moral and political attack and affirms that its poetical charm lies in the style 'delightfully

intermingled with and contrasted by all manners of serious things' (186). For another, by aligning Byron with Walter Scott he elevates the young lord to the high altitude of the artistic achievement and recognizes England to be his sphere of literary imagination and his scope of poetical power. Lockhart's argument concludes with the emphasis on the interaction between the deep-rooted attachment to native land and the aesthetic prominence, stating that 'energetic thoughts are expressed in energetic language', attaining the sublime state. In brief Lockhart confers the honor of the national poet on Byron and is the first among many to demonstrate historical fair-mindedness. No wonder Byron, upon reading his commentary, told Murray on 29 June 1821, 'it is diabolically well written, and full of fun and ferocity. I must forgive the dog, whoever he is' (182).

The brief overview of the criticism from three fronts enables us to re-imagine the most immediate context in which *Don Juan* is situated. As it shows clearly, though moral accusation and political attack may be more prevalent, the other dissenting voices are allowed to exist. Lockhart, in particular, reminds us that *Don Juan* is at its best in presenting a national picture of England; but his shrewd observation about Byron's active commitment to English social life has not been further pursued until the second half of the twentieth century.

Subsequent to Byron's death, critics tend to be more conscientious in dispelling the Byronic phantom from his poetical writing. Their calculated efforts to dismantle the Byronic spell from his poetry give us an insight into the canonizing process of Romanticism starting in the late nineteenth century. William Hazlitt, one year after the poet's death (1825) completed the most eloquent memorial to 'the spoiled child of fame as well as fortune' (275). Like Lockhart he draws an intuitive comparison between Byron and Scott, and Wordsworth. Admitting Byron's genius, Hazlitt gives a higher rating to Scott because Byron is such an easy prey to 'his ruling passion' (270). From Hazlitt's argument, one can perceive that the tendency to aestheticize Romantic writing was already under way.

Lord Byron does not exhibit a new view of nature, or raise insignificant objects into importance by the romantic associations with which he surrounds them; but generally (at least) takes

commonplace thoughts and events, and endeavors to express them in stronger and statelier language than others... (272).

In connection with Lockhart's comments, Hazlitt's views manifest a shift from the historical vision to emphasize the thematic and formalistic features of the Romantic trends. The irony is profound. In the eyes of Hazlitt, Byron seems to turn the sublime and the ridiculous upside down, amuse the tragic hero with farcical tricks, and create the halo only for the desecration. The true nature of Byron as a pampered egoist deprives his poetry of the access to the artistic or aesthetic legitimization.

Hazlitt's efforts to impose the prevailing poetical principles such as 'imagination', 'nature', and the commonplace on Byron already imply the hidden working of canonical criterion, or the start to de-historicize Byron's writing. The maneuver in the canonizing direction culminates in Matthew Arnold's reassessment before the end of the nineteenth century. It is well documented that Arnold eventually ranks Wordsworth above Byron despite his recognition of the latter's genius. His verdict begins with efforts to dispense of the mighty shadow of his fame over the text; and his analysis of Byronic enigma carries the sweeping power of historical retrospective and his preference for Wordsworth is informed by the precision of the nationalist or canonical thinking. In a word, the paradox of Byron springs from the changing nature of Nation. To Byron's sensibility the rising status of the middle class constitutes the most revolting aspect

The mental bondage of the most powerful part of our nation, of its strong middle-class, to a narrow and false system of this kind, is what we call British Philistinism. That bondage is unbroken to this hour, but in Byron's time it was even far more deep and dark than it is now. Byron was an aristocrat, and it is not difficult for an aristocrat to look on the prejudices and habits of the British Philistinism with scepticism and disdain (455).

The emergence of the Philistine mentality enacts a split in the aristocratic community and their public involvement.

Plenty of young men of his own class Byron met at Almack's or at Lady Jersey's, who regarded the established facts and reigning beliefs of the England of that day with as little reverence as he did. But these men, disbelievers in British Philistinism in private, entered English public life, the most conventional in the world, and at once they saluted with respect the habits and ideas of British Philistinism as if they were a part of the order of creation, and as if in public no sane man would think of warring against them. With Byron it was different. What he called the cant of the great middle part of the English nation, what we call its Philistinism, revolted him; but the cant of

his own class, deferring to this Philistinism and profiting by it, while they disbelieved in it, revolted him even more (455-56).

It is apparent that for the most part of his career, Byron was trapped in a 'world of an aristocracy materialized and null, a middle-class purblind and hideous, a lower class crude and brutal' (459); and that his choice of satirical style to detach and dissociate himself from the debasing tendency of Philistinism.

By extending historical sympathy to a Byronic predicament, Matthew Arnold like Hazlitt proceeds to alert readers to the narcissistic artistry of Byron's poetry. Byron is unable to delve into the 'region of real poetical art,--art impersonal and disinterested, --at all' and 'he has treated hardly any subject but one--himself' (447). 'Byron is so negligent in his poetical style, he is often, to say the truth, so slovenly, slipshod, and infelicitous, he is so little haunted by the true artist's fine passion for the correct use and consummate management of words, that he may be described as having for this artistic insensibility of the barbarian' (448). In brief, 'Byron has never yet, perhaps, had the serious admiration which he deserves' (458). Arnold perfectly understands how Byron has been implicated and assimilated into the historical text; but after conveying certain measure of condolence to the broken dandy, he refuses to give more. He determines to place 'Wordsworth's poetry, therefore, above Byron's on the whole...although Byron's poetry will always, probably, find more readers than Wordsworth's, and will give pleasure more easily'(459).

It is in the context of his purpose to build national faith that Arnold's judgment on Byron and his aesthetic preference for Wordsworth should be understood. For one thing, Arnold's commitment to do full justice to Wordsworth poetry has paid off. The 1805 *Prelude* and its status as a national epic ensure Wordsworth today a large body of the academic admirers with serious attention, privileged education and technically advanced institutional vocabulary. Both Hazlitt and Arnold raise their eyebrows to the theatricality of Byronic pose, complaining bitterly that his poetry deals with no other subject than himself. As a matter of fact, the same charge holds true of Wordsworth's anatomy of his poetic Mind. In 1805 Wordsworth wrote that the *Prelude* would be

'not much less than 9000 lines...an alarming length! And a thing unprecedented in literary history that *a man should talk so much about himself*' (de Selincourt, 1967: 586).

The irony surrounding the self-expressive principle is rather striking. While the charge of double standard may not be accurate, it is obvious to see the prejudice behind the aesthetic claim of disinterestedness. Wordsworth's conceit of mental inwardness, being manifest in nine thousand lines has been acclaimed by some as 'psychological epic' instead of 'egoistic monstrosity', while Byron is only allowed to show his sinister laughter with the masquerade. Byron as the Romantic émigré is luckier than those women writers whose voice has been systematically silenced in the canon.

For another, Arnold's reluctance or hesitation to favor Byron complies with his penetrating awareness of the role of the literary criticism in promoting national culture and exercise the aesthetic control. In the Essay 'the Function of Criticism at the Present Time,' Arnold defines criticism as 'a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world'(38-39). According to his conception, in Britain where individual enterprise is highly valued, one of the organs of criticism is to protect the personal mind from self-complacency and to lead ordinary people into spiritual perfection. On an international level English literature has to compete with its German and French counterparts to devote its own share of the best that is known and thought on one hand; yet on the other, to practice its criticism with the spirit of European 'Confederation' to a common result. Byron's poetry, with its satirical tyranny, its verbal violence and its suspicious masquerade, may never live up to the standard set by Arnold for English literature—the 'best that is known and thought in the world'.

In presenting the selective commentary of *Don Juan* in the nineteenth century, I intend to argue that the shadow of Byron's personality on his poetry and the resulting tension only come to be reckoned as an issue after the double acts of 'de-historicizing' and 'aestheticizing'. Byron's connection with English nation and its immediate historicity seems to be elusively severed. If such connection is positively

reviewed by Lockhart as the true merit of *Don Juan*, Hazlitt and Arnold begin to naturalize Byron with Romantic abstraction but find it hard to forgive his artistic negligence. As one sees in the next section, the aesthetic or philosophical emphasis of the English Romantic canon gradually distances Byron from specific historicity and the separation of Byron as a historical being from Byron as a poetic soul becomes inevitable.

B. The Twentieth Century: Romantic Assimilation

Jane Stabler, in the Introduction to *Byron*, a critical collection, makes an interesting briefing about his literary fortune in the twentieth century:

...that critical work on Byron often appears as the wild card of English Romantic studies. Unlike the steady growth of work on the other members of the 'Big Six', Byron's critical reputation in the twentieth century has fluctuated with what he called 'glorious uncertainty' (1998:1).

The critical overview which Stabler proceeds to offer in a chronological order illustrates the changing theoretical banner of each decade of the twentieth century. It is admitted that the theoretical transformation of the literary criticism, with the expanding critical vocabulary, establishes 'literature' as a respectable 'scientific' discipline in modern educational system. Despite the experiment of various interpretive models, Byron remains an inconvenient and embarrassing figure in the canonical Romanticism and his cultural popularity undercuts his intellectual and artistic seriousness. I now plan to concentrate on the efforts of the three cardinal figures to anthologize Byron in British Romanticism, namely M.H.Abrams, Harold Bloom and Jerome McGann in order to examine how the binary tension of the Byronic historicity has been reinforced in the process of romantic assimilation.

Jane Stabler claims that "Abrams is only interested in Byron when he is under the influence of Wordsworth and striving to 'mingle with the universe'"; but she probably neglects the evidence related to the poet's artistic observation in the *Mirror and the Lamp*, a book of compulsory quotation. With regard to the nature of poetry, natural genius and inspiration, expressive therapy and personality fulfillment, various evidences can be enlisted and grouped to attest Byron's aesthetic contribution. For

instance the metaphor of volcanic eruption vividly captures the tension of literary creation.

Poetry is the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake. They say poets never or rarely go mad ... but are generally so near it that I cannot help thinking rhyme is so far useful in anticipating and preventing the disorder (Abrams: 139)

The overwhelming rhapsody for utterance finds balanced and purifying expression in the poetry. The Aristotelian notion of Catharsis is transplanted to poetic experience for psychological comfort. Poetry, born out of poetic imagination, is given a motherly touch.

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! With whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd fellings' death (Abrams: 50)

Poetry, more for the poet, is ennobling, elevating, and confessing; poetry, the child of soul, of thoughts and of passion, is pregnable in a spontaneous mind. Coleridge's theory of 'I- representation' invites contemporary readers to identify the hero with his author and to relate private diaries and correspondences with poetical utterance. Common readers in Byron's day do not reject the principle while the critics tend to painstakingly salvage the poetic truth from the dazzling personal halo.

Abrams's dismissal of Byron as a 'lesser poet' might not stand if Byron is less deliberately excluded by the same rhetorical or poetical principle he applies to Wordsworth or Coleridge. For instance, his quotation of Keble's classification between *pathos* and *ethos* sheds a light on the nature of Byronic mobility.

Ethos, as Keble interprets it, is a matter of long-term character traits; *pathos* is a passing impulse of feeling, short, intense and overpowering. Under the expression of *pathos*, Keble groups the traditional forms of lyric, elegy, and some modes of satire; under the rubric of '*ethos*' he includes the epic, dramatic, and narrative forms (produced by poets who by nature are 'fond of action') (146)

Connecting the remark in parenthesis with Arnold's comment on Byron's character, 'Byron himself gave the preference, he tells us, to politicians and doers, far above

writers and singers' (1970: 456), one may discern how Byronic vulnerability to the immediate passions is likely to be guided and governed by the 'Ethos' in his temperament and how the multi-facets of his personality may give vent to a diversity of utterances. Given the conclusive nature of *Don Juan* in Byron's folio, one may perceive the direct link between the epic form and the poet's ambitious action; hence it is safe to grant the epic narrative the Romantic currency it deserves. Keble's insight into the interaction between natural disposition and poetic composition may be relevant to Byron's seriousness in subsequent chapters.

Harold Bloom, the guardian figure of the Western Canon, displays more patience in addressing Byron's imaginative qualities in *Visionary Company*. Trying to position Byron within the structure of a mythical archetype, Bloom resorts to the Miltonic Promethean myth to define the seriousness of his work.

Byron's entire poetic career at its most serious... can be understood as attempt to justify the theft of fire by creating with its aid, while never forgetting that precisely such creation intensifies the original Promethean 'Godlike crime.' Byron, in this, writes in the line of Miltonic prophetic fears (246).

Bloom's endeavor to tackle Byron's life and his poetic writing as the organic process of myth-building is pursued in the circular motion of loss-quest- regain and sinking-soaring- downfall. The strength of his mythical approach is critical tolerance and vision to expand the critical scope; and in Byron's case his life narrative serves as a kind of subtext which can be readily checked though still under the sway of Romantic virtues.

What haunted Byron is the specter of meaninglessness, of pointless absurdity. He is an unwilling prophet of our sensibility. The apocalyptic desires of Blake and Shelley, the natural sacramentalism of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the humanistic naturalism of Keats, all find some parallels in Byron.... Too traditional to be one of them, too restless and driven to be traditional, impatient of personal myth if only because he incarnates his own too fully, he creates a poem [*Don Juan*] without faith in Nature, Art, Society, or the Imagination he so capably employs (264-5).

Bloom's piety in integrating Byron into the artificial Romantic vision in one sense makes his difference from other Romantics –the prominent social and political outlook –more pronounced. His circular judgment may lead to his saying that *Hamlet* is the metaphysical progenitor of *Don Juan*, the organization of both centering on two

thematic metaphors: the Tragic Fall of Man, and the Assertion of Manhood. In this light Don Juan is refashioned into another Christian vagabond for whom existential borders blur.

It proves difficult for the early Romantic canon-makers who have excessive passion for subjectivity and interiority to assess Byron along the same principle as other members of the Big-Six Group. The marginal position of Byron's works in traditional anthologies has not been significantly challenged until 1983 which saw the publication of *The Romantic Ideology: a Critical Investigation* by Jerome McGann. The central claim which this book and McGann's later works exhibit is the turn to history. It offers much impetus to rescue Romantic studies from the deconstructionism pull and makes Lord Byron less an outsider of the official canon (Stabler, 1998:13). It is on an attempt 'to return poetry to a human form' that McGann retrieves the socio-historical method against what he calls the 'fetishization' of literary works of art—"frozen, immobilized, abstracted"—into an arrangement of words" (1983:159-160).

McGann argues that 'the scholarship and criticism of Romanticism and its works are dominated by a Romantic Ideology, by an uncritical absorption in Romanticism's own self-representations'(1); and he is to check and clear the confusion resulting from the continuity of the ideology. Romantic poetry, as the manifestation of a metaphysical idealization or illusion, breaks loose from the temporal and spatial constraints and hence builds a myth. Critics, if unaware of or negligent of the critical implication of the historical differences, may fall easy prey to 'the most reactionary purpose of their societies' and fail to fulfill the 'obligation' of 'a critical consciousness 'to resist incorporation' by the weapon of analysis (2). It is important to suppose that M.H.Abrams is the patriarchic figure against whom McGann bears in mind to rebel in the scrutiny of Romantic ideology. In this regard, the discussion of Coleridge's polemic of Understanding and Heine's essay *The Romantic School in Romantic Ideology* are significant since they help establish McGann in the offensive position countering Abrams's ideological posture. The historical thickness and

theoretical sophistication of *The Mirror and the Lamp* largely derive from the meticulous weaving of Coleridge's appropriation of German aesthetic theory; and it is possible that McGann by adopting a similar interpretive strategy wishes to invest more theoretical legitimacy on his polemic. Marlon B. Ross is acute to point out

Just as Abrams has been convinced by the ideology of Wordsworth's poetry, McGann has been convinced by the ideology of Heine's criticism. Just as Abrams values a 'transcendental displacement of human desires' over 'political and social transformation' (at least in terms of the assumptions of his critical pronouncements), McGann values poetry that engages itself in historical and critical self-consciousness, and therefore historical and critical self-consciousness becomes the major impetus for criticism and the standard for great poetry (1985:208).

In brief McGann 'has effectively reversed Abrams's priorities' (Stabler:18); but they actually address the shared agenda in contrary directions, opening Romanticism to more critical inquiry. The turn to history as initiated by McGann effectively reverses the direction of Romantic critical thinking and forms the theoretical basis of the later Romantic demystification; but it should be noted that the tension of public life and poetic expression inherent in Byron critique becomes even more entangled by the growing interest in culture as a materialistic construct.

C. From the Nineties to the Millennium:

Byron in the Plural form

The last two decades witnessed the remarkable transformation of the romantic landscape and imaginative horizon thanks to the incessant efforts of a critical community. The 'rediscovery' of women writers from historical debris reveals what a problematic fragment the big-Six male canon is; and the critical thrust of post-colonial theories renders it possible to perceive how Romantic writing produces, propagates and naturalizes the imperial ideology. New historicism, emerging from the deconstruction debris and the psychoanalytical shadow of the seventies and eighties, revitalizes literary ontology with the prestige of historicism. On the consensus that a literary work is an exchange, a compromise and a dialogue between aesthetic entity and external context, the practitioners of new historicism, being aided with theoretical alternatives from feminism to eco-critique, effectively acquaints us with the Romantic

cosmos which ignites Byron's passion and releases his anxiety. The ever accumulating scholarship on Byron and his literary productions, under the banner of New Historicism, can by and large be grouped under three headings:

The first group situates Byron in the context of European cosmopolitanism and discusses the interaction between the poet and some popular elements of folk culture in his contemporary world. The noticeable examples include *Don Juan and Regency England* (1990) and *Byron's Don Juan and the Don Juan Legend*. On his attempt to replace *Don Juan* in its Regency context, Peter W. Graham accentuates the tension between the cosmopolitanism and English identity and draws on inter-textual links between *Don Juan* and certain popular literary works such as Robert Southey's *Letters from England* and Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon*. Graham's contextual approach reminds readers today how *Don Juan* is highly responsive to the national cultural ambience of its day. A considerable part of Moyra Haslett's *Byron's Don Juan and the Don Juan Legend* is devoted to the exploration of the Don Juan legend in various theatrical forms from Continental to the English stage. Like Graham, Haslett is interested in the reading of Byron's contemporaries whose utterance shows how elements of popular culture make the shifting subtext for the implication of sexual politics in *Don Juan*.

In these two decades, critics like McGann continue to subject Byron to the Romantic lenses of imagination and spontaneity. This is the second group. By drawing on the actual evidences of historical conditions, he is engaged to redeem Byron from the charge of insincerity and imperceptiveness. Good illustrations of this kind can be found in *Byron and Romanticism* (2002). The collection of critical essays, corresponding to multiple stages of McGann's career, falls into two parts. The first part, with more focus on his lyrics, is engaged to shelter Byron from insincerity—'the dark shadow of canonical Romanticism' (Hopps:156). In the essay concerning the circumstances of publication, McGann singles out 'Fare Thee Well!' to demonstrate how the material circulation and circumstances of a poem could make more difference to its meaning than many other factors. Though Byron intended the poem to be assumed as the articulation by an 'injured and affectionate husband' (83), it was

charged as a cunning ploy to control the public opinion by Lady Byron when the poem moved into a domestic circle of friends and relatives; but when the poem was finally printed in the *Champion* magazine, the poem, as expected, was denounced as 'hypocritical' and insidious. By outlining the poem's circuit, McGann persuades us that the charge of insincerity issues from the complication of social networking in which both the poet and his writings become mutual texts. In comparison, the critical works of the first group, concentrate on the textual details which gather their momentum in the specific work of Byron; while the extrinsic preoccupation with historicity, of the second approach, extends the material dimensions which contribute to the plurality of meanings.

The third trend emerging in the millennium tends to align aesthetic and psychological dimensions with the historical dimension and explores the political coloring of mental subjectivity. An interesting example is *Byron, Poetics and History* (2002) by Jane Stabler. Stabler argues that the digressive style of Byron makes it difficult for his writing to any single theoretical totalizing. Despite her claim, Stabler adopts the strategy embracing the inter-textual approach, reader-response and even Derridean indeterminacy. In line with the spirit of dialogism, Stabler's critique attempts to abridge the gap between extrinsic cultural context and intrinsic poetic quality and highlights the role of the literary review in informing Byron's writing and strengthening his spiritual tie. Her reliance on new sources of information such as the *Galignani's Messenger* and the absorption into the national features of the day do not fully, however, resolve the potent conflict between the poet's artistic ideal and the regular digression nor justify the textual indeterminacy as a necessity required by historical contingency. Like the works in the first two groups, the book succeeds in locating new untouched materials and discovering new targets of fascination. The minute undercurrents in the social taste and mass psyche form a more accurate backdrop to perceive Byron's poetics.

Thanks to literary archaeology, the excavation of literary fragments or cultural ruins and their accumulation render it possible to approach Byron and his poetic utterance in the full inter-textual and historical light. *Don Juan*, as Byron's final

attempt of the verse novel, assumes the status of spiritual autobiography in his literary career; and it offers an actual locus to perceive how Byron functions in a larger scope of historicity. The dynamics of the socio-historical consciousness remain very strong as it brings together diverse contexts; however, it is doubtful how much one can gain from the cumulative evidence to account for the divide between Byron's personality and his poetry.

II. Rephrasing the Issue: its Significance and Strategy

It may be observed that the circumstantial overemphasis tends to relate text with empirical data and that in the case of Byron the fragmented historicity of his poetry seems to displace him from the proper temporal-spatial presence. The above literary survey raises one question—is it plausible to fixate Byron through the specific lens of a Romantic universe? If the answer is yes, which dimension can effectively help to constitute a recognizable ambience to hold together the seemingly chaotic episodes of his life?

The literary review sketches in a diachronic manner the domestic evolution of Byron's controversy. If the Byronic controversy may be roughly defined as the divide between Byron the man and Byron the poet, it signals the separation of the poetic consciousness from the immediate material history. The growing biographical and contextual attention in the recent critique indicates the gradual return to history. This tendency helps to explore the fluctuation of Byron's place in the national discourse.

The uncertainty of Byron's position requires efforts to re-contextualize the controversy and reconstruct the Romantic vision. In this way Byron's poetic ideal and its multi-faceted articulation, as manifested in *Don Juan*, can be placed in the most immediate historical circumstances.

To fulfill the task I set out on two premises drawn from the above arguments. First, Byron's international renown is inextricably connected with the inspiring spirit of nationalism; second, Byron is reluctantly admitted into the English Romantic canon in which he holds a marginal position. These two premises, linking

international responses with English romantic evaluation, actually converge upon the notion of nationalism which is historically meaningful to frame Byronic presence.

I now proceed to examine the inherent features of Byron's existence in order to justify the relevance of nationalism to *Don Juan*. The maneuver involves three steps: firstly a discussion on Byron's hybrid national identity, secondly on Byron's geographical mobility, and thirdly on the dating of Romantic nationalism. By explaining these three aspects, I attempt to build nationalism as a concept, a marginal one as well as a composite one to re-picture the Romantic history as identified and represented in *Don Juan*. The sub-division of nationalism as a social, geographical and political term may define the boundary of Byron's existence and reveal the inherent tensions. As a methodological tool, it not only illuminates the intricacies of Byron's identity but also explores the positive value of Byron, hence offering a more interesting reading of *Don Juan* than some other readings.

A. Byron and the Question of Nation

The emphasis on nation and nationalism opens up new possibilities to reinterpret the poet who survives his constrained relation with England. To understand the problematic relation between the poet and his mother nation requires examining the specific circumstances and cultural climate of English nationalism.

First, the basic distinction between Britain and England is necessary to pinpoint the accurate site of historicity related with Byron. Linda Colley's consideration in *Britons* about the separate history of the British Isles may show how delicate the issue might be.

The fact that English, Welsh and Scottish history have more often than not been taught and interpreted separately is of course politically and culturally significant. But it is equally significant that quarantining these societies from each other, and concentrating only on what is distinctive about their respective pasts, quickly results in distorted and shrunken history (2005:xii).

Colley's remarks shed light on the subtle challenge which requires attention to differentiating the composite parts of the British identity. Britain is an ambiguous term. Britain and England have been used so interchangeably that one has ample

reasons to require certain distinction. For one thing I consider Britain as a convenient term for the United Kingdom which incorporates England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The inclusive political entity 'was forged in the long period of actual and virtual war with France from 1707 until 1837' (McCrone, 2001: 98). Welsh and Scottish and English were unified in face of the Catholic threat posed by France. For another, Britain is also an imperial joint venture which offered the English, the Scots, the Irish and the Welsh diverse historical possibilities. The invented British integration fostered a dual sense of the cultural identity which refers to an ethnical root and a position in the union. 'The marriage of convenience' between Scotland and England in 1707 in particular made the 'dual nationality' 'a highly profitable reality' (Colley:162). To understand England's role in the empire enterprise one needs to perceive Britain as 'protectors and promoters of Protestantism'. England tends to believe that it would assume an exclusive role in the global missionary cause; and such high self-regard would encourage the English to transcend the 'national self-interest' and covet a more lofty position in the mapping of world civilization (Kumar, 2001:46). The high self-perception is an essential part of cultural inheritance which defines enduring English features. As England was the driving force behind the rise of the British Empire, I adopt English nationalism as the historical backdrop of my critique.

The implication of such differentiation in the case of Byron is profound because he is a cultural mongrel. Born in London on 22 January 1788, Byron, led by his mother, moved to Aberdeen in 1791 and stayed there until 1798 when he inherited the Lord title. Though this part of his early life has been comparatively ignored, Byron partially belongs to Scotland. His attitude to Scotland is marked by ambivalence. *The Curse of Minerva* contains "a long passage of anti-Scottish animus" which "portrays that 'bastard land' as a place of 'niggard earth', 'a land of meanness, sophistry and mist', the Scots 'Foul as their soil and frigid as their snows'"(Cheeke, 2003:24). Nevertheless 'Scotland for Byron, like Harrow and Newstead, would always represent a place of imaginative return' and shall be revisited spiritually through works like *Don Juan* (37). For instance, in stanzas 16 to 18 of Canto X, by the

spiritual return to boyhood dream, Byron in the final stage of his life comes to understand that Scotland means a past of innocence and sweetness, an irretrievable past to which he could only pay homage. In general Byron's whimsical attitude to Scotland becomes understandable if one takes into account the rivalry between Scotland and England and its implicit effect on cultural aspirations.

Despite his early Scottish ties, Byron has strong affinities with the English cultural climate and political scenes and deems himself to be the natural heir to English tradition of liberty. The element is so fundamental to Byron's self-perception that his life as an English nobleman manifests in a 'root-en-route' scenario. Being raised as an English aristocrat, and dying in Greece, Byron spends ten years and two months of his thirty-seven-old life off the native shore, traveling across the Euro-Asian continents, with personal involvement in both Italy and Greece, reaching places as far apart as Lisbon and Constantinople. The panorama of nations in the early nineteenth century constitutes the ambience of Byron's legend.

Second geographical mobility partially entails the paradox of Byron as both an English national and a Continental Romantic. As I shall discuss in the subsequent section, the cosmopolitan Grand Tour was an English national pastime especially in the high aristocratic circle. Byron's writings, from *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* to *Don Juan*, stand in the shadow of contemporary vogue of travelogues. In paying respect to his first pilgrimage (1809-1811) as part of his rite of passage, and in acknowledging its link with the formation of his cosmopolitan outlook, one is able to discern how his discontent with the national reality led to his involvement with the hot nationalism of Young European movement; and to note how his radical political commitment was rooted in his aristocratic ambition. His apparent cosmopolitan outlook constitutes an implicit part of his national obligation. 'I am so convinced...of the bitter effects of staying at home with all the narrow prejudices of an Islander,' Byron wrote on his Continental travels in 1811, 'that I think there should be a law amongst us to set our young men abroad among the few allies our wars have left us' (Marchand, 1973:34-35). As certain critics observe, the strong cosmopolitan attachment for Byron means 'an escape from the tightening Burkean nationalism of war-time Britain'

(Wohlgemut, 2008:8). But Byron was an English peer by nature. His writings, as the connected narrative of geographical mobility, bear witness to his struggle against and reconciliation with English nationhood.

To sum up, in discussing cultural and geographical features peculiar to Byron, I intend to highlight that the interaction between native roots and cosmopolitan identity generates much of Byronic charisma which can be felt through a considerable part of his poetic creation. It may be through writing back to his native land that his anxiety over nationality has been adequately controlled and subsequently appeased. It is part of the ambiguities of nationalism that entail the contradictions surrounding Byron. While he is rejected by the emerging bourgeois nation-state for his radical spirit, Byron embodies the political or liberal hopefulness for national independence. Nationalism or nationality for Byron is at once the origin of honor and glory and the source of contempt and ennui. If his physical existence is characterized by geographical mobility, Byron's literary career can be seen as a romantic transit of nationhood. In the above argumentation, I explore how nation can be regarded as an inherent component of Byron's mongrel identity as well as an element of geographical periphery and how the intersection of two dimensions is crucial to comprehend Byronic impulse. I now proceed to frame English romanticism within the evolution of nationalism in order to show how nationalism as a cultural and psychological artifice contributes to the heterogeneous Romanticism.

B. Theoretical Rationale: Gellner and Anderson

In this section I adopt the theories of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, especially the notion of high culture and imagined community in order to establish that nationalism is a matrix for the Romantic mapping. I mean to build on these theoretical hypotheses to prove the affinity between the rise of national consciousness and romantic currents.

Ernest Gellner's theory on human history and the genesis of nationalism can roughly match the history of England in the 18th and 19th centuries. In Gellner's view, nationalism functions as a secular religion and provides the necessary cultural cement

for the industrial society. According to Gellner human history evolves in three stages: a. the hunter-gatherer stage; b. the agro-literate stage; and c. the industrial stage. The transition from the agro-literate stage into the industrial one makes nationalism a historical necessity since the gradual dismantling of the rural community and the disintegration of feudal patriarchy leads to extensive urban dislocation and severe individual disorientation. As industrialization deprives newly-arrived urban workers of everything but native language and culture, it is only a matter of time to equip them with not only basic surviving skills but a whole body of common values and beliefs; hence the villages and tribal structures are replaced with a new sense of national solidarity. Nationalism is a historical category. Gellner believes that 'nations can emerge when general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities' (1983:55). High culture is defined as 'a literate, public culture inculcated through a mass, standardized and academy-supervised education system, serviced by cultural specialists' (Smith, 1998:37). The notion of high culture explains how nationalism functions as a unifying cultural mechanism. With this concept Gellner locates an internal dynamism through which nationalism is disseminated and infused into subjectivity, creating a way of thinking, feeling and acting. On the personal level, 'in conditions of high social mobility', 'the culture in which one had been taught to communicate becomes the core of one's identity'; and 'modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may say, but to a culture' (Özkırmli: 134;132).

To situate English Romanticism in the scenario of national formation requires a retrospective look into English society in the eighteenth century. From the Glorious Revolution (1688) onwards, England had undergone a relatively stable period of economic development; market-oriented agricultural system gave further impetus to the industrialization. The deepening and expansion of the industrialized economy led to the rise of bourgeois class as a middle stratum of social hierarchy. The other side of the picture was that an increasing number of rural workers were forced to join the proletariat underclass. As orthodox religion did not live up to the task to appease the

threat posed by extreme polarization, it is inevitable that inner conflicts and possibilities conspired to create a balanced cultural dynamism and an open system of social mobility. It functioned to allocate the economic resources, to regulate the social flow and above all to provide the cultural kernel with which every member could identify him/herself. The ever increasing tendency of industrial dehumanization forced the individual consciousness to face up the menacing existential fragmentation for which the gardening of culture might offer some nourishment or condolence. The explosion which French Revolution ignited not only affirmed the intensity of psychological desire but also accelerated the maturity of English national culture.

The Fall of Bastille on July 14, 1789 announced the break with *ancien régime* and the turbulence in its wake triggered the most profound crisis—a crisis of representation and legitimization—on the threshold of modernity. Geopolitical struggle precipitated and fostered the national consciousness.

Hostility between France and Britain led to a protracted period of war between the two countries beginning in 1793 and only concluding with Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815... But the wars between the two countries also, in the long run, fostered British trade and the British economy. The wars in addition, in a rather more elusive way, prompted the British to adjust, or perhaps to reinforce, their sense of their national identity (Peck and Coyle, 2002:153).

It can be imagined how the emergence of national identity can be shaped by a host of internal and external factors and how one tends to define itself against its opponent. The inclusion and affirmation of the One and the exclusion and negation of the Other not only find their way to literary production but also contribute to the making of a national self. On the British soil the French turbulence kindled public awareness and passion over its political, cultural and moral destiny. By uttering modern anxiety those intelligentsias initiated and partook in the circulation of national consciousness.

Behind Byronic mobility and aesthetic career stands a historical context of Romanticism, a period of radical transition corresponding to what Gellner terms from agrarian society to urban industrial construct. If 'Romanticism' is coined by literary critics initially to bracket the heterogeneous mixture of writings, it corresponds to a turbulent period in which national consciousness was on the rise. English Romanticism as a historical category bears witness to the process in which the

metropolitan England learns to redefine its status on the geopolitical mapping of Europe; and its self-conception of nationhood in diverse forms becomes transmitted to, diffused through and absorbed by the individual subjectivity.

If Gellner reveals the function of nationalism as a cultural and moral imperative in time of unrest, Benedict Anderson enables us to understand how a nation can be imagined in a particular style. By replacing 'nation' with a 'community', Anderson actually draws a 'coming-of-age' scenario for the nurturing of national consciousness.

Nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural system that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being (145).

Anderson's observation of print culture elucidates the possibility that specific cultural medium makes a nation imaginable and tangible. The mass consumption of newspapers can be likened to a mass ceremony, a ceremony performed in silent privacy (147). The daily replication of this ceremony fosters the national awareness and strengthens the mutual confidence in national identity.

Both Gellner and Anderson recognize the predominant role of culture in shaping the public consensus and national psyche. The generation of the public opinion as the integral part of capitalism logic, is directly responsible for the shaping of self-identity, voices of which shall be uttered, heard and recorded in the narrative of a nation. The charm and grandeur of English Romanticism is, historically as well as aesthetically, expressed by individual obsession with the myth of nation and the profundity of its power. Romantic writings as a whole represent a collective endeavor to negotiate individual subjectivity with the disturbing historicity. Each writer, whatever sex, party, rank or faith, strives to make the individual stance public, hence consciously or unconsciously participating in patterning the nation.

As both historical and literary categories, English Romanticism has long been associated with the fountain of nationalist thinking and the assertion of national longing. Judging by Gellner's timing of social evolution, Britain had more or less completed the transition from rural society to industrial society by the 1780s and by the nineteenth century it was firmly established as an industrial nation with growing

imperial ambition. The growth of the modern system of publishing in the eighteenth century forced the individual writer to be conscious of the changing nature of the reading public (Bygrave, 1996: 81). As Raymond Williams points out in *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, 'From the third and fourth decades of the eighteenth century there had been growing up a large new middle-class reading public, the rise in which corresponds very closely with the rise to influence and power of the same class' (1958:50). The maturity of print industry, accompanied with the increase of mass literacy makes an English community imaginable, whether it is a shared marketplace or a forum of communication. In Anderson's terms, the style in which a community is imaginable in the English context differs from that of Germany and France simply because they are situated in different stages. To conclude, "if the rapidly increasing 'reading public' offered the Romantic artist a vision of influence on a grand scale, it also offered a vision of society as a community of readers, all influenced by the same work, all defining themselves in terms of the same set of influences. This vision of a society of readers is close to what we would nowadays call *culture*" (Bygrave: 82).

In brief, the emergence of national consciousness is 'thickly' embedded in the English Romanticism as a historical contextualization of subjectivity. From the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, the industrial expansion and political insurgency accelerated the maturing of national consciousness accompanied with the formation of marketplace and the expansion of general readership. Situated in such context Romanticism represents the utterance of collective endeavor to reconcile individual subjectivity with the historical imperative of nationalism. English Romantic writing as a whole, being more than a passive documentation of historicity, intervenes to transform the canopy and peculiarity of national thinking; hence it reaffirms the dignity of personal initiative and the value of individual autonomy. It is on such belief that my critical interest in Lord Byron rests; and my current investigation into *Don Juan* also moves in that direction.

C. *Don Juan* and National Boundary

By the time when he began to compose *Don Juan*, Byron has been an 'exilic cosmopolitan' for a couple of years. His travel from one nation to the other

contributes to his status as the 'citizen of the world'; and the resulting international perspective enables him to see the national events from a critical distance.

The Byronic stance highlights the liminal position of an expatriate. To be an expatriate is to be (voluntarily or involuntarily) outside the nation; at the same time, it is to define oneself according to the nation. It is thus to be both inside and outside the national attachment (Wohlgemut: 10).

Byron's mobile stance is traceable in *Don Juan's* shifting narration of native experience and trans-national wandering. If the tension to reconcile the international perspective with home affairs is ever-present, *Don Juan* makes an appropriate vantage point to observe the interaction and sketch the national boundary.

In the first place, the very act of *Don Juan's* composition and its ensuing circulation illustrate how literary creation may evolve into an imaginary paradigm of expatriate existence. The fact that *Don Juan* had been written intermittently in Italy from 1818 to 1823 accentuates the indeterminacy of locality and its implication on a drifting soul. Byron as 'an isolated Being on the Earth' is destined to be an eternal foreigner wherever he goes, which leads to his poignant and sarcastic sentiments towards national roots (Page:9). With no hope whatsoever nor even the slightest desire to return to England, it is safe to assume that community imagining, to borrow Anderson's term though not in strict sense, becomes not only part of his daily essentials but also the ritual of his spiritual sustenance. In this light the significance of literary writing is three-fold: 1) to alleviate the pressure imposed by exile; 2) to maintain the physical contact with English reading public; 3) to secure some material resources to support his Greek political engagement.

Byron's expatriate existence, as a shifting atlas in which *Don Juan* is located, forces the wandering poet to dedicate a memorial elegy to lost isles and a buried self; yet the relation between exile and Byron's poetical utterance has not captured sufficient critical attention. The exile as an extreme form of displacement, while destabilizing his bond with family, friends and native language, also endows Byron with more literary spontaneity and sensibility to guard against the danger of uprooting. In this sense the English Isles constitute, in Byron's performance of border-crossing, a point of departure only being frequented through his literary nostalgia. Literary

In Chapter Two the narrative of *Don Juan* involves an initiation process in which Juan's interaction with both female characters and male figures prepares him for an emerging national consciousness as crucial to the maturing of his masculinity. Juan undergoes an adventure of initiation which can be deciphered as an implicit quest for masculine honor. The lure of female love and the inspiration of masculine heroism represent double tracks of masculine pursuits and acquaint Juan with the national difference which metaphorically reflects the formative process of national vision.

In Chapter Three I focus on 'Isles of Greece' and explore its ironic implications. I aim at exposing how the theme of liberal nationalism can be divergently shaped by contextual elements. As I choose to re-examine the lyric within the English context and the Chinese one, I engage with the interpretation of the liberal nationalism.

In conclusion Byron in *Don Juan* historicizes the cluster of forces of modernity—cosmopolitan ideals, the rise of English nationalism and anti-imperial liberal nationalism. He stands for the individual dilemma of modernity and his charisma lies in his doomed attempts to rebel against the violence of historicity. My purpose to comprehend Byronic controversy on an international scale can be fulfilled by treating *Don Juan* as the locus of possibilities. My reading of *Don Juan* is historical by nature but my analysis is not historically exhaustive, if such impression is likely to arise.

composition mediates the tension between the exiled self and the earlier memory of nationhood. Timothy Brennan argues,

Exile and nationalism are conflicting poles of feeling that correspond to more traditional aesthetic conflicts: artistic iconoclasm and communal assent, the unique vision and the collective truth. In fact, many words in the exile family divide themselves between an archaic or literary sense and a modern political one: for example, banishment vs. deportation; émigré vs. immigrant; wanderer vs. refugee; exodus vs. flight. The division between exile and nationalism, therefore, presents itself as not only between individual and group, but between loser and winner, between a mood of rejection and a mood of celebration. Literarily, the division is suggested by the tension between lyric and epic, tragedy and comedy, monologue and dialogue, confession and proclamation (1990:61).

Although it is often employed in the postcolonial study now, the dualism between exile and nationalism has long been a tradition beginning from Homer, extending to Dante and Voltaire in the Western literature. Georg Morris Cohen Brandes believes it is the French Revolution and subsequent warfare that plunge different peoples onto exile and force them to be familiar with each other and then bring about the literary grandeur of the nineteenth century (1904: 10-20). Lord Byron, by imposing himself on exile half-willingly, is only creating his version of an allegory of a floating island, mirroring the national narrative in his own gesture. The very formation of nation is not unaccompanied with the repression of selfhood since

the writer proclaims his identity with a country whose artificiality and exclusiveness have driven him into a kind of exile—a simultaneous recognition of nationhood and an alienation from it (63).

In this regard, *Don Juan*, like a banished son of modern England, should be approached against the overall framework of national history; and its relevance to today's readers lies partly on the poet's endeavor to preserve the integrated self under the fragmenting impact of modernity of which nationalism is one sentimental façade. It should also be remembered that Byron's post-1816 experience is not typical of expatriate existence, being complicated by his active intervention in English public life. For instance the publication and reception history of *Don Juan* in Britain manifests how Byron manipulates his personal myth to construct the collective memory. This is one of the ambiguities surrounding the Byronic controversy which the present author attempts to unveil.

In the second place, *Don Juan* is historically informed and enriched by English travel writing which develops into prominence in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. That *Don Juan* can be perceived as an assemblage of travelogues testifies to the process in which Britain steps up its overseas exploration in its search for national identity. Though claiming to have no writing plan, Byron actually devises an international scenario for the Spanish dandy—from Spain to Oriental waters, onto Imperial Empire, Russia and then back to England. The travel scenario constitutes the central narrative pattern, attaching each episodic part with distinctive local labels. Byronic mobility first reveals its physical aspect in such geographical sequence, which tends to lead readers into mixing the poet's actual travel with the hero's fancied journey. Both typify, transmit and remold the prototype to map the nationhood. It is partly in the capacity of travelogue that *Don Juan* acquires its formalistic charm and allows the private recollection to converge with public experience.

It should be noted that *Don Juan* is a verse novel and that its connection with *Bildungsroman* as a literary genre evidences how narrating a nation can be transfigured into a new form of subjectivity. In 'The National Longing Form', Timothy Brennan, by following Anderson's argument of 'imagined community', traces the analogous progression between specific forms of imaginative literature and the rise of nationalism which corresponds to the Romantic period. He highlights the rise of a novel. A novel generates, spreads and perpetuates an aesthetic, a cognitive and even an ideological pattern by which self-identity locates an anchorage-point in the national mapping. Brennan quotes Anderson who claims the novel depicts

The movement of a solitary hero, through a sociological landscape of a fixity that fuses the world inside the novel with the world outside. The picaresque of *tour d'horizon*—hospitals, prisons, remote villages, monasteries, Indians, Negroes—is nonetheless not a *tour du monde*. The horizon is clearly bounded (1990:50).

In simpler terms a novel portrays the individual experiences within a clear-defined national boundary. The hero has to imagine him/herself in a landscape where his or her travel brings diverse national apparatuses into exposure. *Don Juan* should be placed on the expanded horizon in which the hero gains experience by crossing the

divergent modes of geography. His repeated acts to cross the political borders have been united into a single text.

That Don Juan reaches the vast expanse of Continental Europe and Ottoman Empire should be reckoned in the particular historical context of travel writing which flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Byron's overseas experience reaffirms the relevance of the claim. The vogue of Grand Tour in pre-revolutionary era initiates a process of identifying geographical, ethnical and national difference. For early modern English travelers the national pastime was a grand tour to continental Europe, Ireland and the Ottoman Empire. The cultural criterion and psychological implications underlying the choice of these popular destinations are fully elaborated by Anna Suranyi in her book *The Genius of the English Nation*. Suranyi argues that for early travelers the most important criteria for their assessment of a community were civility and barbarism. It is through the observation of different governments that England began to emulate Turkish imperial governance, to conceive its national strategy in the arena of European geopolitical power struggle and to seek potential prey such as Ireland for subjugation (2008:15-53). After finishing Canto V, Byron confesses to have a certain design for the hero.

I meant to take him on a tour of Europe with a proper mixture of siege, battle and adventure. I meant to have made him a *Cavaliere Servante* in Italy, a cause for divorce in England and a sentimental Werther-faced man in Germany, so as to show the different ridicules of the societies in each of these countries; and to have displayed him gradually *gaté* and *blasé* as he grew older, which is natural (requoted from Scott-Kilvert, 1984:62).

The original idea is much altered for exotic glamour. It is doubtful that Byron adjusts much of the plan to the public taste of marketplace in order to give his 'epic ambition' a modern edge. Byron may also envisage the poem to be a novelistic rite of passage which promises Don Juan a natural adulthood by the end of line.

However Byron fails to reform Don Juan's personality. This pallid figure functions to coordinate the constant digression and regulate the narrative flow. By presenting a wide variety of observation related with local specialties, social conventions, eco-curiosities and even gender differences through the lonely hero,

Byron unconsciously gears his writing to meet the public gaze into the exotic spectacle.

As exotic travel became increasingly accessible, travel writing flourished. Suranyi discovers that the rich collection of travel accounts at least fulfills two functions: 1) the constant supply of information could satisfy public curiosity for the rest of the world; and 2) in an elusive way writing about difference helps to articulate national identity or unique religious destiny and shape imaginary boundary (23).

Emerging primarily in the late sixteenth century, travel writing in the eighteenth century

began to change significantly, with works focusing upon personal growth, enlightened sensibilities and romantic aspirations... which reveals much more about the first attempts of English writers to come to terms with their role in Europe and the world'(24).

It is in the paradigm of difference that *Don Juan* is framed to build a 'structure of international political identities' (36) and to develop an ideological rhetoric. 'The discourse of difference developed in these narratives proved to be eminently suitable for expressing English proto-nationalism and justifying future colonial encounters in the early modern era'(19).

The concept of the unified British Empire, through the channel of popular travel writing, penetrates into the mainstream mentality. As a matter of fact, the modes of governance, civil system, gender role and hygienic level of foreign lands are carefully observed and evaluated to judge whether a country or a nation is civilized or barbarous. No wonder the imperial scope of Ottoman and Spain draws the admiring yet anxious look from Britons. Spain of the sixteenth century boasted of the most expansive empire, its frontiers ranging from the Philistines to Africa, from Italy to Peru. Spain held up the first 'modern' imperial model for its neighboring countries. The Turkish vast sphere of influence agitated English anxiety for empire. In the seventeenth century Britain was still cautious of Turkish potential rivalry as it recognized Ottoman Empire as a more sophisticated and civilized entity; but the Turkish tyrannical style of administration and its menacing manners and conduct made such admission fairly reluctant.

England never has the fixed conception of civility principle; and what hides behind its contradictory manifestation is the operation of power logic and the instrumentality of imperialism. This is what Suranyi fails to explain in her book. Behind the shifting label of civility lies its conscious gaze onto the intricacy of government and imperial control. In this light Byron's choice of Spanish dandy and his Ottoman disguise may be an instance of accidental artifice; but it might also be informed by the popular notion of national peculiarities. In the Dudù episode, the cross-dressing of Don Juan reveals the imperial anxiety triggered by unintended gaze. The English gender-nation paradigm underlying the episode and its connection with the change of English imperial status shall be pursued in subsequent chapters.

Don Juan stands in the tradition of travelogues which is to reaffirm the national difference and promote the patriotic pride. The textual details of *Don Juan* further illustrate how the work is under the influence of contemporary travel writing. Evidences that Byron is an avid reader of travelogues can be elicited to prove their shaping effect. For example many of the details of Canto III are inspired by Richard Tully's *Narrative of a Ten Years' Residence at Tripoli in Africa* which was published in 1816. Among many others, prominent sources include Claudius James Rich's *Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon* (1815) and *Second Memoir ...* (1818), and Aubry de la Motraye's *Voyages en Europe, Asie & Africa...* (1727). As English imperial ambition was gradually achieved in many parts of Asia, it also delved into the scope of Africa and even of South America in Byron's time. Another legend about the native people in southern Argentina is that natives were of gigantic height (McGann, 1986: Notes). What remains the same is the gaze of curiosity, stimulating the exploration and fostering their sense of superiority as a civilized nation. Clues of exotic marvel in *Don Juan* suggest that Byron is under the sway of imperial ideology despite his open defiance against English status quo.

The recent increasing attention to the relation between exotic East and Romantic writings helps to expose the problematic nature of English Romanticism as imperial ideology. As a literary canon, English Romantic writings create and circulate the cultural stereotype and justify the colonial dominion as a 'civilizing' mission. *Don*

Juan shows that Byron is not exempt from the belief that English people are chosen by God to accomplish their unique destiny in the world. Replicating the pattern of travel writing, *Don Juan* also builds its connection with the discourse of national identity.

My arguments so far emphasize that nationalism as one form of the collective consciousness underlies the ideological construction of the Romantic writings; therefore it makes a valid frame to generate a historical understanding of Romantic momentum. As a legitimate perspective, nationalism is likely to make unique contribution to my inquiry towards Byronic controversy and *Don Juan*. At the international level Byron's immense popularity with revolutionaries in nations like China forbids us to ignore his role to spread the gospel of national liberty. On the domestic scale, however, Byron's mobile stance may call his English nationality and his relation with home politics into question. Byron's case provides an exceptional point to comprehend the intersection between nationalism and cosmopolitan spirit; and *Don Juan* makes the task to analyze the hidden ambivalence manageable. More than a retrospective database of Regency England, *Don Juan* contains rich evidences which help to situate Byron on a temporal cross-road. In this way the rich complexities of nationalism as political ambition, cultural dynamics and psychological imperative in the post-French Revolution era can be reconsidered at close quarters. I intend to explore the interplay between Byron and nationalism through *Don Juan* in three chapters.

Chapter One brings the digression of *Don Juan* under scrutiny and argues that *Don Juan* as a social text embodies Byron's efforts to sort out domestic undercurrents which tend to contradict and disintegrate cosmopolitan and chivalric values. By highlighting the sources of Byron's social discontent, I intend to contextualize Byron on a historical split between the rise of middle class nationalism, especially epitomized as the feminized public sphere and the lapse of cosmopolitan values. The utterance of social dissatisfaction can be attributed to masculine anguish which he partially releases in an imaginary landscape.

Chapter I *Don Juan*: English Domesticities and Cosmopolitan Ideal

In this alternative reading of *Don Juan*, I adopt the theories of nationalism to contextualize the process of poetic composition and identify potential thematic patterns. Given the inter-disciplinary nature of my approach, I intend to attach more emphasis to the dimension of cultural dynamics than the political constituents of nationalism. First of all, nationalism as a political category originates from a particular type of cultural artifact. Nationalism signifies ‘an imagined political community’ because ‘cultural products of nationalism—poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic art’ define the particular style in which a community is to be imagined (Anderson, 1991:6, 141). *Don Juan* as Byron’s exilic utterance symbolizes the retrospective process of imagining the native lands. What Byron transmits to a reader through the digressive recollection is the emotional intensity peculiar to his expatriate imagining. Secondly, it requires attention to the double working of Scottish and English elements in Byron’s ethnical identity. Given the role of England as imperial pioneer and its special significance for Byron, as discussed in the Introduction, I intend to pinpoint Byron in the scene of English nationalism which offers a central location from which an imperial enterprise can be accessed. The way he imagines or recalls native land during the expatriate years might testify to the connection between collective memory and individual subjectivity, or between ideological paradigm and singular mindset.

On the personal level, Byron’s transformation initiated by his two Grand Tours involves the national specification and the formation of a new worldview. In a sense Byron’s spiritual growth corresponds to the process in which nascent national awareness seeps its way into imperial mentality. The inherent struggle and tension between the emergent and the residual social elements constitute the fascinating locus of historical intricacy; and it demands attention to deciphering the personal adjustment to the upsurge of national consciousness.

In brief the theories of nationalism are useful in that they suggest a feasible framework with which the potential trends of Romantic discourse and mentality could

be contextualized. By reading *Don Juan* as part of the historical narrative, one can see that in a substantial way Byronic contradiction, on the wide spectrum from gender orientation to stylistic choice, results from his failed self-modulation to the prominent social paradigm. The narration of nationalism may shed light on Byron's (semi-)voluntary or (half) conscious efforts to abridge the gap between national mindset and personal conduct.

I. Defining Byron in Romantic Nationalism

The literature about 'romantic nationalism' shows that this term has diverse historical referents in various temporal-spatial scenes, like in Eastern Europe, Ireland, Scotland, America from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century or even the post-colonial Caribbean regions. It means the political appeal for national liberty, the cultural strategy to accommodate the hybrid identity and the ideological inheritance from the 'authentic' sources. As Timothy Brennan points out,

In Europe and the United States, for the most part, the triumphant literary depiction of nationalism is Romantic. It is part of an earlier period when the forming of nation was a European concern, and before the experience of colonialism, world war, and fascism had soured people on what Edward Said has called nationalism's 'heroic narratives' (from *Nation and Narration* ed. Bhabha, 1990:44).

English Romanticism is one of the historical scenes of authentic national depiction and its memory.

It is necessary to accommodate Byron in the network of romantic nationalism. English Romanticism, as both a historical and a literary phenomenon, may serve as one early local version of the European romantic nationalism. Gerald Newman's book *The Rise of English Nationalism: a Cultural History, 1740-1830* offers sufficient evidences which reveal the repressed historicity in the metaphysical exultation of Romantic aesthetics. As noted earlier, the rising English nationalism marks the preliminary stage of Romanticism as the historical category. According to Newman, Romanticism was primarily a scholarly and artistic revolution under the banner of literary nationalism, springing from the anxiety to break the yoke of French cultural hegemony. By the 1740s English culture had long been one colony of French culture

whose dominant influence on the aristocracy was felt and complained in the various ways. The ruling aristocracy prided itself on the cultural superiority by the excessive imitation of French tastes and manners. The first generation romantic poets, like William Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge, after their traumatic encounter with the French Revolution, were among the chief carriers to build an aesthetical system uncontaminated by French artificiality. The distinctive English aesthetic philosophy, extolling the 'sublime' and the 'Gothic', emerged to compete with its French counterpart and to revive and glorify the native artistic tradition. The collaboration of the lake poets with Tory anti-French propaganda, despite the charge of 'reactionary' and 'renegade', did lead to the eventual triumph of native English poetry. In *Prelude* Wordsworth succeeded in actualizing a nationalistic poetics against 'the ape Philosophy' of France (Newman: 241). Their poetic and aesthetic pursuits lent expedient service to the need of mental unification and the reorganization of the country. Socially the lake poets did join the popular progressive patriotic force to bring down enlightened French values championed by the aristocratic society. If Romanticism nurtures the allegiance to national identity, the so-called 'mystic escape from the problems of the hour' indicates the return to native simplicity (110-111).

The implicit clash between popular nationalistic sentiment and enlightenment cosmopolitanism might be the root cause of the controversy over Wordsworth and Byron. While Wordsworth promotes national poetics in *Prelude*, Byron presents the picaresque narrative of border-crossing in *Don Juan*. There emerges a competitive pattern between national vision and cosmopolitan worldview. 'Cosmopolitan culture was the soil from which European nationalism burst forth' (22). On the one hand cosmopolitan ideals formed a cultural system shared by European aristocracy who maintained their exclusive cultural status. On the other hand the lower class, led by bourgeois intellectuals and artists, launched the attack on the cosmopolitan values by affirming native mores. The fact that Byron was one member of the aristocracy is inadequate to account for his personal alignment with the French. The deliberate scorn for England and the ardent admiration for French culture, expressed in heroic couplets and satire, were a counter-reaction against what Matthew Arnold called the

rise of Philistines. Though some of the young idealists were rich and wellborn like Byron and Shelley, the innate resentment against all trashy cant was by no means confined to the upper class. Keats was a notable example. The fact that these young idealists of the second generation were active but died before mid-1820s can be taken as a social signifier that this decade 'saw the final demise in England of the international ideas of French Enlightenment' (243).

Only by understanding the repressive nature of the virtuous Reign of Tory can one doubt the claim that Byron was anti-nationalistic. On the political level Byron is anti-nationalistic since his Whiggish devotion to intellectual internationalism forbids him to sympathize with patriotic seclusion. John Gibson Lockhart's remark that Byron would have more chance than Wordsworth to inform the later generations of a truer Regency England implies Byron's more intimate relation with the contemporary national scene. While Wordsworth's national epic was virtually unknown to the public during his lifetime, *Don Juan* immediately provoked a public uproar. Gellner believes that a 'modern man is not loyal to a monarch or a land or a faith, whatever he may, but to a culture' (1983:35). Byron is no exception to this criterion because his cosmopolitan attachment is a residual yet composite part of English social thinking.

To sum up Newman fulfills his role as a cultural historian and shows a crucial historical gateway which leads to separate intellectual or ideological camps. The 'romantic artists' such as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey tended to defend the native English tradition from potential French corruption. In reshaping national character and culture, these English romantic artists endeavored to foster collective consciousness towards a unifying vision. If they represent what the English middle-class subjects regard as the progressive national momentum, this tendency manifests itself in gender, social customs, political reform and scientific advancement, offering a frame to examine the digressions of *Don Juan*. Byron's cosmopolitan gesture makes him rather vulnerable to the climate of political patriotism. Newman's book usefully places Byron in 'the battle over national identity', in the 'shift from eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism to nineteenth-century nationalism in England' (Wohlgemut: 17). With the rise of the middle class, the bourgeois notion of nation

was decidedly 'anti-cosmopolitan, anti-aristocratic and nativist' (Newman: 67). As the aristocracy was repudiated for moral degeneracy and artificiality, Byron's 'fall from English grace' becomes understandable. If aristocratic cosmopolitanism was a residual mode to be replaced by the emerging middle-class nationalism, their entwined clash and reconciliation may help to guide the probe into *Don Juan*. To understand that Byron actually re-patterns Regency England in *Don Juan* and ventures to present an idealistic vision truer than historic occurrence, we might envision a poetics of nationalism which extends from political endeavor into poetical composition.

The following survey briefs the diverse possibilities to connect Byron with nationalism. Though it might overlap with the earlier reasoning as to the relevance of nationalism as a method to Byron, it sheds light on the nuances of the approach and provides a far more accurate vocabulary to illustrate the complexities.

Byron's famous status as a political volunteer in the cause of national independence of Italy and Greece extends the poetry's mapping in the age of political turmoil. In his journal article 'Byron to D'Annunzio: from liberalism to fascism in national poetry, 1815–1920' (2008) David Aberbach explains that part of Byron's appeal lies in the spirit of nationalism and liberalism. Byron's self-sacrifice effectively highlights the poet's role as political activist ready to fight and die for a nation and liberty. Petofi of Hungary, Mickiewicz of Poland, Botev of Bulgaria, Martí of Cuba and Pearse of Ireland, among many others, follow Byron's suit in their transformation from a fighter to a poet and then to a martyr.

In a certain sense Byron personifies the *Zeitgeist* dominating the nineteenth century European Continent; and the social reading of Byron's career highlights the pioneering spirit of poetry in social reform. On a considerable scale Byron's (inter-)nationalistic involvement testifies to Shelley's prophecy that 'poets are unacknowledged legislators of the universe'. In countries other than England Byron epitomizes 'universal liberty', sporting the image of 'a passionate and dauntless soldier' (Perkins, 1967: 786). The social text preconditions the literary evaluation of Byron; and such a 'leftist tendency' prevailed in regions where nationalistic uprising

reached its peak. However, such a perception is too politically oriented to adequately defend Byron's niche in the Pantheon of Poets.

In 'Byron and the Paradoxes of Nationalism', Bernard Beatty, by focusing on *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, highlights Byron's anxiety towards Italy as a modern nation when he faces the ruins of ancient Rome. Drawing on the observation of protestant pilgrimage, Beatty illuminates the ironic undertone of the Grand Tour for the nationalistic psyche. With the rise of the vernacular versions of Holy Scriptures, European travelers no longer shared 'the same rituals or respected the same holy places' (Newey, 1991:153). They realized that their very national identity was founded on the fragmented 'Latin liturgy which no longer represented...the universal tradition of Christendom in the Western church'. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Latin culture ceased to be 'a shared, potentially secular, humanism'; and Rome 'is, for orphans of the heart, a lone mother of dead empire, a city of the soul and, but momentarily, my country' (153-4). Ironically, 'the idea of Rome is hard to fuse with Italian nationalism' because Rome as 'a supra-national ideal' may authorize the 'universal brotherhood' but not nationalism itself (157). The insistent historical retrospective throws the 'massive contradictions' of Rome into relief. On the one hand Rome was 'the parent of our religion' and the mother of modern nation states, on the other hand the modern Rome had to fight against the Austrian domination. In a certain sense Italy's political necessity for liberty contradicts the 'Roman nurture of universal Christianity' (157) because the once subjugated states contributed to the glory of Roman Empire and that 'the achievement of modern Europe' was 'founded upon the destruction of Ancient Rome' (159). Beatty concludes that 'Rome is a gigantic exemplum of this self-cancellation and therefore a fitting resting-place for Harold/Byron's pilgrimage who, self-exiled, deny their own national origin and find themselves simultaneously strangers and at home in a succession of European lands'(161). In brief, it is essential to understand that Roman ruins are a beacon light for his wandering in order to comprehend Byron's cosmopolitan vision. The gigantic contraries of the Roman history enhance Byron's cosmopolitan awareness as much as his contemplation of the domestic life. Beatty might be one of a few critics who

perceive the effect exerted by the paradox of modern European history on the last cosmopolitan. The paradox of Roman history, voiced by Childe Harold, indicates that a cosmopolitan vision is mostly likely to be displaced by the national boundary. Harold's musing reveals Byron's early profile as a philosophical traveler who is on eternal exile since his real home perpetually disappears.

Kirsten Daly also explores the special implication which Byron's cosmopolitan status has on his national vision. The article 'Worlds beyond England: *Don Juan* and the Legacy of Enlightenment Cosmopolitanism' elaborates how the innate contraries of cosmopolitanism work through *Don Juan*. The French Revolution saw the dramatic change in the cultural climate as Napoleon swept across the Continent. The fear of French invasion in Britain made the articulation of the cosmopolitan thinking very problematic. When the Kingdom of Italy was occupied by Napoleon in 1804, cosmopolitanism became 'an ideal under strain, and, consciously writing against the grain in a newly complex context, Romantic writers responded to this situation with trepidation, defiance and, ultimately, ingenuity' (1998:190). The spirit of cosmopolitanism, being 'a perpetually vanishing ideal' of freedom, works as 'an implied model' in the panoramic perspective of *Don Juan*. Byron's attempts to retain the ideal are characterized by his evasive mobility which partly results from his trying to comprehend the present dilemma. *Don Juan* embodies the poet's negotiation with cosmopolitan ideal and his 'transcendence of national identity'. Daly's critique illuminates the philosophic locus of Byron's mobility; and he concludes with emphasis on the poet's tendency to rise above 'parochial prejudices and chauvinistic national loyalties' (195). Beatty's and Daly's scrutiny converges on the cosmopolitan ideal embedded in Byron's poems.

In comparing Lord Byron with Mme de Stael as the notable 'citizens of the world', Joanne Wilkes detects that Byron's obsession with the Roman ruins is pertinent to his ambition to alter the domestic degeneracy which springs from 'the resistance of their [Byron and de Stael] nations to external influences' (1999:98). The affinity between Byron's cosmopolitan outlook and its national formulation may be further proved by the extensive digression concerning English domestic affairs.

A commonplace example in *Don Juan* is Lord Henry whose portrayal in the English episode has direct link with Byron's political principles. Malcolm Kelsall suggests that 'his commitment to direct-action anti-colonial politics in Italy and Greece' is only part of 'Byron's personal attempt to reconstitute his own heroic status'; and that his poetical pursuits demonstrate his more pervasive concern with English domestic politics (2004:51-52). The depiction of Lord Henry and his political networking in the country house indicates Byron's marginal position as one member of the opposition Whig party. But 'he had not deserted his earlier principles by leaving the country, so his apologetic claimed. It was apostate Britain which had left those principles of liberty enunciated by the successive revolutions of 1688/9, 1776 and 1789' (Kelsall:53). Both Wilkes and Kelsall recognize that Byron's continental career extends his national obligation and political ambition.

Confirming the central relevance of Byron's domestic concern supplements the neglected part of Byron's cosmopolitanism and facilitates us to understand the implicit tension between two parts. Esther Wohlgemut, in the doctoral thesis 'Cosmopolitan Affinities: The Question of the Nation in Edgeworth, Byron, and Maturin', concludes that

Cosmopolitanism does not mean the absence of national attachment and national limitations but rather involves the co-existence of national demarcations and universal belonging, and in early nineteenth century Britain, it appears alongside romantic nationalism in the struggle to represent the nation (1999, abstract).

Wohlgemut's definition here contains two important elements: 1) as it develops from Kant's political philosophy, cosmopolitanism represents the spiritual legacy which many Romantic writers still cherish in the era of the French Revolution; 2) it attaches equal value to national affiliation and universal engagement; and the romantic representation of a nation is interwoven with the tension to negotiate the cosmopolitan ideal and national interest².

In brief, the existing scholarship on the interaction between Byron and nationalism highlights two historical poles--enlightenment cosmopolitanism and romantic nationalism. After the French Revolution the two tangible forces contribute

² Since only the thesis abstract is available, discussion related to Byron is restricted.

to a sandwich structure of a social transition, as figured by Newman—a shifting site between the residual and the nascent, between the idealistic and the actual, between the imaginative and the experienced. These articles mentioned above manage to put the diverse subject positions of Byron's exile in the limelight. If his readiness to fight for universal liberty was attested by his direct participation in Italian or Greek national independence, Byron learned to gear his writing and the cosmopolitan ideal to English common readers. *Don Juan* demonstrates the process in which the implicit ideal has been 'retained, negotiated and reformulated' by the domestic conditions (190). The pervasive concern for home affairs offers a fundamental impulse to Byron's existence of mobility and writing.

On the ground of the social transition, my subsequent inquiry attempts to reconstruct the domestic context in which Byron's singularity and mobile gesture can be reinterpreted with serious attention and in positive detachment. I now concentrate on the digressive details in order to identify the prevailing trends in domestic culture.

II. His Discontent with a Modern Nation

Jerome McGann's point that 'the matter of digression is the key to Byron's method' suggests the formalistic concern for the 'conversational deviation from the plot' (1968: 278; Stabler, 2002: 3). The digressive body encompasses a wide range of commentaries about political renegades, scientific innovations, and literary controversies. Given its substantial presence, it may be more sensible to concentrate on one or two cantos so that one may obtain an overall feel of cultural atmosphere and social backdrop. English modernity as cultural dynamics brought about both technological innovations and humanistic suspicions. In the following section I intend to focus on the Dedication and Cantos I and III to note what irony modernity means to Byron in its fullest sense. This may begin with the suspicion with science.

A. The Age of Scientific Dissection: Splitting Self and Community

Byron shares the general antipathy of the Romantics towards the mechanistic natural philosophy whose 'analytic and judgmental approach' in their eyes triggers 'our fall from grace with nature' (Cunningham & Jardine, 1990:4). Though his rejection can be more conveniently illustrated by his mocking of Newton's gravitation theory in Canto X, the opening canto goes straight to denounce the destructive role of instrumental mentality in generating human misery.

What opposite discoveries we have seen,
Signs of true genius and of empty pockets!
One makes new noses, one a guillotine,
One breaks your bones, one sets them in their sockets.
But vaccination certainly has been
A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,
With which the Doctor paid off an old pox,
By borrowing a new one from an ox. (Canto I, 129)

Byron is acute to discern the sharp irony of scientific dissection and the futility of medical breakthrough. The age produces both genius of liars and genius of killers. Benjamin Charles Perkins, the American quack, demonstrated his talent for commercial promotion by advertising his metal tractor as a cure for all bodily disorders, ranging from Red Noses, Gouty-toes, Windy Bowels, to Broken Legs, and Hump Backs (Pratt, 1973:580). It is true that Dr. Edward Jenner (1749-1823) succeeded in creating the vaccination against smallpox; but such medical improvements were abortive in saving lives from being shocked and destroyed by war rockets (580). From Perkins' human 'tractor' to rocket, scientific innovation reduces human body to an apparatus which may be either dissected, or be experimented with or be exploited. Galvanism, the experiment of the electrical testing on the body of a murderer, is ethically unacceptable for its dehumanizing practice (581).

It is even more ironic that the elimination of smallpox is replaced by a more dangerous and contagious disease, 'syphilis'.

'Tis said the great came from America;
Perhaps it may set out on its return,--
The population there so spreads, they say
'Tis grown high time to thin it in its turn
With war or plague or famine, any way,

So that civilization they may learn;
And which in ravage the more loathsome evil is-
Their real *lues* or our pseudo-syphilis? (I,131)

What Byron bears in mind while writing the stanza is Thomas Robert Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798). According to Malthus, battle, murder and pestilence are our best friends as they prevent our being overstocked and eaten alive (581). Byron's commentary on Malthus's population theory reflects the profound anxiety about the rapid and dramatic change in scientific knowledge and religious values. On one hand the scientific progress and medical breakthrough seem to confirm the linear advancement of civilization; on the other hand the poet doubts whether scientific discovery is capable of restoring human dignity.

It may be true that Byron's joking about venereal disease refers to domestic degeneration; however, the satire on the population and disease shows the humanitarian concern over the ideological validity of imperial expansion. In certain ways his habitual skepticism may be historically attested. Firstly the eighteenth-century popular belief that syphilis originated from America was historically untrue. On the contrary it was the white people who brought flu and other contagious diseases to Native Americans who had not developed immunity to such diseases. This is but one of the reasons for the demographical disaster in America. Secondly the expansion of the English imperial rule on the American continent offered an outlet to accommodate its dramatic increase of population; however, the spread of civilization should depend on war, famine and epidemic.

Byron lived in an age of enlightenment as well as absurdities. The safety lamp invented by Sir Humphry Davy in 1815 might protect miners from firedamp. The British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1804 to 'save more souls'. People even travelled to Arctic Regions to expand the frontier of human knowledge (581).

This is the patent age of new inventions
For killing bodies and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions.
Sir Humphry Davy's lantern, by which coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,

Timbuctoo travels, voyages to the Poles
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true
Perhaps as shooting them at Waterloo. (I, 132)

If such human accomplishments all ended up with the bloody butchery like the Battle of Waterloo, however, we have to ponder whether life is a farce full of sound and fury. 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions'³. Byron obviously makes no attempts to distinguish the value of these scientific discoveries or judge the benefits of the moral preaching. If these endeavors ever did make a difference, they might but save more souls for the fire guns.

'This is the age of oddities let loose' (I, 128, 1021). Trapped in the fragmented social fabric, Byron voices his concern about the dehumanizing power of scientific rationality and commercialism. He seems resolute to preserve human dignity and questions the utility of the scientific innovations which seek to wipe out social ills and political ailments. His physical absence from England while writing makes him a keener observer of English social milieu; and the sarcastic tone is not confined to the discussion of the technological breakthrough.

B. Social Discontent: National Observation from the Periphery

Another substantial part of the digression evolves around Byron's antagonism against politicians and literary tradesmen. McGann believes that 'the basis of its [*Don Juan*'s] political and literary attack was deeply personal' (668). If personal grudge results from the disparaging political and poetical principles, the direct verbal confrontation further reveals the complexities of social undercurrents and hidden tensions in the post-revolutionary England.

Robert Southey is viewed as the very incarnation of political renegade, dissipating his valor and gifts in contemptible collaboration with the ruling class. The very title of Laureateship is disgraced by Byron's teasing about his sexual impotency, a metaphorical sign for effeminacy.

You, Bob, are rather insolent, you know,

³ This is an adaption from the Portuguese proverb 'Hell is paved with good intentions.' (McGann: V, 732)

At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a dry Bob! (Dedication, 3, 17-23)

By comparing him to 'warbler' and 'flying fish', Byron pokes fun at Southey's servility to the Royal family and predicts his eventual downfall due to his psychological instability and inability to serve.

Byron's abhorrence towards royal hack writers and reactionary politicians is reinforced when he invokes the phantom of Milton to denounce acts of compromise, treason and tyranny as the manifest signs of inner effeminacy.

Think'st thou, could he, the blind Old Man, arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes
And heartless daughters-worn and pale and poor,
Would he adore a sultan? He obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh? (Dedication, 11)

Milton personifies the moral measurement for poetic conscience. Even after the Restoration of Charles II he remained faithful to Puritan ideals and identity. His domestic misfortunes –the betrayal of daughters, the torment of blindness—only reinforce his personal integrity and political righteousness. If he came alive in the early nineteenth century Britain, as Byron imagines, Milton might not yield to reactionary politicians such as Robert Stewart Castlereagh (1769-1822) who, for the benefit of British imperial interests, suppressed the United Irish rebellion and worked to forge the Quadruple Alliance to accelerate the downfall of Napoleon. By describing Castlereagh as a 'cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant', as 'an orator of such set trash of phrase' and 'a bungler even in its disgusting trade' in the subsequent stanzas (12, 13 and 14), Byron fuels the most devastating wrath against the British Foreign Secretary of Irish origin and condemns him as the most loathsome enemy of liberty and independence.

It is interesting to note that Byron seasons his strong-worded condemnation with anecdotes typical of Milton's eccentricities.

Milton's the prince of poets, so we say;
A little heavy, but not less divine,
An independent being in his day,
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine; (III, 91)

These trivialities add an amusing touch to the glory which Milton deserves. In comparison, England of the late eighteenth century appeared to be more civilized in terms of morality and temperament than the previous century; but in reality it had many apostates, traitors and conspirators.

The following two stanzas, subsequent to the amusing anecdotes of Milton, Shakespeare and Bacon, among others, ridicule the didactic profile of the Lake poets. Despite their early radical idealism, the Lake poets were morally crippled as they eventually betrayed their ideals and succumbed to the authority.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy';
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography.
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem called the 'Excursion,'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion. (III,93,94)

In 1794, Southey and Coleridge proposed the 'Pantisocracy' plan to set up a utopian community on the Susquehanna. Southey wrote verses for the Tory *Morning Post*, for a guinea a week, from 1798 to 1803. Wordsworth's 'pedlar' poems are generally regarded as one of his best poems; but these poems only secure him a position in the Customs after his ardor for radical politics recedes. Marrying the gentile Fricke sisters, Coleridge and Southey seem to forge a virtuous alliance (Stephan: 616-17).

The poet intensifies his verbal attack when he comes to connect these moralists with the infamy of the Australian plantation—Botany Bay where criminals and religious dissenters were kept. From the perspective of individual integrity, these men were like convicts because they betrayed their ideals of political commitment. Moreover, subsequent to his political withdrawal, Wordsworth indulged himself in the ‘Excursion’ to lakes and mountains. Was it an attempt to avoid the troubled water? In *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology*, Noah Heringman argues that ‘the discourse on rocks and land forms also helps to explain what happens to public sphere in England amidst reaction against French Revolution’; and

... the discourse and practices of natural history seems to remain a relatively stable and unified zone within the rifted public sphere of the 1790s because it is *an ostensibly depoliticized zone*. It functions as a virtual public sphere, maintaining the autonomy of the republic of letters against and between the polarized Tory state and radical counter public sphere (2004:17, italics being mine).

Given the role of geology in public discourse around 1800, Wordsworth’s deliberate withdrawal from radical politics in the post revolutionary era validates Byron’s accusation of Apostasy. It should be admitted that Byron’s rage against the Lake poets is tinged with his aristocratic disdain and prejudice against men of humble origins; this might account for why he feels himself unable to alter what Arnold refers to as English Philistinism.

For you I envy neither fruit nor boughs,
And for the fame you would engross below,
The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow.
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore and Crabbe will try
’Gainst you the question with posterity. (Dedication, 7)

Being repelled from the political center of England, Byron remains indifferent to the current fame which Wordsworth reaps. He extends the hope to the posterity who might draw the final judgment.

’Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters- go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.’(I, 222, 1769-72)

By quoting the final stanza of Southey’s ‘Epilogue to the Lay of the Laureate’ in the final stanza of Canto I, Byron gives a suggestive pose to proceed with the literary

initiative started in *Dedication*. On the one hand Byron is aware that his *Don Juan*, like those poems of Wordsworth and Southey, is about to be passed on; on the other, he demands a reader's discriminating appreciation for his poetry. Historically for contemporary readers who did not see the *Dedication* until 1833, these four lines remind them of Byron's ambition to address the national arena. By quoting from the Poet Laureate, Byron positions himself in a counter-offensive and demands the equivalent power and authority to attack the rise of the English Philistines. But this is only part of the internal weakness of the nation—the bow to established beliefs and the salute to reactionary Tory politics. Domestic effeminacy also becomes manifest in another more prevailing cultural trend which may claim his spiritual territory.

These observations about scientific innovations and political discontent are only part of the social reality of the Regency England; but they are unique in that Byron is not worn out by years of exile which intensifies his contempt for English institutions and social manners. His expatriate recollection per se, presented in the regular digression, reveals one feature typical of Byron—mental mobility. The restless state of mind reflects his own ambiguous attitude to cosmopolitanism. If geographical distance makes him anxiously aware of his role as an English national, Byron's protest also corresponds with his marginal position.

The rise of female writers has long begun to transform the cultural mapping of industrial England. On the one hand the popularity of women writers, epitomized by the influential Bluestocking Club, marks the crucial change of the cultural make-up and the national taste of the nineteenth century England. On the other hand the rise of feminine writing symbolizes the tightening control of middle class mores over the aristocratic mores and privileges.

III. Jesting with Bluestocking Ladies

Byron's status as an outsider to the immediate English world casts a bewildering light on the fact that women's presence makes the butt of the substantial part of his digressive critique and satire. One may wonder if Byron seeks to justify his masculine libertine behaviour by these comments or voice his estrangement since his aristocratic

pejoratives have been subject to increasing middle-class repudiation. While cosmopolitanism shapes his political inclination, his efforts to maintain masculinity is typically English.

In highlighting the role of the bluestocking ladies, I intend to show that the interaction between English women and public life transforms English society. In their diverse capacities as readers, writers and social reformers, 'bluestocking ladies' exert sufficient impact on national ambience. Finding himself increasingly besieged by an unexpected influx of women writers, Byron gives vent to his injured pride in *Don Juan*. Byron learns that he could not afford to ignore the 'belle' part of the readership and that jesting postures are a feasible way to win over female readers while laughing them off. In doing so he tends to defend the natural dignity of the 'first' sex. The depiction of Donna Inez is a case in point.

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or 'Coelebs' Wife' set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers.
To others' share let 'female errors fall,'
For she had not even one—the worst of all. (I, 16, 121-128)

The satirical portrayal of Donna Inez is arguably connected with Lady Byron who, among many of her peculiarities, is keen on mathematical calculation and perfect morality. The claim's accuracy is not my concern now; however the stanza supplies much-needed information pertinent to the role of the female intellectuals in the breeding of a respectable lady. Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) was known as a popular author of the conduct books like *Practical Education* (1798). Together with her father Richard, advocated a modern and scientific approach to children's education, especially daughters (Curran, 1993:185). Social reformers such as Sara Trimmer (1741-1810) turned to fiction to intervene in the education of middle-class children. Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) was wildly popular,

preaching the exemplary Christian virtues (Bone, 2004: 58). Situated in a larger cultural arena, these women writers extended 'the network sponsored by the Bluestockings' who were deeply committed to the pursuit of 'customary liberal and humanitarian ideals' (Curran: 181). It is obvious that Byron dislikes what these early feminists have been pursuing with their expertise on morality and education. The outcome is as satisfying to moralists as appalling to him as the punch line carves out a mummy of morality—rigid, mechanistic, prudish and insincere. This may help to account for the unspeakable pressure imposed by Annabella Milbanke who might be counted as one of the learned ladies. He once complained to Lady Caroline Lamb 'I have no desire to be better acquainted with Miss Milbank[e], she is too good for a fallen spirit to know or wish to know, & I should like her more if she were less perfect' (*BLJ*, vol.2. 176).

If these complaints in his early twenties forecast the doom of his marriage, the failure should be more attributed to his repulsion against instrumental rationality than to having a natural misogynist instinct. In his eyes, the more widespread the model of feminine morality becomes, the more likely will the household be stifled by scientific didactics.

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education.
Or gentlemen, who, though well-born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation:
I don't choose to say much upon this head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
But—oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all? (I, 22)

As more bourgeois women model themselves after Bluestocking ladies, their participation in intellectual activities from moral debate to literary criticism disturb the social norms and male complacency with their superiority. The comic description of the feminine rationality stresses its possible strain on family life. Jesting about intellectual ladies and their husbands, Byron actually reveals how estranged a man would feel from too rational a wife. His implicit discontent shows that moral correctness and sexual propriety are distant and even alien to the life of nobility.

In brief 'as bourgeois culture narrowed the range of activity deemed respectable for women and the domestic circle became increasingly a circumscription', the expanding role of women writers is highly paradoxical (Curran: 192).

The rise of female author/readership has double effect on Byron. Firstly, being an actual reader of the bluestocking writing, Byron is unconsciously involved in contemporary dialogues with prominent female writers and reformers. Evidences abound in both *Don Juan* and his journals and letters that he exchanged frequently with female writers under various circumstances. Being invited to Lady Davy's party in May of 1813, Byron found himself "rather appalled by the wit of Ly. Delacour and the sense of 'Miss Nugent' " [sic](*BLJ*, Vol.3, 48). The two characters mentioned here refer to the heroines of the two novels by Maria Edgeworth – *Belinda* (1801) and *The Absentee* (1812). Lady Delacour is reported to be witty and intelligent, but also cunning, hypocritical and scheming. On more than one occasion Byron confessed the pressure imposed by Edgeworth's talents.

In the second place, when female writers make their presence felt in *Don Juan*, Byron actually opens his writing to more female readers by capitalizing on the existing market share whose initial ownership belongs to the bluestocking group. This is a clever strategy on both commercial and cultural terms. To extend the case of Maria Edgeworth, Byron's reference to her not only reaffirms the wide acclaim which she enjoys but also gains for his works the increasing currency within the frontier she pioneers. Byron's awareness of commercial competition prompts him to develop his own tactics of self-promotion. On December 13, 1813, Byron commented wittily on a complimentary note from his publisher Murray who claimed 'he is lucky in having such a poet'.

The same illustrious Edinburgh bookseller once sent an order for books, poesy, and cookery, with this agreeable postscript—'The *Harold* and *Cookery* are much wanted.' Such is fame, and after all, quite as good as any other 'life in others' breath.' 'Tis much the same to divide purchasers with Hannah Glasse or Hannah More. (*BJL*, vol.3, 238)

Discovering that *Childe Harold's* popularity means ranking along with cookbooks and conduct books, Byron knows how ridiculous fame may be. The early cultural transaction, however, forces him into the realization that he has to compete with

women writers of various kinds for the bigger share of the domestic sphere. He can no longer ignore the dramatic change of the cultural mapping.

'By the final third of the eighteenth century' 'the culture of writing was becoming rapidly feminized' (178). Edgeworth wrote in *Letters for Literary Ladies*

Women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago. They make a class in society, they fill the public eye, and have acquired a degree of consequence and an appropriate character. (quoted from Bygrave *Romantic Writings* 1996, 92)

Edgeworth's confidence, and pride stemming from women's position in the public sphere, however, is not shared by authoritative figures who lament over the general artistic decline. In a lecture of 1801, 'On the Present State of the Art, and the causes which check its Progress,' Henry Fuseli, the President of the Royal Academy in London delved into deep recesses of the public sphere.

Our age, when compared with former ages, has but little occasion for great works, and that is the reason why so few are produced;--the ambition, activity, and spirit of public life is shrunk to the minute detail of domestic arrangements—every thing that surrounds us tends to show us in private, is become[sic] snug, less, narrow, pretty and insignificant. We are not, perhaps, the less happy on account of all this; but from such selfish trifling to expect a system of Art built on grandeur, without a total revolution, would only be less presumptuous than insane.

(Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, 1831, 47-8; quoted from Bygrave, 96)

Fuseli's worry is an antithesis to the dramatic change of England in the nineteenth century. Despite its successive military conquests and triumphant geographical expansion in this period, English cultural life underwent an invisible cultural decline resulting from the trivialized domestic life and degenerate cultural taste. The glory brought by Flinders and Nelson in the foreign waters and soil only brought patriotic complacency to national psyche. In his 'Aphorisms on Art,' he further blames the turn to triviality and domesticity on the rise of the affluent bourgeois ladies.

By referring to his time as 'an effeminate age', Fuseli wrote:

In an age of luxury women have taste, decide and dictate; for in an age of luxury woman aspires to the functions of man, and man slides in to the offices of woman. The epoch of eunuchs was ever the epoch of viragoes. (Ibid, 144; 97)

In one sense Romantic male writers share a more or less similar national cultural agenda—to defend their dominant position from the ascent of women writers and to regard themselves as the legitimate heir of a grand tradition, even though each displays his own attitude and develops his own poetical or aesthetical principles.

Byron's age saw the last gleam of the grand Grecian-Roman tradition; and in his nation ladies became too intelligent to flatter his masculine pride; and his government grew merciless, faithless and brainless. During Byron's lifetime his Whig party never won the ruling power; and the ascent of Regent who used to be on the Whig side turned back on his former faith and failed to fulfill his liberal commitment.

Castlereagh's crackdown on Irish insurrection in 1798 and the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 shattered the illusion of the youthful spirits like Shelley and Byron whose subsequent exile was the natural result of bitter disappointment.

As it is increasingly acknowledged, the dominance of women writers supplies a 'missing link' in our reassessment of the Romantic period; and their presence contributes to 'an environment that is commercially sophisticated in its marketing and consumption of cultural commodity' (Martin, 2004: 90). Byron's experience with the popular taste, through the early *Childe Harold* scenario, makes him capable of talking back and acting up for female readers. Together with Walter Scott, Byron is one of the very few male writers who could compete with women novelists for a market share. As William St. Clair has recently shown in *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, *Don Juan* actually makes Byron one of the most frequently read authors in the Romantic period itself.

Maria Edgeworth and Hanna More are not the only women being treated with satirical ferocity. Byron also voices his skepticism towards the accomplishment of the female social reformers in a condescending tone. Elizabeth Fry's assistance to the marginal groups of London is a case of point.

My gentle countrymen, we will renew,
Our old acquaintance: and at least I'll try
To tell you truths you will not take as true,
Because they are so. A male Mrs Fry,
with a soft besom will I sweep your hall
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

Oh, Mrs. Fry, why go to Newgate? Why
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try
Your hand at hardened and imperial sin.

To mend the people's an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better. Fie!
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry. (X, 84,85)

Byron the cosmopolitan has been accused by his political enemies of 'political and moral subversion'. They claim that 'poets like Byron threaten integrity of the English nation by introducing a moral virus into the heart of English identity'

(Wohlgemut:13). These two stanzas illustrate why his comic satire signals a moral terror to those conservatives with pride and conviction in English 'moral purity' (13). Considering Mrs. Fry's philanthropic reform at Newgate Prison in a condescending gesture, Byron suggests that her efforts would not make much difference to reality unless the brutal imperial rule would be thoroughly exposed or denounced. The irony imparted by these two cantos is profound because it is absurd to believe that the reform or the rehabilitation of the marginal and poor can eradicate the corruption of the imperial nation. The rhythmic alternateness of 'Fry' and 'Fie' marks his aversion to moral decorum with a high pitch. Whereas the commentary on Mrs. Fry displays his disbelief about the social reform, more stanzas concerning intellectual women can be enlisted to demonstrate Byron's efforts to detach his literary endeavor from the women's sphere of influence.

Women readers assume the guardian role of national taste in the age of print capitalism, being 'the supreme arbiters of the destiny and reputation of the new poetry' or what Coleridge claims 'Women the ultimate Oracles of Morals' (Stabler, 2002:147, 30). Such declamation about the significance of female readers appear rather pretentious and ironic considering the anxiety over the emergence of women writers; nevertheless, it tells why women readers are potentially restricted to didactic works. Moyra Haslett suggests that *Don Juan* 'was addressed conspiratorially to masculine intimates, but was not unaware that women would overhear' (1997, 191). As to the readership intended by the poet, Haslett's claim is questionable not only because the presence of female readers and writers can no longer be ignored but also because the poet frequently addresses them in the direct voices like 'gentle', 'kind',

'moral' and 'chaste'. The ironic manner of addressing reveals the poet's contempt towards female taste and its erosive influence on cultural morale.

This type of addressing may signify the poet's inclination to mock the genteel taste. Just as Susan Matthews points out, 'high' or 'male' Romanticism 'seeks to mark its own works as masculine and to sever the association with female writers and readers' despite their significant borrowing (1996:114). Mocking Bluestocking ladies who dominate the leisurely and literary conversation, Byron is conscious that he has to compete against the 'petticoat influence' on the fortune of many books.

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?
What, must I go to the oblivious cooks?(IV. 108, 856-860)

What, can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's starling,
Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore,
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling)
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery
Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie. (109,866-872)

His journal on March 22, 1814 may illustrate how Byron once deplored over the dissipating life. Returning from a party at Lansdowne-house, the poet wrote: 'deplorable waste of time', 'Nothing imparted—nothing acquired—talking without ideas' '—and in this way half London pass what is called life'; but he would still attend another one as a punishment for 'not having a pursuit' (*BLJ*, Vol.3, 254).

Feeling to be reduced to a tool of sheer entertainment, he actually finds it hard to enjoy the present state of fame and popularity. What is even more injurious to his aristocratic self-esteem is that he is at the mercy of a female coterie whose capricious decisions might throw his books into the hands of cooks for wrapping the food. By punning on the name of Wordsworth as 'Wordy swore', Byron seems to joke that Wordsworth could no longer win the favor of these intellectual ladies who hold the

sway on public taste. His frequent flirtation with them is strategic enough to 'wrest the ground of poetry away from women writers and readers' (Bygrave, 92)

The recurrent allusions to the bluestocking ladies in *Don Juan* reveal the complicated interaction between the poet and his female readers, linking individual subjectivity with public sphere. Lady Caroline Lamb might be the most famous reader and a high-profile bluestocking writer engaged in poetic dialogism. *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* kindled her curiosity about its author. Her intense passion led to the scandal which eventually ousted Byron from England. She actually participated in the 'dissemination of Byronic personality' by writing *Glenarvon* (Eisner, 2003: 56). The relevance of Romantic celebrity to literary working shall be discussed further: but today's critics should feel obliged to Byron whose response to the bluestocking ladies at least preserves part of the women's voice which has been silenced systematically in the Romantic canon.⁴

Byron does not confine the presence of Bluestocking ladies merely in the digressive recollection of *Years of Fame* (1812-1815). When his experience as the literary celebrity is woven into the main plot, the evasive reflexive relation between the poet and the hero Don Juan emerges. The episode of English court marks a strange moment for both Byron and Don Juan.

The Blues, the tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets
And with the pages of the last *Review*
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue:
They talked bad French of Spanish, and upon its
Late authors asked him for a hint or two;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian.

⁴ Lonsdale, in *The Eighteenth Century Women Poets*, sees the Romantic period as a time in which women lost their accepted position as writers. Indeed he sees the male Romantic poets as attempting to wrest the ground of poetry away from women writers and readers. He notes that women writers were absent from influential poetry anthologies of the Romantic period: 'the cause of the women writers was not helped by the fact that none were included in the huge multi-volume compilations of the works of the English poets assembled by Robert Anderson (1792-5) and Alexander Chalmers (1810), which ... have always had a remarkable influence on the subsequent views of eighteenth-century verse' (quoted from Bygrave: 92-3). Byron's commentary on Blue ladies bears proof to the potential rivalry of 'high' or 'male' Romanticism.

And whether in his travels he saw Ilion.

Juan, who was a little superficial
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer.
His duties warlike, loving, or official,
His steady application as a dancer
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green.

(Canto XI, 50-51, 393-408)

These two stanzas depict the scene of the English public sphere where periodicals begin to create a 'newly self-conscious middle-class public' though its audiences can be found in the upper strata (Klancher: 15). One may have two ways to evaluate the stanzas. In terms of gender and sexuality, they draw readers' attention to the struggle over sexual domination. On different tracks of narrative, Don Juan and the poet intermingle in this episode and many others. Echoing the earlier stanza which teases aristocratic lords for being hen-pecked by their intellectual wives, Don Juan's innocent encounter with English ladies elaborates the tension which Byron once had to bear in his illustrious years. Don Juan's assumed identity as Spanish Catholic makes his passivity an admiring virtue which distances the aggressive ladies.

The other pattern involves the operation of the whole cultural machinery in which periodical reviews generate public discourse. This pattern works implicitly with the gender pattern for the advantages of the blue ladies, at least in the eyes of Don Juan. By reliving the life of London circle, Byron reveals his anxiety over the exposure to readerly curiosity, which complicates the triangular relation among author, narrator and hero. Eric Marshal Eisner argues

Readerly curiosity in the Romantic period could be cast in both positive and negative terms: particularly as associated with female readers, readerly curiosity was often construed as a threat to the integrity of authorial identity and to the boundaries between artistic production and debased market structure; at the same time, readerly curiosity could be positively valued as an element of an intimate, feeling exchange between reader and writer that guaranteed artistic value (2003:57).

In a sense reading becomes politicized because blue ladies rely on reading the widely circulated periodicals to empower themselves, undermining the authoritative position of masculine readers and writers. The transformation of the reading market and

reading habit may constitute what male writers complain about the 'feminized public sphere'.

In addition, the stanza above, in depicting Juan's socializing with literary ladies, shows how the female gaze of curiosity modulates the relative positioning of the author, the hero and the narrator. In his proximity to the ballroom, the narrator seems to read an aside while casting a contemptuous glance over Don Juan. Juan, like a busybody, emerges not merely as an essential linkage between story and digression, but also as a figure that mirrors Byron's susceptibility to various circumstances. More than is commonly acknowledged, Juan blends the potent yet repressed part in Byron's tumultuous psyche with the masquerade of mobility. He is a silent rebel against English repressive domesticity but is too clever to betray his scorn. He is a secret agent who supervises Byron's conscience in the course of writing, as Byron confesses: 'To withdraw *myself* from myself (oh that cursed selfishness!) has ever been my sole, my entire, my sincere motive in scribbling at all; and publishing is also the continuance of the same object, by the action it affords to the mind, which else recoils upon itself...But for the soul of me, I cannot and will not give the lie to my own thoughts and doubts, come what may' (*BLJ*, vol.3, 225).

If writing offers Byron a moment of rest and detachment, the very act of composition testifies to his inner struggle to maintain personal dignity. In this regard the relation between the poet and the hero becomes tricky. Don Juan seems to have been eavesdropping on the dialogues which Byron carries either with himself or with his old acquaintances. The opposite might be equally plausible. In an unconscious way Byron entrusts his soul to Don Juan who is the silent yet potent observer of his revolt against English domestic arena. Don Juan fulfills his role of a scapegoat to relieve Byron of the masquerade in the drowsy world. Don Juan, in the course of the adventurous narrative, seems ready to take whatever is given from without; and he tends to submit to the will of circumstances, though from a virtuous distance. His presence casts the moral pretension and the corruption of the material world in a long and doubtful perspective. The ironic overtone to the description of bluestocking ladies reflects Byron's 'consciousness of the overbearing presence of a consuming public'

(Martin, 89). That the poet is in no small scale intimidated by their wit and intelligence unsettles the conventional gender norms.

If one shifts the focus to the effect of the Bluestocking writing on the codes of sexual conduct, one may comprehend Byron's anxiety over female dominance. The early nineteenth century saw what Mary Poovey calls the 'uneven development' of acceptable sexual patterns. On the one hand, the high circle in which Byron dwelt still clung to the old looser codes of sexuality; and adultery was commonly tolerated as aristocratic indulgence. On the other hand popular conduct books by writers like Hannah More advocated strict moral codes—devotion to household, and faithfulness to marital partners. The moral censure was not confined to the middle stratum. Ladies from the upper-class such as Annabelle Milbanke were tamed by such moral instructions, as the early caricature of Donna Inez shows. The eventual collapse of Byron's marriage only signals the failure to reconcile 'aristocratic sexual ethos' with a new stricter Puritan morality (Elfenbein: 65-66).

In one sense the imposed moral censure gradually restricts Byron's access to the libertine conduct which his father generation might take for granted. The following lines certainly should not be taken seriously; but the joking about southern libertine manners itself reveals what is acceptable in aristocratic moralities.

What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,

Is much more common where the climate's sultry. (I, 63, 503-04)

In the elite circle of the eighteenth century Britain, to behave gallantly meant to lead a dissolute life with fashionable ladies. Considering his blood relation, Byron's father was a notorious libertine and ravaged much in France and squandered the riches of two heiresses. Even without his father being a potential role model, Byron might tend to pardon or justify his behavior with loose sexual mores sanctioned by chivalric amatory poetry whose classical form is Provençal love poetry. The celebration of adultery is a distinct feature of such genre.

Frederick Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* helps to clarify the historical origin of chivalrous love.

...this first form of individual sexual love, the chivalrous love of the middle ages, was by no means conjugal. Quite the contrary. In its classic form among the Provençals, it heads straight for adultery, and the poets of love celebrated adultery. The flower of Provençal love poetry are [sic] the Àlbas (*aubades*, songs of dawn). They describe in glowing colors how the knight lies in bed beside his love—the wife of another man—while outside stands the watchman who calls to him as soon as the first gray of dawn (*alba*) appears, so that he can get away unobserved; the parting scene then forms the climax of the poem. The northern French and also the worthy Germans adopted this kind of poetry together with the corresponding fashion of chivalrous love... (1942:62)

The knowledge of gallantry love and its literary representation may show that Byron does have some thought on the mode of chivalrous love as an alternative lifestyle to monogamy, as evidenced by the vivid Julia episode. Given the role of the sexual levity in Byron's conception of gallantry, the caricature related to the Bluestocking group indicates the psychological uneasiness with which Byron discerns the restrictive influence of the feminized public sphere on masculine pride. Though female writers dwell in a separate sphere, they already impose a tightening control on household, making the gallantry glamour inaccessible.

Caroline Franklin in *Byron's Heroines* explains how the debate on the social role of women contextualizes Byron's rewriting the Don Juan myth.

The contemporary debate on the role of woman in society is therefore the context of Byron's decision to rewrite the Don Juan myth. Sexual politics are its subject-matter. That Byron has in his sights the Evangelical movement, now at its height, and the female writers of conduct books and novels propagating bourgeois domestic ideology is obvious enough (1992:101).

Franklin's further contextualization aims at ascertaining that *Don Juan* is intended as a sexual satire as the women in *Don Juan* are subtly drawn so as to embody the particular customs, the institutions and laws of their respective country. This may facilitate my analysis in the later section. However, my concern right now is to address how the exchange with the bluestocking ladies latently erodes his complacency to treat women as the inferior 'other'. As Franklin pinpoints above, the increasing influence of the women on issues related to social reform and home morality gradually encroaches on the aristocratic privilege. The portrayal of the blue ladies may substantiate the claim of the 'feminized culture' and makes

fictionalization necessary as a self-defense against the existing 'female manipulativenness' (101).

The digressive details in two sections above project the effeminacy of the nation in a turbulent era⁵. By 'effeminate', I refer to the gender overtone of a national image as cultural artifact. Byron's retrospection in *Don Juan* offers the historical close-up of the cultural decline. There emerges a war against the principle of civil liberty, aristocratic ideal and masculine honor—the bloody crackdown, the conversion of political allegiance, the cultural trivialization and the unbearable pressure imposed by Philistine moral values. The manifest signs of cultural degeneracy may also be confirmed by the female personification of Britain as a sleeping beauty. In her rivalry with France, Britain 'is shown repeatedly as weeping, abused, insulted, cozened, persecuted, martyred, and in every way defiled'. However Britain 'will return...she is not dead but sleepeth' (Newman: 78).

Though being physically and ideologically distanced, Byron in the course of *Don Juan* becomes increasingly acute to his native roots—historical descent, current turmoil and collective anxiety. As an expatriated English aristocrat, Byron blends in *Don Juan* the national yearning with cosmopolitan values which he tries to retain and reformulate.

IV. Cosmopolitan Ideal and Gallantry

In 1823, seven years after he left England, Byron found himself pondering over the past glory and the present worth of his homeland.

I have no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the noblest nation;
But though I owe it little but my birth,

⁵ The historian Linda Colley argues that in the years of the war with France (1793-1815) there are broad attempts to emphasize the masculinity of the English identity in opposition to that of the French, who are seen both as the enemy and as effeminate: 'There was a sense at this time...in which the British conceived of themselves as an essentially 'masculine' culture—bluff, forthright, rational, down-to-earth to the extent of being philistine—caught up in an eternal rivalry with an essentially 'effeminate' France—subtle, intellectually devious, preoccupied with high fashion, fine cuisine and etiquette, and so obsessed with sex that boudoir politics were bound to direct it (*Britons*, 1992, 252). Byron is not immune to widespread concern over the potential effect of the rise of female writers on the decline of national culture.

I feel it a mixed regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

Alas, could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorred,
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than worst of foes, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind (*Don Juan*, X, 66-67)

These two stanzas present a contrastive structure between the poet's geographical remoteness and Don Juan's landing on the beach of Dover, the very location from which he departed for exile in April, 1816. By revisiting the native shore spiritually, Byron works to exercise his judgment on England. Judging from his expatriate experience and the opinion of posterity, the poet is concerned with the potential role of England on an international scale. He also expresses nostalgia, the bitterness over loss and the scorn for imperial colonialism. Some critics, such as Saree Makdisi, argue that Byron should be perceived to resist the dominant ideology of English imperialism because works like *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* embody an effort to legitimize the Orient existence whose validity should be independent of European deciphering (1998:123-34). But such view is lopsided because his actual journey into non-British regions is constructed within the broad context of the British Empire; and his representation of the Orient or his perception of the East as a parallel entity of Europe accords with his implicit desire for national identification.

The cynicism uttered by the two stanzas denotes more than an antagonistic attitude to the ruling imperial doctrine; and it reveals the implicit national engagement in an alternative way. In the wake of the Napoleon war, Peterloo Massacre and Queen Caroline trial, the situation of Whig cause required a comprehensive reassessment. Jane Stabler is insightful to point out that 'Lord Byron could only engage with

revolutionary politics outside England because he remained, at heart, an English peer' (2002:179). The inborn sense of national obligation, pertinent to men of rank, sustains the overall heroic ambition which Byron ventures to realize through *Don Juan* by negotiating the complex of cultural tradition, personal fantasy and the status quo. What Byron undertakes in *Don Juan* is to reconcile the passing universal ideal with the problematic nature of nationalistic thinking. Byron's literary crusade in the time of cultural decline and political crisis is heralded by the phantom of Cervantes.

When he declares that 'I *have* no plan—I *had* no plan – but I have or had materials' for *Don Juan*, Byron certainly does not mean that he has no intention to write a new poem but that he allows himself maximum digressive liberty (*BLJ* VI.96). Byron is in a certain sense playing with the word 'plan'. When 'some have accused me of a strange design/ Against the creed and morals of the land', Byron argues that 'But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd'(IV, 5, 33-4, 38). Denying that he has any ill intention to corrupt public morality, the poet proceeds to suggest that he does have a blueprint for the selection of materials.

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic.
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more quixotic,
And revelled in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic;
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet. (IV, 6)

This stanza contains the basic elements of a literary manifesto—writing strategy, target readership and subject matters. By imitating Pulci's half-serious rhyme, Byron intends to exploit the residual elements of chivalric romance in which Don Quixote cuts a figure. As discussed earlier, gallantry as the privileged lifestyle incurred growing moral censure from the bourgeois middle class; and adultery and dissipated life were often raw materials for chivalric love poems. As an ancient value system, gallantry spirit tends to endorse loose sexual mores and merit manly honor. Byron in this stanza sketches out an imaginary medieval landscape where a knight was allowed to play a crucial role to redress the social injustice and alleviate the suffering of the

poor and weak. To update the chivalric experience in the contemporary landscape, Byron adopts the mock-heroic style which targets the imports from the 'Other' land to the potential female readership back in 'moral England'. By this point of his career, Byron conducts 'the dynamic testing and the renewal of form' which might be 'one way that Byron restores the aristocratic codes of order'. Stabler observes that after the year 1819 'Byron seemed to become increasingly disillusioned with the aristocratic English elite' and sought an alternative aesthetic form which still upholds the spirit of heroism (178-180).

Byron completed the draft of Canto IV on 30 November 1819. Stanza 6 marks a defining moment. The nostalgia for chivalry makes a converging scene on which he takes on the apparel of a modern knight and condescends to address a train of women admirers. In a self-proclaimed manner, the poet gains himself a vantage point to respond to the immediate social milieu.

The stanza introduces an implicit pattern which maintains thematic stability. By 'thematic stability', I mean that the dynamics of *Don Juan* is interwoven with a story line underpinned by chivalry elements. Being the stock characters of the chivalric romance, 'chaste dames, huge giants and despotic kings' transfigure the picaresque *tour de force* of *Don Juan* into a triangular chivalric stage, illuminating three inter-supportive components :1) The love of chaste dames is fundamental to the chivalric honour for it possesses the power to transcend the moral restraints; and Juan's romantic encounter in successive episodes symbolizes the modern allegory of individual will whose devotion for a monarch is replaced by more intense desire for love. 2) The individual struggle against invisible institutional power is translated into the discontent with home affairs. 3) The defiance against monarchical tyranny represents Byron's ruling passion for liberty which sheds light on his political engagement and literary pursuit. No matter whether it is fictional or realistic, each thematic unit throughout *Don Juan* can find its equivalent in the narrative framework of heroic romance which basically features courage, loyalty and undying love (Martin, 2004:95).

If one connects Stanza 6 of Canto IV with Stanza 8 to 11 in Canto XIII, an analogous relation emerges between Cervantes and Byron. In 1819 Byron zealously embarked on a poetical mission to modernize the heroic genre. In 1823, three years after Canto IV was drafted, the phantom of Cervantes and the quixotic smile reappeared in Canto XIII with more distinctive colours.

I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes in that too true tale
Of Quixote shown how all such efforts fail. (XIII, 8, lines 61-64)

His admission that Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a true prophecy defeats his idealism did come at a dear price. The year of 1822 was marked by a succession of unnatural deaths, of foe and beloved alike. April saw the death of Allegra, his illegitimate child borne by Clairmont. The storm in July along the Italian shore claimed the lives of Shelley and Edward Williams, two of his intimates. In its wake, Viscount Castlereagh, England's Foreign Secretary (1811-1812) committed suicide in August after a notoriously reactionary career. Death passes the same verdict on each wandering soul in his or her difficult pursuit for fortune or fame; and any human endeavour, consumed by vanity, means nothing but the scorn of time. His involvement with the Italian and Greek liberation cause might incur the suspicion of rapturous showmanship; but his ambition and efforts to reshape the world which was 'out of joint' turned out to be 'mere Fancy's sport' ending up with his eternal exile from home nation and domestic comfort (XIII, 10, 78).

In response to the cynical tone of Cervantes, Byron brings his Spanish predecessor into the poetical court, interrogating the historical value of his vision.

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laughter demolished the right arm
Of his own country. Seldom since that day
Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright array,
And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition. (XIII, 11)

Demolishing the chivalric glory, Cervantes is accused of endangering Spain's spiritual backbone. Byron's charge against Cervantes displays his surging passion for heroic idealism; and it also marks his conciliation with the invisible absolute will which has been manifest in a series of social and sentimental disruption, political and personal setbacks. Nevertheless he keeps a clear eye on the potential impact of romance on public opinions and remains staunch to the earlier idealism.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native.
Alas! Must noblest views, like an old song,
Be for Mere Fancy's sport a theme creative? (XIII, 10, 73-78)

The first four lines convey the quixotic gesture or the Cervantes code, being dramatized by the fictional Don Juan and actualized by Byron himself. His abiding interest in aristocratic grandeur and noble deeds has been testified by a sequence of political activities. He presented the maiden speech in the House of Lords against the death penalty for Luddites in 1812; and he made Greece and Italy the new battlefield for his chivalric campaign. The following poem was written in 1820.

Stanzas

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knocked on his head for his labours.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
And is always nobly requited;
The battle for freedom wherever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you will get knighted.

(Complete Poetical Works, vol.IV, 1986, p.290)

It is easy to discern a subtle twist from the first six lines to the last two. Byron seems determined to extend his heroic pursuits beyond home nation, as seen in the first stanza. However,

The poem is deeply ironic—at the expense of those politicians who might indeed have been knighted for their efforts in foreign policy, but also at Byron's own expense. At home, freedom is a lost cause; but at the time this poem was written, uprisings in Spain and Naples led Byron to believe that Italy would rise against Austria (Bygrave: 173).

It is important to discern Byron's scepticism towards the existing knighthood practices from his resolution to choose a 'good cause to die in' because at this point of his personal displacement Byron needs to transcend social mobility and historical chaos by following a fixed direction. In a more important sense, Byron emerges in the historical foreground, partially aware of the futility of the chivalric mission in the present age; but he seems ever more committed to its fulfilment and his possible role in foreign lands. The utterance of existential tension may enable us to perceive the chasm between a poetic soul and his age.

Byron's indebtedness to Cervantes in terms of the chivalric endeavour can be traced back to one of his early journal entries in 1813, in which he passed his judgment onto the literary profession. On November 24th, 1813, Byron jotted down some comments, carefully sheltering Cervantes from the thrust of his general contempt for men of letters.

but I do think the preference of *writers* to *agents*—the mighty stir made about scribbling and scribes, by themselves and others—a sign of effeminacy, degeneracy, and weakness. Who would write, who had anything better to do? 'Action-action-action'—said Demosthenes: 'Actions-actions,' I say, and not writing,—least of all, rhyme. Look at the querulous and monotonous lives of the 'genus'—except Cervantes, Tasso, Dante, Ariosto, Kleist (who were brave and active citizens), Aeschylus, Sophocles, and some other of the antiques also— what a worthless, idle brood it is!" (BLJ, vol.3, 220-21)

Only one year after *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* made him a literary star, Byron might still deem writing as an idle pastime appropriate to his aristocratic status. He lived in the age of national patriotism which extended from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the opening of the nineteenth century. Lord Holland, Byron's political mentor in the House of Lords, once casually remarked 'My education resembled that of most young men of my rank...I went through Eton and Oxford'. 'Around 1800 over 70 percent of all English peers received their education at just four public schools, Eton, Westminster, Winchester and Harrow' where

Patriotic duty was stressed in practical ways, as when public-school masters encouraged boys to participate in national subscriptions and to celebrate British military and naval victories. And patriotism of a kind was embedded in the classical curriculum. The emphasis on Greek and Roman authors and ancient history meant a constant diet of stories of war, empire, bravery and sacrifices for the state. (Colley: 167-8)

Accordingly young nobility 'from hardy sports, from manly schools' deemed their nation 'not just another and a greater Rome' but 'also a latter-day Sparta' and they were 'warriors not wimps'(170). Given the dominant *Zeitgeist*, it is understandable that Byron in his early twenties devalued writing for it embodied little heroic, masculine and vigorous; and it seemed an unworthy trade for a titled lord. By carefully excluding a train of 'brave and active citizens' from the parasitic brood, however, Byron affirms the ideological orientation of his patrician education—classical literature long nurtured in him a patriotic aspiration for glory and fame. The lingering presence of Cervantes epitomizes 'the conflict in Byron's mind about his manifest desire for fame' (McGann: 6).

That Byron lists Cervantes as a classic genius shows he is very familiar with his life. The life of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) is a saga of adventures. His left arm was paralyzed in the Battle of Lepanto (1571) and he was imprisoned by Turks in Algiers for five years despite his repeated attempts to escape. Cervantes should belong to the illustrious rank of writers whose works serve to reinforce rather than overshadow their personality. *Don Quixote* is the solemn and punctual reminder of the illusory absurdities held by chivalric romances on one hand; but on the other Don Quixote's naïve enthusiasm still provokes the men of substance to ponder over the universal dilemma of individual heroism and collective destiny. Byron's late night confession implies that he is aware of the paradox of human agency which perplexes his Spanish predecessor.

Roger B. Salomon, in analysing 'Byron's discussion of Cervantes in *Don Juan*', argues that

The writer of mock-heroic narrative on the Cervantean model is directly and explicitly concerned with the full relation of heroic experience to his own immediate environment. To this question he responds with ambivalent attitudes and contradictory judgments, his ironic sense modulating at every point whatever emotional and intellectual commitments he may make. The mode of Cervantean mock-heroic is almost invariably tragi-comic, expressing at the same time much of the irreconcilability of tragic idealism and much of the sense of absurdity that comes from strong social awareness of the ridiculousness involved in the pursuit of abstractions (1976:1).

Though he connects Byron with Cervantes for the purpose to address *Don Juan* as the narrative of genre, Salomon's observation illustrates how Byron has to rely on mock-heroic to express the dilemma of chivalry. His partial disillusionment or disbelief as conveyed in the Cervantean stanzas is highly relevant to the understanding of the form and meaning of *Don Juan*. The comparison between Cervantes and Byron presents a historical parallel which highlights the crucial phase towards the respective formation of national identity and reveals the ironic implications of the chivalric tradition. The point may be approached in two ways. Firstly, both writers dwelled in a transformative stage at which the maturing of the colonial empire promised the unprecedented possibilities for individual endeavor but the subsequent decline of the imperial splendor ridiculed naïve idealism. Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries boasted of the most expansive territory under the rule of absolute monarchy, ranging from the Philippines to Africa, from Italy to Peru. Cervantes cherished his role as the citizen of the leading colonial power in Europe and his commitment to history. Not complaining of his paralyzed left arm, he congratulated in *Journey to Parnassus* that 'he had lost the movement of the left hand for the glory of the right'. The paralysis of his left arm did not gain him full rewards; and it is even more ironical that the phenomenal success of *Don Quixote* failed to deliver him from financial destitution and other earthly worries. The maddening squabbling for wealth from the slave trade, genocide and the plundering of the 'New World', if can be called the testimony of chivalry, actually left Spain and its citizens nothing but a dissipating way of living. The latter half of Cervantes's life already saw the gradual decline of Spain being wrecked by war and epidemic.

In a similar vein, after 1707 'Great Britain was forged' partly because 'different classes and interest groups came to see this newly invented nation as a usable resource, as a focus of loyalty which would also cater to their own needs and ambitions' (Colley, 2005: 55). The expansion of English power in the global atlas offered its elite class 'a purpose, an opportunity to carry out what they had been trained to do since childhood: ride horses, fire guns, exercise their undoubted physical courage and tell other people what to do' (178). Men of talent and rank strove to

compose their own epic of heroic individualism, as preached by the patriotic curriculum in public schools and universities (177). When he pays tribute to Horatio Nelson, however, Byron observes that the glamour of English navy has been surpassed by the victory of the army.

Nelson was once Britannia's god of war
And still should be so, but tide is turned;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'Tis with our hero quietly inurned;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concerned;
Besides, the Prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis. (Canto I. 4)

Four English admirals mentioned in the last line distinguished themselves by their navy service; but they would soon fall into oblivion after the victory of Waterloo. It has been said that Byron always admired Nelson but constantly attacked Wellington (McGann, 1986:674). The reasons for Byron's preference over martial glory deserve further research; but he seems to lament of having no chance to relive the saga of Odysseus or even Cervantes.

Secondly *Don Juan's* special place in Byron's life bears resemblance to that of *Don Quixote* in Cervantes's if the lineage of chivalry can be carefully traced and observed. In one sense the discrepancy between Cervantes's chivalric faith and its 'earthly bequest'—physical handicap, poverty and spiritual humiliation eventually threw Cervantes' faith in Knighthood into doubt. The Spanish miracle sweeping through the Iberian Peninsula from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries failed to secure her citizens a decent standard of living; and Don Quixote's challenge to windmills with his spear and shield metaphorically captures the double irony of chivalry in medieval Spain. It endowed Spanish citizens with moral legitimacy to trample on the 'New World' only for the returns which enabled the ruling class in the Old Land to sharpen the state apparatus and put its people into tighter harness. One may wonder if Cervantes by his death came to realize what he staged in the Battle of Lepanto was nothing but vanity, failure and futility; and that the hearty laughter

produced by Quixote and Sancho makes the chivalric tears all the more desperate and ridiculous. The following stanza suggests that Byron does not fail to catch the tragic overtone of *Don Quixote*.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest, and more sad,
Because it makes us smile. His hero's right,
And still pursues the right; to curb the bad,
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight,
His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him mad.
But his adventures form a sorry sight:
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real Epic unto all who have thought. (XIII,9)

In a certain sense Byron takes the message of Cervantes at its face value. Denouncing the outdated chivalric romance as one form of 'mind-forged manacle', Cervantes pokes more than fun in the parody. He confronts the spiritual crisis and individual alienation accelerated by the imperial domination. The incongruous relation between individual agency and imperial mechanism becomes even more pronounced within the context of the nineteenth century England. Byron's tribute to the Phantom of Cervantes places his *Don Juan* in the chivalric lineage as a hinge point between cosmopolitan heritage and national sympathy.

Taken together, these allusions to Cervantes and *Don Quixote* have dual significance: 1) they provide a chivalric ideal as a central clue to interpret *Don Juan* as a heroic romance of nationalism; and 2) they give a notional fixity to Byron's existence of mobility. Feeling threatened and marginalized by women writers, Byron in his allegiance to chivalry justifies his literary initiative to preserve masculine identity—obligation and privileges. For such purposes, I propose an interdependent reading between main story and digressive commentary because 1) the overemphasis on either part or the deliberate isolation violates the reflexive unity between the narrator and the protagonist; 2) such reading takes the maximum advantage of divergent codes and messages contained in the thematic database of *Don Juan*.

The reading supplies substantial evidences that Byron the Poet modernizes the form of heroic romance in response to what cultural conservatives, like Henry Fuseli,

perceive as symptoms of a 'feminized' culture, a term indicating cultural decline (Bygrave, 1996:97). Edmund Burke exclaims in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 'but the age of chivalry is gone.—That of sophisters, oeconomists[sic], and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever'(1968 edn,p.169-70). It is not hard to perceive that Byron clings to the residual cosmopolitan ideal on an attempt to redress the social dissection; and that the phantom of Cervantes illuminates his plan to upgrade the cosmopolitan ideal in chivalric romance and to reassert the boundary of masculinity amid the transgression of femininity.

To sum up, the overall classification of the digressive details shows that the writer's mental reality tends to shift from the banality of the middle-class materialism to the illusory world of the bygone masculine glory. If the former constitutes one version of the Regency reality, the latter represents a lapsing possibility to transcend the repulsive impulses of the quotidian world. The understanding that the social exposure in the digressive form represents Byron's encounter with real but banal dimensions of life prepares one to apprehend how the narrative of *Don Juan* actualizes what Byron has been denied or deprived of in the real world and how the heroic attachment, though being negated, has been relocated as the real matrix of the narrative.

My subsequent analysis shall explore how *Don Juan*'s story—Juan's libertine adventures with various heroines as well as his encounter with male figures—responds to the dormant chivalric moment as the cosmopolitan antithesis of the female domination. Under the pressure of the rigid Puritan morality and the bourgeois philistines, love, marriage and family as social institutions, become increasingly commoditized and degraded. This may account for why Byron transplants his domestic anxiety onto the venture of the Other land.

Chapter II *Don Juan*: Masculine Desire and the Evolution of National Vision

By focusing chiefly on the digression, I pinpoint in Chapter I the sources of Byron's social discontent. On the one hand the rise of women writers hinders him from enjoying aristocratic privileges; and he grows increasingly dissatisfied with political renegades and other domestic undesirables. On the other the references to Cervantes and *Don Quixote* shows the effect of residual chivalric spirit on Byron's outlook. This dimension is equally important because it helps to locate the poet within the flow of historicity where diverse currents of modernity criss-cross. In *Don Juan* Byron more than manages to voice his discontent towards Regency England. Despite his skepticism towards Cervantes who laments over chivalric demise, Byron highlights the positive value of knighthood spirit and its relevancy to personal aspiration and national morale. The chivalric elements can effectively illustrate how Byron was within the grip of cosmopolitanism and nascent national consciousness. On the threshold of chaotic modernity, the chivalric mission and heroism seem likely to create a sense of order and meaning to individual endeavor.

In 1823 Byron was thirty six years old and had been away from England for seven years. For him nation is 'the idea of continuity, which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space' (from Williams, *Culture and Society*, 11).

I speak what I do know---from what I have *seen and felt personally* in my youth- - from what I have undergone and been made to undergo---and from what I know of the whole scene in general, by my experience, and that of others, and my acquaintance was somewhat extensive. I speak of seven years ago and more; it may be bettered now (*BLJ*, Vol.10:116).

Exile seems essential for Byron to reestablish spiritual bonds with the native isles. The geographical absence forces him to imagine the youthful past and the local community. Nation is retrospectively imagined and represented in a satirical style.

If in digression he tends to retrieve a home vision which blurs over time and distance, then Byron proceeds to reconstruct, through poetic narrative, an idealized cosmopolitan ambience where he could partially fulfill heroic fantasies in reaction to

his domestic failure. In a sense, two structural units of *Don Juan*—digression and narrative—are both engaged in the process of national imagining. The interlocking of the digression and the narrative, in analogy to Byron's patterns of composition, combines the negation of the repressive reality with the affirmation and even the fulfillment of the heroic nostalgia. By writing back to native country, Byron carries a conversation with English readers whose feedbacks to earlier cantos can be incorporated into the subsequent series. 'Public opinion led the poet to reconsider the nature of the poem and his relationship with the public' (Nijibayashi, 2004:201). On the margin of a modern empire, Byron constantly adjusts his writing to the potential tension which a focused national vision generates.

In this light I propose an interactive reading in which both parts converge upon a nationalistic perspective. While digressive details project a domestic scene of Regency England retold by a banished poet, the narrative builds on an alternative vision which contains not only a trans-national panorama but also an evolution pattern for masculine endeavor. By delving into the intricate triangle among the narrator, the poet and the hero, I intend to argue that beneath the digressive mobility lays an implicit yet fundamental drive for the assertion of chivalric masculinity; and that Juan's pursuit for manhood which metaphorically culminates in the poet's national identification extends into two tracks of conventional heroic romance. One track is the lure of beauty and love while the other is the test of battlefield, both shaping and defining the ideals of manliness.

The ideal of manliness was basic to the self-definition of bourgeois society and to the national ideology... Manliness symbolized the nation's spiritual and material vitality. It called for strength of body and mind... Manliness drew upon the aristocratic ideal of knighthood as a pattern of virtue in a changing world and a model for some of its behavior. Nevertheless, it was a bourgeois concept (Mosse, 1985:23).

The quotation helps the ongoing argument by connecting masculinity with chivalry, nationalism and bourgeois ideology. Nationalism is contextualized in both historical and personal way. Juan's apparent lack of power and passivity make it dubious to connect him with masculinity or even with knighthood. However if one takes Juan as what meets his or her eyes, one may have difficulty in accounting for the

autobiographical elements in Juan's adventures. Therefore I venture to propose that Juan's initiation of adventures transfigures Byron's aristocratic ambition which has gradually been disciplined by the ideology of nationalism.

1. The Lure of Beauties and Loves

With two nouns in the plural form in the title I intend to read *Don Juan* as a poetical narrative of initiation. This move may be risky, given the commonplace view that Juan seems to possess an innate 'negative capability' and remains passive to diverse circumstances. His adventures—amours, escapades and fighting—fail to facilitate his internal growth; and he remains in readers' impression as a young lad with a girlish face, innocent and momentarily heroic. However Byron once confessed that Don Juan should grow naturally even though he ends up with a measure of world weariness.

I meant to have him made a *Cavaliere Servante* in Italy and a cause for divorce in England and a Sentimental 'Werther-faced man' in Germany—so as to show the different ridicules of the societies in each of these countries—and to have displayed him gradually gaté and blasé as he grew older—as is natural (*BLJ*,8:78).

Byron's own life may indicate the possibility to treat the whole narrative as the rite of passage actualized in the Grand Tour to acquire both self-knowledge and worldly wisdom. Despite his flat personality, Juan is seen to embark on the process of confronting reality and playing diverging roles. Initiation is a process of self-recognition in which one has to reconcile both idealistic and materialistic worlds and may appear at once innocent and experienced, hopeful and disillusioned⁶. Juan undergoes an adventure of initiation which can be deciphered as an implicit quest for masculine honor. The lure of female love not only represents one imaginative dimension of masculine desire but also acquaints Juan with the national difference of sexual politics.

⁶ I refer to Prof. Zhang Benzi's lecture notes in the course titled 'Topics in East/West Comparative Literature' to define the initiation as a term of psychological conception.

A. The Circle of Christian Ladies: Inez's Pattern versus Adeline's Pattern

Caroline Franklin points out that Byron might initially desire *Don Juan* as a sexual satire and an 'attempt at using sexual mores as the material for political satire'.

When we consider that Juan, on leaving his Spanish birthplace, travels first to a primitive Greek isle, then to despotic Turkey, followed by the 'enlightened despotism' of feudal Russia, and finally to the limited monarchy of England, we see that Byron follows a similar procedure. His poem is also structured to illustrate a secular and relativist view of sexual morality, in which the status of woman indicates the nature of a nation's government. Byron thus uses a doubled evolutionary model of sexuality to structure the poem. The story of Juan is a *Bildungsroman* which records the sexual history of a male individual from infancy to maturity, superimposed on a developmental view of sexual mores in society as a whole (1992:102).

By a 'doubled evolutionary model of sexuality', Franklin may refer to the analogous reflection between the style of political states and the peculiarities of sexual mores. However, from the perspective of masculine growth, Juan's sexual evolution, along with his wandering, involves an implicit contrast between Christendom and 'Oriental' countries which symbolizes crossing from enlightened sophistication to primitive innocence. In this manner Juan is prepared to seek a more balanced conception. In the following section I intend to focus on ladies in Christendom to explore how the hero's masculine assertion eventually leads to national identification.

A succession of female figures at various locales—Donna Inez and Julia of Seville, Haidée of Greece, Gulbeyaz in the Otto court, Leila from the siege of Ismail, Catherine the Great of Russia and Adeline and Aurora of London society—occupy the central thread of Don Juan's perils and respond to various incidents in Byron's rite of passage. It is seldom observed that the narrative *tour d'horizon* starts and ends with a country of Christendom while the 'Oriental' ladies appear in *medias res*. Does the narrative sequence signify the progression of masculine desire? If so, in what way does such progression help to develop insights about national differences of femininity and lead to the maturity of masculine psyche, particularly in the case of Byron?

In the first place the opening episode of *Don Juan* positions Juan in an imaginary microcosm which combines the local specialties of both Spain and England. In this case nationality is not a reliable indicator. Despite her Spanish identity, for instance,

Donna Inez is caricatured as a typical English Blue lady who is well versed in language and mathematics, as analyzed at length in Chapter I. In contrast, her husband Don Jose is sympathetically portrayed as a good-for-nothing.

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
With no great love for learning, or the learn'd,
Who chose to go wher'er he had a mind,
And never dream'd his lady was concern'd; (I, 19, 146-48)

His wife's learning is not auspicious to marriage though 'conducive' to Juan's growth. The household of Inez is a careful parody of Byron's own and the farce of separation dramatizes the hypocrisy of the Christian marriage.

Don Jose and the Donna Inez led
For some time an unhappy sort of life,
Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;
They lived respectably as man and wife,
Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
And put the business past all kind of doubt. (I, 26)

Under the trapping of bourgeois respectability, domestic inhibition intensifies the impulse to break loose, leading to secret attempt to foment a marital intrigue.

Byron identifies 'the object of *Don Juan*' as 'nothing but a satire on affectations of all kinds, mixed with some relief of serious feeling and description' (*BLJ*, 10:116). While the portrait of Inez represents a satirical attack on didactic pretension, Julia is depicted to show the contrast between 'moral north' and 'Catholic south'. Byron exploits the geographical difference and historical anecdotes and gives them an amusing twist. The episode of Julia and Juan is a serious moment to expose the 'civilized' artificiality. Julia's Moorish lineage is a case in point. The occupation of Granada by the Spanish army intermingled Islamic blood with Catholic blood, making Julia a half-bred beauty.

The darkness of her oriental eye
Accorded with her Moorish origin;
Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by;
In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin.

And

She married (I forgot the pedigree)
With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down,

His blood less noble than such blood should be;

(I, 56, 441-44; 57, 449-451)

The pagan heredity has the advantage to improve the natural genetic reproduction but keep the libertine lifestyle intact.

This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
Ruin'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
For, from a root the ugliest in Old Spain
Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh;
The sons no more were short, the daughters plain
But there's a rumor which I fain would hush;
'Tis said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
Produced her Don more heirs at love than law. (I, 58)

Byron appropriates the familiar stereotypical difference of women images. If Inez embodies the rigidity of 'the moral north', her learning and disposition only work to turn her marriage into calculation. In contrast Julia beams with youthful vigor, natural beauty and intelligence, even though such oriental attractiveness is under a malicious gaze.

Byron only reveals bits by bits the possible underground liaison between Donna Inez and Alfonso. Under her virtuous cover-up, Inez suspiciously encourages the acquaintance between Juan and Julia. She may mean initially to silence the scandal between Alfonso and her; but in time she entraps them for her own advantage. Readers are kept in dark of Inez's motives; and only until years later when Juan is in Russia are we informed of her second wedlock.

The (semi-)recognition of Inez's year-long scheme makes one shudder at her artful strategy which claims Julia's youth and gives rise to Juan's banishment; but her conspiracy unleashes all the dramatic conflicts in the scenario, enabling Juan to grow to perceive and to know himself. In addition, by depicting Inez as the fine specimen of the ostentatious 'bluestocking' mannerism, Byron does not greatly depart from the preconception that European women are more mentally sophisticated. That Inez outwits Julia in their respective plan underlines the calculating and scheming nature of the enlightened women and emphasizes the discrepancy between moral north and libertine south.

Secondly despite the alleged conspiracy against the young pair, Juan's affair with Julia is a necessary part of his masculine education. Inez, from the very start, desires to make her son a paragon. Therefore,

Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
In case our lord the king should go to war again,
He learned the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress—or a nunnery (1, 38).

By equipping her son with necessary skills, she amazingly foresees the ordeals which Juan may run into. Even his acquaintance with Julia seems to be purposely designed; and when Julia does end up in nunnery, the first part of initiation education comes to a halt. This part of his education reveals an essential stage for a boy's social networking.

'in the *ancien régime*, a young man, if he was to make his way in the world, must have his education superintended by his mother, so that he would have the social graces to please the coteries of older women, who assisted such aspiring young men to obtain patronage and intrigued on their behalf' (Franklin: 108).

One may presume how Julia is implicated in the process of Juan's sexual initiation and to understand that Julia might be more victimized by Inez's manipulation than by her uncontrollable passion. In fact Julia is partially aware of Inez's intention. The special care Julia takes not to undermine Juan's faith in the pretentious virtues of the adults hints that their adulterous relation contains truer elements of sympathy than those lawful.

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds,
Alfonso's loves with Inez were well known;
But whether 'twas that one's own guilt confounds,
But that can't be, as has been often shown,
A lady with apologies abounds;
It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was dear. (Canto I, 176, 1401-08)

Julia's mature vision adds a protective dimension to the natural love of youth. Making herself unconsciously the martyr of fierce passion, Julia actually accompanies Juan into the stage of adulthood. Her willingness to shelter Juan from potential harm indicates what is lacking in Inez's motherhood and her enlightened education. Julia's

natural passion and maternal care remind one of those pagan virtues which might have been stifled by rational thinking and utilitarian education in the seemingly more advanced society.

Julia's farewell letter, as the ending of the whole sequence in Canto I, is the sole concrete written proof of the female intellectual capability portrayed in a positive light. Julia's adieu overwhelms readers with passion, bitterness and defiance. The desire for varied experience, shared by both sexes, only means exclusive rights for men while for women the only resort is to have a good match.

Man's love is of his life a thing apart,
'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart.
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these can not estrange:
Man has all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone. (I, 194)

The plain truth uttered by Julia is more than a simple denunciation of social inequality; but it contains bitterness and disappointment for her inability to fulfill ambition and hope.

You will proceed in beauty, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core; (I, 196, 1561-64)

The eloquence of Julia indicates her role as a loving sister whose wailing fills Juan's heart with so much tenderness and pity that he is mentally prepared to embark upon a journey. The ironic effect of Julia's letter on the subsequent episodes deserves certain attention. Without his illicit relation with Julia, Juan might never have the impetus to set out for his transnational sexual conquests. 'Just as he wanders from nation to nation, so too he wanders from women to women' (Wohlgemut:14). By Julia's letter Juan pledges the perpetual devotion; but its being used to draw bets in the shipwreck episode strikes a satirical strain of the hero's fluctuating passion.

As the sequel to Inez's domestic strife, the overall episode of Julia and Juan creates a profile of youth culture in a counter-position towards the corrupt adult world. The contrastive pattern between Julia's 'oriental' portrait and Inez's 'northern'

rigidness and pretension builds analogy to that of innocent youth and adult corruption. Julia's strength and Juan's innocence, though thwarted by the cunning schematization of the adults, have acquired for Juan the precious knowledge for future growth.

The story of Julia and Juan as the prelude signifies one recurring pattern in response to the prominent agenda of English national culture. For one thing heroines of the Other origins are meant to satirize intellectual women for their excessive rationality. By highlighting the pagan blood lineage of Donna Julia, Byron seems to mourn over the loss of libertine gallantry to which English aristocrats of his father's generation once were entitled. Such loss may be attributed to the rise of female rationality and the spread of bourgeois respectability. In detailing Inez's 'Blue' breeding, the poet strikes home his ridicule of the intellectual women. Julia's fresh image and her adoration for Juan imply the potential longing for maternal instincts.

The conclusive English episode draws a full circle since Juan reenters the Christian territory as the citizen of the world. English high society gradually brings Juan into intimacy with two characters—Adeline and Aurora Raby, one being the high-bred ladies, the other, 'a young star who shone/O'er life' (XV, 43, 341-42). The analogous pattern between intellectual sophistication and innocence reappears with certain modification. In every possible aspect, Adeline, like Inez, 'was perfect past all parallel' (I, 17, 129). A paragon lady of the high English court, she 'was the Queen-bee, the glass of all that's fair; /whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb' (XIII, 13, 101-102). Her social grace at the electoral country dinner draws the admiring gaze from both the noble and the humble. She improvises a song in the breakfast to drive away the phantom of Black Friar, displaying the unusual vocal talent of poetical composition. Her beauty is reinforced by inner grace. At the age of twenty seven,

Adeline was far from that ripe age,
Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
For she had seen the world, and stood its test, (XIV, 54, 425- 28)

While Adeline's image sparkles with maternal care, intelligence and maturity, Aurora enters the scene with naivety. She is

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
 Child to the care of guardians good and kind;
 But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
 Blood is not water; and where shall we find
 Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie
 By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
 To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
 Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb? (XV, 44,345-53)

Aurora's air of loneliness and infant-like image contain every virtue which tends to arouse pity and care in Juan who displays fatigue over the down pouring of Adeline's gentle caresses. Furthermore that 'she was a Catholic too, sincere, austere' better persuades Juan of the feasibility of the match. Just as in Canto I the portrayals of Inez and Julia hint at the tension between calculated rationality and natural instincts, the proximity of Adeline and Aurora underlies the possible clash between English ostentatious etiquette and the reserve and demureness of the proper Catholicism.

These minute indications actually accord with Byron's preference for Catholicism. In 8 March, 1822 Byron wrote to Thomas Moore

I am really a great admirer of tangible religion; and am breeding one of daughters a Catholic, that she may have her hands full. It is by far the most elegant worship, hardly excepting the Greek mythology. What with incense, pictures, statues, altars, shrines, relics and the real presence, confession, absolution,--there is something to grasp at. (*BLJ*, Vol. 9, 123)

Here he refers to Allegra, his illegitimate child with Clairmont. There are some reasons why Byron insisted on sending Allegra to Catholic Convent School instead of having her raised in Shelley's atheistic household. For one the fact that many children in Shelley's family died young convinced him of their incapability to raise children; for another a girl brought up in a Catholic convent with proper dowry had more possibilities to get married into Italian higher class. Though he meant well for the poor girl, Allegra never got enough parental attention and did not live to the day of marriage. The forlorn figure of Aurora may be enhanced by Byron's guilty conscience over Allegra's premature death.

Suggesting the inner incongruity between Adeline and Aurora, Byron not only conveys his penchant for Catholicism but also traces Juan's development in handling the relation with women. By keeping certain distance from Adeline, Juan seems to share special chemistry with Aurora for mystique innocence, a feature reminiscent of

Haidée's presence. He learns to gain a firmer self-control over manipulative circumstance. In the scene where she considers the potential match for Juan, Adeline omits Aurora from her catalogue of candidacy. This act arouses Juan's curiosity. What she bears in mind—Miss Reading, Raw, Flaw, Showman, Knowman, Giltbedding, Audacia Shoestring—draw a glaring view of vanity fair which is stuffed with pretentious didactic learning, ostentatious material display and audacious schematization. When Adeline raises her eyebrows over Aurora, Juan immediately feels what is amiss.

And this omission, like that of the bust
Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
This he express'd half smiling and half serious:
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?' (XV, 49, 385-92)

The poet is very elusive about why Adeline excludes Aurora from her consideration; but it might be either envy, or scorn or jealousy, or all. The pattern of secret competition in Canto I reappears. Though he stays alert to such tension, Juan has no occasion to escape. Juan's quiet sympathy for the Catholic orphan is perceivable; and his admiring attention to an intellectual equal means a spiritual compromise with English society which emerges in the wake of Juan's tour in Oriental land.

Juan's sojourn in London is like a flash-back of Byron's entanglement with London for fame and ruin. In the course of his transformation, four female figures—Inez, Julia, Adeline and Aurora—constitute a complete circle of the aristocratic pursuit for idealistic love. Fulfilling the role of mother, first lover, society mentor and potential wife respectively, these four heroines reveal the inner aspects of Christendom families which are familiar to Byron. In addition their respective virtues and singularities are sympathetically rendered to ridicule the corruption without hampering the hope. The digressive commentary brings the dire reality of marriage market into focus. Juan's debut in London Court produces much agitation.

Fair virgins blushed upon him; wedded dames
Bloomed also in less transitory hues;

For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
The painting and the painted; youth, ceruse,
Against his heart preferred their usual claims,
Such as no gentlemen can quite refuse;
Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
Enquired his income, and if he had brothers. (XI, 48, 377-84)

While vying for the grip of a husband, the women of rank all barter either charm or wealth for the potential prey. Just as marriage is a channel for the new bourgeoisie to elevate their social status, the dissolute aristocratic class acquires money through it to relieve the financial burden. The full-scale commoditization of marriage as a basic social unit produces all the repulsive constraints to heroic fantasy. Even the marriage of Adeline who is chaste, lawful and graceful rests on a precarious footing.

She loved her lord or thought so, but that love
Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sisyphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of or reprove,
No bickerings, no connubial turmoil;
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble, conjugal, but cold. (XIV, 86)

Caroline Franklin regards Adeline as an archetypal Northern 'self-repressed' woman (Stabler: 161). Her admirable performance on various social occasions only reduces the family to a glamorous showcase; and her perfect self-control denies any access to the cold hearth of her marital arena. Model being such, English domesticity drives the sensitive conscience into an abyss and forces the ego to resist the cold truth.

Some critics have observed that Byron's death led to the lack of narrative closure of *Don Juan* (161); and they tend to rely on Byron's confessed plans to speculate on Juan's future. What would happen to Juan subsequent to the English episode is actually not important since by this point his exposure to divergent climes and customs already enlightens him about the innate ethnical peculiarities of women. Over time the accumulation of the worldly experience supplements his early chivalric education with the knowledge of female sexuality. The existing sixteen cantos, though fragmented, contain a closed circle of the idealistic quest. Even on the fictional level Juan unconsciously learns from his experience and develops a mature

outlook. If in the initial episode of Julia and Inez he appears perfectly content with female pampering, Juan eventually learns to tactfully keep a neutral position from female rivalry in the high society of London. Such progression is important for Byron who tends to perceive women power as a threatening and corrupting force. He once laments that his life has been sacrificed to and consumed by women (*BLJ*, Vol.6, 257). Juan seems to help Byron relocate himself in a tempting environment where he might have avoided the potential trap. 'Women grow by men' and vice versa. Juan seems never to take off his effeminate masquerade which makes him an easy lure to the eyes of women. At least this is a spiritual self-portrait which underpins Byron's self-esteem. In a way Juan fulfills the role of Byron's id and persists not to fall victim to female manipulation. His final efforts to fence off the shadow of Duchess of Fitz-Fulke signal that he reaches a balanced state of mental independence and will power. Meanwhile by revisiting and reliving the early life atlas with Juan, Byron presents, through the comparative sketches of Christian ladies, a seasoned view about sexuality, marriage and national difference. On the one hand he feels repressed with the rise of female intellectuality; and he learns to reconcile himself with bourgeois moral constraints on the other. The former tendency is personified by the figures of 'northern repression' like Inez and Adeline. If the depiction of Julia spells out his initial admiration for southern libertine lifestyle, his sympathetic portrayal of Aurora demonstrates that he finally comes to terms with English moral austerity. Such compromise seems inconsistent with his sexual penchant; but this becomes understandable if we take into account his affairs with truly 'Oriental' ladies who enable Juan to develop more rational and systematic understanding about national difference. Metaphorically speaking Juan's rite of passages oscillates between center and margin with a growing tendency to return. The crucial link is the Byronic version of Oriental ladies.

B. Oriental Ladies in Medias res: Haidée, Dudù and Leila

When the narration shifts from Julia to Haidée, Juan's entry into the pagan

east from the Christian west brings him in contact with the imaginative and idealistic world. This dimension is presented with the regular comparison between the two. I now turn briefly to a stanza about the marketability of sex and its moral value.

Happy the nations of the moral north!
Where all is virtue, and the winter season
Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth;
Where juries cast up what a wife is worth
By laying whate'er sum, in mulct, they please on
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice. (I,64)

According to Charles Donelan,

The 'sum, in mulct' mentioned in the marketable vice stanza is the fine that was imposed on men convicted of seducing married women, an amount that was paid to aggrieved husbands based on the jury's estimate of the value of their wives' fidelity. The stanza therefore implies that men in Regency England, if they could afford it, bought their way out of responsibility for this kind of sexual misbehavior(6)

'In England, love is a saleable commodity, whether on the level of prostitution or in the marriage market of more respectable circles' (Smeed, 1990:39). The stanza of 'moral north' follows immediately the one where the 'indecent sun' and the 'sultry climate' are blamed for sexual indulgence in the south. Byron seems to sneer at the typical English law court where virtues and chastity are transferable commodities. The legal practice exposes the ridiculous, corrupt and scandalous part of domestic life. The dismay triggered by the social constraint on masculine desire may heighten our awareness of the delicate narrative logic which sustains the episodic structure and the evolution of masculine identity and nation.

Haidée's debut shows that she is the child of Nature and Innocence, a rare commodity in the 'advanced' society.

Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
Flowed in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flashed on her little hand, but what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but not stocking. (II, 121)

The punch line ending in 'stocking', Byron leaves no occasion to speak ill of the literary ladies. His feigned 'shock' at Haidée's wearing no stocking is a subtle and clever satire on intellectual pretension. The close-up on her small bare feet projects

the sexual attractiveness without visual encumbrance and hints at the artificiality of Christian intellectual women.

Being repulsed by the cold rationality and marriage constraints of the Christian domain, Byron incorporates his oriental fantasy in his chivalric mission. The portrayals of Haidée of Greek Island, Dudù of Otto court and Leila in the battlefield of Ismail, who appear in sequence between Catholic Spain and Protestant England, exhibit the poet's steady gaze into exotic land as he expands his adventurous territory.⁷ The sequence not only involves the descent into an uninhibited and libertine world but also contains a reluctant return to the rational though hypocritical community. The national mapping of the Orient is transfigured into an implicit pattern of sexual and gender observation.

Haidée's meticulous care and comfort for Juan symbolizes the sweet boon for the first act of border-crossing. With all the vestige of Christian civilization gone, the shipwreck seems to baptize Juan's body with a pagan embrace. His connection with the native Spain—from Julia's letter to his tutor, from his valet to all fellow passengers—are totally destroyed by sea waves. He loses all the material documents which may prove his native identity. His 'damp trance' upon the seashore marks a temporary break-off with Christian world, leaving behind death, strife, and fear. Juan's accidental rendezvous with Haidée represents a move into a 'newly-found' region and a retreat into an alternative temporality.

Haidée, the fair incarnation of pastoral freedom, is defined with constant comparison to Christian reality.

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the incumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass:
I speak of Christian lands in comparison,

⁷ It should be noted that Julia who features libertine lifestyle and is half-pagan by blood should behave in the faith of Catholics. That is also why her sexual transgression leads to her retreat into a Catholic convent.

Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison. (II, 175, 1393-1400)

The island princess, while enjoying the freedom of Christian married women, is the free ruler of her own passion without the impediment of social networking. Being nurtured in the weather-beaten coast, isolated by high cliffs, far away from the chaotic modernity, Haidée dwells in a haven untouched by marriage treachery prevailing in the Regency England.

.... treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over. (II, 200, 1595-1600)

The recognition of marriage betrayals and family theatricals as love routine reveals that the poet's interest in describing the union of Juan and Haidée is not as innocent as imagined. With nature as the sanctuary of love, with Haidée's sparkling beauty and purity, Juan is renovated by the coastal seclusion in the wake of love scandal and ship wreck.

Byron critics have long observed the analogous relation between the Haidée episode and certain episodes in the *Odyssey*, like 'the Scherian sojourn and the Ithakan homecoming' (Donelan:80). What underlies these stories of Homeric tradition is the interconnection between geographical isolation and the cultivation and preservation of manliness. The isle ladies from Nausikaa and Penelope to Haidée all play the nurturing role to satisfy the masculine desires, physically and spiritually. With their riches, chastity and matron kindness, these ladies embody the cult of primitive women who tend to conflate 'rebel daughter' and 'natural mother'. To eulogize the daughter of the pirate king as the spiritual angel and the guardian of soul dramatizes a kind of male fantasy—easy access to boundless wealth and power, infinite opportunities of adventures and minimum social obligation. Greek shore represents what one is impossible to obtain in contemporary Christian world where marriage has been heavily taxed.

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,

Or perils by a loving maid incurr'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird:
And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy. (II, 190, 1513-20)

Consequently

And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek. (II, 194, 1551-52)

In Haidée's world, egoistic fantasy is attended with milk and honey and without the burden of duty, or pledge of faithfulness. Marital bondage, held as a civilized infection, is foreign to the remote island. The amour of Juan and Haidée displays Byron's most audacious attempt of escapist fantasy; but her care and love marks the crucial stage in the formation of Juan's masculine identity.

The moment when Juan has been found naked and senseless marks the beginning of a complete process to bear and nurture a child—bedding, clothing, nursing and dressing. 'Lifting him with care into the cave,' the two Greek maids lavish the wretched lad with the most delicate attention; and the cave, like the womb, preserves the lingering trace of life and develops to his full capacity. Haidée seems too ready to relinquish the chance to be a mother.

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hushed as the babe upon its mother's breast,
Drooped as the willow when no winds can breathe,
Lulled like the depth of ocean when at rest, (II, 148, 1177 - 1180)

In fear to waken the shipwrecked youth

And went into the cavern Haidée stepped
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept. (II, 143, 1136 - 39)

At the moment of eating

He ate, and he was well supplied, and she
Who watched him like a mother, would have fed
Him past all bounds, because she smile to see
Such appetite in one she had deemed dead. (II, 158, 1157- 60)

However, her efforts to teach him Grecian tongue prove not so successful, which makes all the difference to their relationship.

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at speaking,
But not a word could Juan comprehend,

Although he listened so that the young Greek in
Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end, (II, 161, 1281-84)

The marked lack of verbal communication sets Haidée far apart from her Christian counterparts. Julia's letter and Adeline's rhyming of Black Friar are the impressive proof of their intellectual capability. The Christian sophistication, in light of Juan's failure to learn the Grecian language, is very suggestive. While acclaimed as the daughter of Nature, Haidée is subject to male gaze and its idealization. Her exclusive companionship has been constantly deciphered in accordance with the masculine code. The ensuing discrepancy between Christian heroines and Haidée in terms of literacy and articulation conveys a less flattering message—moral naivety and mental inferiority which may indicate the true reason for sexual indulgence.

The symphony of love is sustained by bodily language instead of verbal utterances. The effect is double: 1) it presents an ironic contrast to the Christian love and marriage. The creative power of bluestocking ladies strengthens their capability to desire and demand. 2) Haidée, like Greece of the period, is entrapped in a make-believe world where she is being gazed at, evaluated and appreciated. Without the chance to know what she really thinks, readers have to decode the escapist fantasy of a white male—no intrusion, absolute freedom, the enjoyment of wealth, beauty and love and the minimum obligation. The only moment when Haidée is heard, she speaks to defend Juan from her father's assault. This is also the only moment when Haidée speaks about her identity and faith.

When Haidée threw herself her boy before,
Stern as her sire. 'On me,' she cried, 'let death
Descend, the fault is mine. This fatal shore
He found, but sought not. I have pledged my faith.
I love him, I will die with him. I knew
Your nature's firmness—know your daughter's too.' (IV, 42, 331-36)

The hereditary nobleness in Haidée's demeanors symbolizes the eternal spirit of Greek glory.

He gazed on her, and she on him. 'Twas strange
How like they looked. The expression was the same,
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame,
For she too was as one who could avenge,

If cause should be—a lioness, though tame,
Her father's blood before her father's face
boiled up and proved her truly of his race. (IV, 44)

The poet's admiration to both father and daughter stems from the respect to the inscrutable will and incorruptible integrity nurtured by the lonely seashore and high cliffs.

The frontier of his 'heroic exotica' is extended into the heart of the Otto court, bringing into our vision the silent Dudù. 'Women's condition is a certain guide for the observations of a stranger who enters an unknown country' (106). As Juan's guide to the harem life, Dudù is depicted with Turkish passivity and servitude.

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,
Where all was harmony and calm and quiet,
Luxuriant, budding, cheerful without mirth, (VI,53,417-20)

Haidée's appeal lies in her spontaneous passion and natural felicity whereas Dudù's manners are branded with natural taciturn generated by Turkish despotic rules. Dudù's presence and Juan's own cross-dressing considerably heighten his awareness of the masculine identity. On one hand the female disguise protects him from the potential threat of being gazed at and allows him certain measure of autonomy; on the other hand, the dominant female presence renders him even more alert to the potential temptation. The psychological uncertainty resulting from identity disorientation and Dudù's silence dissolves into the commotion triggered by her curious dream. Dudù's dream dramatizes an alternative mode of masculine fantasy in an Oriental milieu. The 'strange coincidence' involves Dudù's efforts to pick 'a golden apple' in the obscure wood. Though her early attempts fail,

That on a sudden when she least had hope,
It fell down of its own accord before
Her feet; that her first movement was to stoop
And pick it up and bite it to the core;
That just as her young lip began to open
Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
A bee flew out and stung her to the heart,
And so she woke with a great scream and start. (VI,77)

It is easy to perceive the biblical connotation of the image such as 'golden apple' and the sexual implication of the sting of bees. Dudù's dream has broken up the spell cast

by her silence on Juan and mirrors his agitating sexuality in the overwhelming presence of women. The panic triggered by the dream in the harem hints at the aggression or invasion of Christian masculinity in the oppressive and suffocating atmosphere of the Turkish court. Though it is unlikely that Turkish minds may harbor Christian imagery, religious transplanting, like Juan's cross-dressing, reveals Byron's metaphysical anxiety and androgynous nature.

On the textual level, Dudù's dream, being the sequel to that of Haidée, further betrays the problematic nature of Byron's Oriental mystiques and his limited conception of women. In the former episode, Haidée

dreamed of being alone on the seashore,
Chained to a rock. She knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her,
And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour,
Until she sobbed for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.(IV, 31)

In the poignant scene Haidée has been struggling with the fierce waves which threaten to plunge herself into abyss. Being aware of Lambro's approaching, one can imagine how the rising waves, like her unquenchable passion, signal her doom. Haidée's dream allows her to relive the experience in discovering Juan and also marks the dramatic transition from the sweet amour to Lambro's ominous emergence. Being cold, wet and pale Haidée has been eventually released from too sweet an embrace and too long a kiss, only to find Juan lifeless. The womb-like cave where she used to nurse him back to life now turns to be their tomb. 'And that brief dream appeared a life too long'(IV, 34,272).Haidée's dream forces her back to reality—father's wrath and the poet's weariness, whereas Dudù's night call reveals what the poet deems has been denied to the Turkish harem.

In contrast to Julia's letter and Adeline's rhyming, the dreams of both Haidée and Dudù betray Byron's ignorance of the realistic psyche of the 'oriental' women. The depiction of the two episodes is marked with the absence of verbal communication which metaphorically reflects his lack of knowledge of the Orient. Out of Byron's

blind eulogy of Oriental mystics, Haidée and Dudù act as a foil to their Christian counterparts. Without meaningful articulation or physical liberty, they are to be imagined, to be represented and to be consumed like soulless animals. If their images are juxtaposed with that of Julia and Adeline, their very tenderness and care go with their lack of mental sophistication and enlightenment. The supposed communicative hindrance allows the poet the full range to exercise his masculine fantasy. In conclusion the portrayal of Haidée and Dudù who offer silent care and comfort to the forlorn soul channels the poet's existential anxiety stemming from the acute alienation from English domestic life and the exposure of moral hypocrisy. In addition, that Haidée and Dudù appear in the middle of Juan's adventures may account for their influence on Juan's masculine growth. As Franklin points out, 'Aurora's significance is social, not existential. She represents Byron's attempt to create a heroine comparable to Haidée in idealization, yet appropriate to an advanced European civilization' (157). Aurora's naivety and self-control is a metaphorical compromise between pagan innocence and Christian modern sophistication. By juxtaposing Aurora and Haidée one can discern the subtle psychological change effected by the imagined Oriental adventures which transplant his masculine mission.

Turkish Sultana Gulbeyaz is a prominent figure prior to Juan's meeting Leila in Ismail. In the guise of male concubine, Juan for the first time feels humiliated by the female temptation. Gulbeyaz's presence, as C. Franklin observes, reverses gender-power pattern conventionally assumed for femininity and masculinity (150-2). The personal experience of seraglio enslavement precipitates Juan's masculine initiative which is to be pursued in the Siege of Ismail.

Leila's emergence offers Juan a precious chance to fulfill his knighthood ambition.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff,
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helplessly native. (XIII, 10, 73-76)

The battlefield of Ismail—the site of slaughter, the coffins of the harmless and the stage of machinery—demonstrates how the merciless thrust of modern warfare lays

waste the individual endeavor of heroism and challenges every assertion of love and justice.

Upon a taken bastion where there lay
Thousands of slaughtered men, a yet warm group
Of murdered women, who had found their way
To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
And shudder; while, as beautiful as May,
A female-child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lulled in bloody rest. (VIII, 91)

In the site of grief and despair Juan fights back to the Cossacks whose brutality is so outrageous that he is determined to deliver the child out of her helpless state. Trying to rescue Leila from the Cossacks' malicious pursuit, Juan seizes the initiative to live up to his own heroic expectation.

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how near
Her fate had been to that of all her race. (VIII, 95,753-55)

And

The Moslem orphan went with her protector.
For she was homeless, houseless, helpless. (VIII, 140, 1117-19;141,1121-22)

'In seeking to explain the significance of Leila, the male fantasy of the dependent woman as a confirmation of one's individuality seems particularly apposite given the circumstances of her appearance in the poem'(116). The emergence of Leila, to a certain extent, helps Juan reposition himself in the meaningless site of slaughter. This is the only and last opportunity which Juan enjoys to act with confidence, pride and masculine honor. The little episode, naturally placed in the sequence of female temptation and manipulation, testifies to the poet's residual attachment to the chivalric tradition and marks another crucial moment of border-crossing.

By describing Leila's companionship to Juan on his trip to Russia and England, Byron puts emphasis on pagan perspective to satirize Christian social reality. Amid the hustle and bustle, Leila's gaze on high English society brings spiritual barrenness to exposure. Her pagan innocence and steadfastness make a ridicule of English showcase and flirtation.

The little Leila with her orient eyes
And taciturn Asiatic disposition

(Which saw all Western things with small surprise,
To the surprise of people of condition,
Who think that novelties are butterflies
To be pursued as food for inanition),
Her charming figure and romantic history
Became a kind of fashionable mystery. (XII,27)

Juan's supposed reputation as a 'person of condition' triggers shabby figures of rank to make a fuss over the girl or the Fortune, reaffirming the circulating value of marital currency in English context.

How all the needy honorable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer or desperate dandy,
The watchful mothers and the careful sisters
.....
like flies o'er candy
Buzz around 'the Fortune' with their busy battery,
To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery. (XII. 32)

But that Leila falls into oblivion and disappears from our horizon raises questions to the poet's ability to balance the pagan belief and his religious or national affiliation. If three pairs of female characters—Inez and Julia, Adeline and Aurora, Haidée, Dudù and Leila —form an asymmetrical pattern in Juan's pursuit for the idealistic love, it highlights a contrast between Christendom and pagan countries, an initiation process from innocence to experience. The three contrastive pairs underlie a logical continuity. The very placement of Haidée, Dudù and Leila in the middle of the whole sequence symbolizes the questioning and reflection of English status quo, mixed with the full exercise of sexual fantasy which can be taken as a gradual transition for psychological reconciliation with domestic reality. These female characters in their various roles reveal the problematic aspect of English family and marriage. The increasing tendency of commercialization and institutionalization places considerable strain on gender conventions and subverts the major object of chivalric pursuit. In this light the gallery of heroines is created in response to the psychological frustration and mental strain imposed by English domestic life; and the portrayal of heroines largely conforms to cultural stereotypes which are built on vivid observations of national difference, geographical, historical and social. However the role of male characters in

Don Juan cannot be ignored in order to understand how the development of masculine identity gradually contributes to the emergence of national vision.

II. The Inspiration of Male Individualism

Interwoven with his amatory encounters, Juan's dealings with various male figures from Alfonso to Lord Henry form another track on which the pursuit for manhood contributes to a modern national vision. Byron's design of male characters reveals a repressed part of the masculine anguish. If the exploration of the heroines reveals that they fulfill male fantasy for idealistic love and exotic sexuality, male figures in their disparate capacities acquaint Juan with the potential role of manhood in diverging circumstances and prepare him for the chivalric career.

Thomas Arnold, wrote in 1862, 'By romantic poems...we mean poems in which heroic subjects are epically treated, after the manner of the old romances of chivalry' (*A Manual of English Literature*, 392). *Don Juan* shares with 'old romances' the double track of chivalric theme—the lure of beauty and love and the inspiration of individual endeavor. As a cultural construct, masculinity can be either distinguished from femininity or from childhood naivety. I now intend to focus on several male figures and evaluate their respective role in Don Juan's rite of passage.

A. Fatherly Intervention— Don Alfonso and Lambro

It is not mere coincidence that certain narrative episodes come to an abrupt end because of the punctual appearance of a male figure. In the earlier stage of Juan's development, two male personas 'collaborate' with matronly figures, though in rather unpredictable manner, to plunge the hero into the tension of innocence and growth. In a Freudian way both Don Alfonso and Lambro assume a pseudo-fatherly role to prevent Juan from sexual indulgence and force him to meet the challenge of masculinity; but their temperament makes Juan aware of ethnical or national difference.

Firstly Don Alfonso's interruption into Julia's affair is crucial for Juan's sexual maturity. As analyzed before, Juan's amour with Julia is implicated in the mechanics

of adult conspiracy and is narrated with a tinge of Platonic innocence. Alfonso who is a fifty-year old Seville hidalgo plays a paradoxical role in Juan's personal growth. On the one hand his night raid arises from the fear which might insult a man's honor.

[But] for a cavalier of his condition
It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
Without a word of previous admonition,
To hold a levee round his lady's bed,
And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
To prove himself the thing he most abhor'd. (I, 139)

In the melodramatic scene Alfonso confirms his suspicion that he has been cuckolded. One might speculate that Alfonso's ferocious move is well calculated by Donna Inez in order to precipitate her love intrigue; but it is unpredictable that Alfonso's rage should trigger an explosion which accelerates Juan's entry into manhood.

Charles Donelan observes that 'in the broader situation involving Inez and Alfonso,' Juan and Julia appear isolated, with Julia being the bored young wife home alone and Juan being a sheltered mama's boy with little experience of the world (43). Even though six months have supposedly passed, Juan's sexual initiation does not change his passivity and his readiness to be pampered. 'The narrator artfully preserves the indecision, ambivalence and motivated unconsciousness of the physical contact that brings Juan and Julia together as lovers' (44). One might reasonably question what will come out of their sweet levee without Alfonso's timely intrusion. The bedroom uproar immediately throws Juan out of the innocent boyhood cradle and forces him into the adult world of experience and conspiracy.

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
And Juan throttled him to get away,
And blood ('t was from the nose) began to flow;
At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
And then his only garment quite gave way;
He fled, like Joseph, leaving it; but there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair. (I, 186)

Peter J. Manning speculates that, since Inez might contrive the whole farce for her own lust, 'Juan's affair with Julia thereby seems a displacement of maternal incest: Alfonso's intervention is thus punishment for the forbidden act and rescue from a dangerous absorption' (226n).

The fighting between the adulterer and the husband can also be deciphered in an oedipal way. In the capacity of the substitute father, Alfonso puts Juan under fraternal supervision and punishes his illicit affair with Julia. His intervention is well-timed because Juan is too young to bear responsibility for the consequences incurred by sexual misdemeanor. In addition, their physical confrontation forces Juan into the real state of combat and challenges him to defend his masculine integrity. The duel might be the first occasion when he could practice chivalric skills to defend a lady's 'honor' and to establish his sense of superiority. In brief Don Alfonso is the first male figure who has shattered Juan's love illusion and brought him into the world of intrigue and violence.

Alfonso's intrusion is to be replayed in the scene of Juan's Greek love; but Lambro's disposition carries different ethnical and national signs. To a large extent Lambro shares with Alfonso the instrumental role to deliver Juan out of 'self-destructive [love] fantasy' which may be attributed to 'a feminine pleasure principle'(9). 'The illicit indulgence of their innocent desires' turns the Island into the state of carnival; and Lambro returns only to find the home isle in the state of disorder and doubt.

He hears -- alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter. (III.28)

The narration of Lambro's home coming evolves around a customary Odysseus pattern, raising the issues related to patriarchal order and family loyalty. Lambro, upon his landing, immediately senses that something is amiss and that the power

vacuum caused by his absence gives rise to the current decadence. His top priority is to identify the source of present irritation before restoring peace and order. Therefore from the very start Juan is imagined as a potential intruder and his very existence poses a direct threat to Lambro's authority. 'But more imprudent grown with every visit, / Haidee forgot the island was her sire's' (III, 13).

Lambro's approaching soon puts an end to the excessive merry-making and introduces a more intense conflict of masculinity—the struggle for domination and power. The depiction of Lambro reveals a particular mode of masculinity which is hardened by ordeals and uncorrupted by civilized artificiality. Donelan likens him to a 'noble savage' and calls him 'a late example of the Byronic hero and an exemplary family man of the pirate class'(82); but the contention between him and Juan prefigures a masculine Other which is presumably on a higher hierarchy than conventional masculinity in Byron's time.

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 't is nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honest vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney. (III, 14)

The piratical lifestyle personified by Lambro embodies the superlative condition of patriarchic power—infinite wealth, absolute control over maritime affairs and individual autonomy. '...the pirate represent a freedom from conventional identity, possible for every man in wartime, but impossible in peace' (160). Even though he engages in the saga of extreme brutality, Lambro is admirably portrayed for his valor, strategy, reserve and dedication to his nation.

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

But something of the spirit of old Greece
 Flashed o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
 Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
 His predecessors in the Colchian days.
 'Tis true he had no ardent love for peace;
 Alas, his country showed no path to praise.
 Hate to the world and war with every nation
 He waged in vengeance of her degradation. (III 53, 55)

In spite of the satirical undertone for his barbarian conduct, Lambro's personality accords with certain traits of Napoleonic superman and transfigures an implicit pattern of national hero. Lambro, the pirate king, appears in the glorious light of Colchian days and his very entry connects masculinity with national mission. Even though he enjoys relative freedom on the isolated island, Lambro does not forget his national commitment. To deliver Greece out of enslavement is like to eradicate the effeminate elements which may corrupt masculine integrity. Lambro, unlike the ordinary narcissistic Byronic hero, is the only figure who lives up to the standard of masculine individualism in *Don Juan*. In a sense his hardened image manifests the more militant part of Byronism.

Byronism, especially in its fascination with the Napoleonic Byronic hero and Romantic individualism, explored both the danger and attraction of the Rousseauistic republic: a ruthless yet charismatic leader whose militarist power is derived directly from the citizen's consent, with no mediating social or constitutional structures (Fulford, 1998: 228)

The actual degeneration of the small island is such a humiliation to Lambro that he is driven to defend his masculine pride. From the biographical perspective some critics observe that the portrayal of Lambro is largely inspired by Byron's acquaintance with some patriots like Albanian revolutionary leader Ali Pasha⁸. In Nov 2 1809 during his tour to Mediterranean regions Byron wrote excitedly to his mother about his impression of the 'formidable tyrant.'

He has the appearance of anything but his real character, for he is a remorseless tyrant, guilty of the most horrible cruelties, very brave and so good a general, that they call him the Mahometan

⁸ According to the notes of Steffan and Pratt's version of *Don Juan*, this pirate figure Lambro was "apparently taken from the Greek pirate Lambro Katzones, of whom Byron heard stories while he was in Greece in 1809-10. According to John Galt, Ali Pasha, the ruler of Albania and western Greece, was a 'vivid likeness' of Lambro"(1973:609).

Buonaparte. Napoleon has twice offered to make him King of Epirus, but he prefers the English interest and abhors the French as he himself told me. He is of so much consequence that he is much courted by both, the Albanians being the most warlike subjects of the Sultan, though Ali is only nominally dependent on the Porte. He has been a mighty warrior, but is as barbarous as he is successful, roasting rebels etc. etc. (*BLJ*, Vol. 1, p228).

Like Ali Pasha, Lambro survives various ordeals and has been converted into an ideal warrior. With his physical machismo and endurance, he assumes the role of political and military leader who possesses an explicit national vision, even though such a vision is pressured out of the European power struggle. More than an ordinary warrior, Lambro lives in the age of nationalism which puts male solidarity and honor into tougher test. When "he gave the word, 'Arrest or slay the Frank'", Lambro makes it clear that Juan must be cleansed with no need to know the ins and outs simply because he is an alien. One lesson which Juan learns from Lambro's intervention is the concept of nation and the sense of ethnical belonging. His awakened masculine fury enables him to reach the higher ladder of psychic growth. The ensuing hand-to-hand wrestling represents, more than a performance of self-defense, but the conflict between Oriental nations and that of Occidental Franks.

Critics like Peter J. Manning observe that Alfonso and Lambro share the crucial role in delivering Juan out of a debased state of masculinity.

Don Juan presents in the temporal sequence of drama the continuum of psychological strategy: the stern warrior is the protagonist which Byron generates to preserve the passive child from collapsing back into his mother (1995: 226).

The liaison with Julia marks the stage of sexual initiation; but Juan's dependence on a loving sister is pathetically an illicit adulterous relation which has been punctually ended by Alfonso. His interruption indicates the natural response of a patriarchal figure to the forbidden love.

But Haidée's affair is of another kind.

Haidée and Juan reach a state of atemporal happiness, but from the human perspective such freedom from time is stasis and death... By forcibly separating Juan from the mother whose love overwhelms him, Lambro, like Alfonso before him, makes possible Juan's independence. (224,226).

Lambro exhibits little sympathy for his daughter's tearful pleading. It may be his national faith and commitment which forbid him to tolerate the dangerous liaison between his daughter and a Frank.

The fatherly intervention enacted by Alfonso and Lambro is crucial for Juan to get over his early vulnerability to female influence. The confrontation between Alfonso and Juan puts an end to his boyhood and acquaints him with the primary element of masculine identity. Lambro teaches him how a modern warrior should behave. From Alfonso to Lambro, be they a cuckold or a warrior, Juan gradually comes to understand what implicitly constitutes the masculine identity. In an interesting way, what Juan receives from these two figures is complementary to his feminized family education. Juan's incomplete love for either Julia or Haidée, together with patriarchal intrusion, prepares him for the assertion of masculine prowess and strategy. By the stage of Greek love female supervision provides Juan with a preliminary chivalric education, sexual initiation and a fresh view of the world; but the subsequent loss of the beloved enriches his inner life as a male warrior. The punctual interruption of patriarchal figures seems to play an instrumental role to break Juan's dependence on female care and equip him with essential features of masculinity.

'The world is full of strange vicissitudes' (LI, 1); but Juan follows a natural path to step across the stage of infancy and nursing. If Julia and Haidée embody 'the lure of love', his erotic encounter with them leaves a distinct stamp on his inner masculinity. The more intense such sexual appeal grows, the more resolute he is to break loose from their influence. The Siege of Ismail provides Juan with a chance to quench his desire for love with the 'inspiration of war'.

B. The Appeal of Ismail— Johnson and General Suwarrow

Delving into the complexities in the Siege of Ismail I mean to decipher the implication of modern warfare on masculine disillusionment. Subsequent to Julia and Haidée, the 'imperious' Gulbeya's rescue once again plunges Juan into a shameful circumstance. When the narrator directs our attention to the Harem, Juan in disguise feels uneasy with his impotence to break the spell of female dominance. He has entered into a higher state of maturity in which his inner anguish forces him to meet the challenge of life and establish masculine honor. 'In one aspect, then, the chivalric

romance motif of battle in disguise dramatizes the constant need to eradicate previous shame by reestablishing oneself in the world of male honor' (Braudy:110).

Wandering in the battlefield of Ismail, Juan must have felt compelled to rejuvenate himself on the glorious route to fame. In the meeting with General Suwarrow he displays enthusiasm to put his body to tough test. The army which he and his friend Johnson attend is a mercenary which is a debased modern organization of chivalric spirit. This makes it difficult to justify the militant endeavor of modern knighthood.

In the early sixteenth century, the same era when...Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France were competing for chivalric honors, the word 'mercenary' came into use to mean specifically someone who fights for a foreign power (141).

It may appear immoral to fight not for one's own nation but for money; but mercenary is a historical derivative of chivalric tradition. With his enrollment on Russian side Juan is psychologically prepared to acquire military glory; but the actual happenings in the battle turn his simple motivation into individual disorientation. At Ismail,

Juan and Johnson join'd a certain corps,
And fought away with might and main, not knowing
The way which they had never trod before,
And still less guessing where they might be going;
But on they march'd, dead bodies trampling o'er,
Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweating, glowing,
But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin (VIII,19).

the internal doubt about war and bloodshed does not turn Juan away from the purifying crucible. It is doubtful, however, that his fortitude and endurance are worthwhile since he does not know which side he is fighting for.

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore. (VIII,3).

Away from the feminine sphere of triviality, Juan finds himself confused in the battlefield though his early chivalric training may be of some use. But if his heroic behavior amounts to nothing but death, disorder and degeneration, it seems rather pointless to pay allegiance to a hollow name and title. Even though he joins the Russian troops under General Suwarrow, the victory to occupy Ismail does not overwhelm him with joy; rather the 'misshapen chaos' renders him to question the universal values of individual heroism. 'A dying Moslem' who bit the 'very tendon' of a Russian officer "left him 'midst the invalid and maimed" (8, 84, 85). The ghastly act of revenge is but a metaphorical reminder that neither Turks nor Russians is the complete beneficiaries or victims of the fighting. Juan's relative neutrality makes him partially conscious of the absurdity of modern warfare in which national interests displaces the chivalric commitment to justice and freedom. An individual soldier trapped in the giant crucible of cannon, gun fighting and artillery is actually replaced and marginalized; and his participation is but an auxiliary extension of military mechanism. As a Turkish saying points out, 'manliness dies when firearms were invented' (117). This is a turning point in Juan's evolution of worldview which affects his estimate of public role.

When I call 'fading' martial immortality,
 I mean that every age and every year
 And almost every day in sad reality
 Some sucking hero is compelled to rear,
 Who when we come to sum up the totality
 Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
 Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
 Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness. (VII, 83)

A soldier with the expectation of masculine immortality turns out to be a butcher or even worse. The observation of Russian commander General Suwarrow complicates Juan's understanding towards individual heroism and national interests. Leading 'the armies of the Christian Empress Catherine', General Suwarrow seems to be a latter-day incarnation of chivalric troops on behalf of a Queen's dignity. However, he 'saw things in the gross,/Being much too gross to see them in detail,/who calculated life as so much dross/ And as the wind a widowed nation's wail' (VII, 77).

Suwarrow's ruthless military aggrandizement is actually symptomatic of his country's inner effeminacy. The cutthroat scene of bloodshed, from a phallic point of view, tends to naturalize the masculine vanity or compensate for the lack of phallic center. If the 'noble art of killing' epitomizes modern chivalric spirit, Juan ventures to save Leila in disgust and repulsion against the senseless slaughter. The very moment when he stops the relentless pursuits of Cossacks Juan crosses the threshold from a boy soldier to a true man. Surviving the test of physical endurance, Juan manages in a sense to retrieve the lost honor of knighthood and regain the masculine glory independent of professionalized army. Juan may obtain 'medals, ranks, ribbons, lace, embroidery, scarlet,' which are the so-called 'things immortal to immortal man' in the wake of the Ismail massacre; but little Leila is his only cherished possession.

If one connects Lambro with Suwarrow, it is not hard to discern Byron's attitude to certain paradigms of nationalism. Given its implications on masculine pride, nationalism may fall into two categories: defensive and aggressive. Lambro's maritime adventures, though equally cruel, are depicted in much sympathy which demonstrates the narrator's awareness of how much pressure national oppression could exert on masculine pride. The death of Haidée in her pregnancy symbolizes Lambro's determination in keeping the hereditary genetics uncontaminated on one hand and the loss of free Greece on the other. The narrator does not tell how Lambro perishes, in grief or in battlefield; however, as the only 'Oriental' man in the epic, Lambro mirrors what the contemporary men of imperial nations may no longer have chances to pursue and possess. If Lambro is comparable to Suwarrow in terms of masculine experience, what the latter pursues in Ismail is downright aggression under the rule of a despotic female monarch. Lambro appears grieved for his inability to deliver his nation from feminine subordination whereas Suwarrow seems to invite more despise for his merciless military campaign to satisfy a widow's vanity and lust. The depiction of Lambro and Suwarrow renders us to consider what implication modernity holds for masculine pride. On Lambro's side, the loss of national territory results from the assault of 'modernity' on the 'ancient' ethnical community and legitimizes the defense of masculine endeavor. However, such legitimacy has to be

imagined on the side of Suwarrow. Byron's negative portrayal of Suwarrow reveals his concern over the role of national interests in the proliferation of modernity. Byron, in his cosmopolitan mentality of enlightenment, is still capable of moral judgment on the potential harm of national aggression. Modernity takes the form of jungle competition of national interests in which the winner has more resources to establish its discourse authority to justify its oppression and conquest. What is laudable about Byron, as shown by the contrastive sketches of Greek and Russian men, is that he still clings to a clear historical moral conscience in an age when national vision was given increasing credits of rationality. Just as Salomon points out,

Byron in general takes a moral view of war... The Ismail episode draws together Homer and the present in a bitter epic parody whose meaning does not lie in any revealed disequilibrium between ideal model and reality but rather in the moral horror of both. Juan's own involvement at Ismail is viewed with an irony different in tone from the indulgence with which he is usually treated (72).

The satirical description of the military brutality as witnessed at Ismail reveals Byron's deep doubt about the possibility for masculine fulfillment by violent means.

In relation to the earlier lament over Cervantes and chivalric spirit, the part of Ismail figures a less involved, more detached attitude to heroism and its futility in the age of modern warfare. It is ironic to note that his residual optimism to revive chivalric spirit by this moment has diminished and that 'the larger emptiness of time and history' fills the air (73).

Englishman Johnson's conduct at Ismail gives a comic twist to the war which is anti-humanistic and aggressive by nature. The purpose of masculine valor is further questioned. With his typical English pragmatic opportunism, Johnson plays the role of social escort to Juan; and his advices in moments of crisis facilitate Juan's cognitive and social growth. For one thing, Johnson is the first person who urges Juan to endure the current hardship because his Spanish identity should endow him with supposed ethnical superiority.

'amidst this motley crew
Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and what not,
All ragamuffins differing but in hue,
With whom it is our luck to cast our lot,
The only gentlemen seem I and you;

So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you any consolation,
'T would give me pleasure. -- Pray, what is your nation?'

When Juan answer'd -- 'Spanish!' he replied,
'I thought, in fact, you could not be a Greek;
Those servile dogs are not so proudly eyed:
Fortune has play'd you here a pretty freak,
But that's her way with all men, till they're tried;
But never mind, -- she'll turn, perhaps, next week:
She has served me also much the same as you,
Except that I have found it nothing new.' (V, 13, 14)

In the slave market of Constantinople, Johnson's befriending immediately reminds Juan that he should behave in a less sentimental or feminine way. In the mixed array of nationals, he stands higher than most slaves simply because of his Spanish identity. The current ordeals are a must to make him a true gentleman. When Johnson proceeds to entertain Juan with the story of his three wives, Juan seems much impressed and amused by the cool humor peculiar to Englishmen. As discussed in Introduction, the popularity of overseas travel acquainted Englishmen with better understanding of their position in the world in the eighteenth century; and they tended to perceive Europeans as more civilized than other Oriental communities. The high self-regard with which Johnson addresses Juan is understandable because Spain and England were two established imperial powers. In a personal way Johnson urges the Spanish youth to face the trial of manhood and wish for a splendid future. 'There still are many rainbows in your sky, / But mine have vanish'd. All, when life is new, / Commence with feelings warm, and prospects high' (V, 21). Johnson bears much resemblance to Byron's boxing coach in Harrow whose encouragement to the lame boy is the lifetime spiritual support.⁹ Subsequent to Alfonso and Lambro Johnson

⁹ Johnson first appears in Canto V as 'a man of thirty'. Cecil Lang has noted that this is 'an affectionate portrait of Byron's boxing master, Gentlemen John Jackson' (from Lang's essay 'Narcissus Jilted: Byron, *Don Juan*, and the Biographical Imperative' in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism* edited by Jerome J. McGann). Byron calls Jackson his 'old friend and corporeal pastor and master' and trusts him to be one who still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humor, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments' (McGann: 747, stanza 19 note).

emerges in time not only to reinforce Juan's masculine confidence but also directs him to think in a nationalistic way.

When they both enter the Siege of Ismail, Johnson's pragmatic sophistication is put under close scrutiny. The contrastive description reflects the narrowing of the metaphorical distance between the poet and his English readership. Johnson is more clearly motivated and knows that for a name in the bulletin of glory personal sacrifice should be kept at minimum level; so he sensibly avoids any injury which fighting might incur.

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
Who had "retreated," as the phrase is when
Men run away much rather than go through
Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
Knew when and how "to cut and come again,"
And never ran away, except when running
Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning (VIII,35).

The play of the war euphemisms strikes an ironic point. Man seeks in the war to test their bravery and to create a purpose. But it requires the soldiers to adopt 'flexible' strategy in order to survive the trying moments. In the mire of death Juan charges forward on the impulse of 'virgin valor'; while Johnson appears more 'noble' with occasional 'retreat' to regain breath and courage. When Juan ventures to save Leila Johnson appears more interested in the St. George Order. If Johnson's simple optimism disperses Juan's naïve sentimentalism in the slave market, he appears hypocritical and shrewd in Ismail in contrast to Juan's idealistic ardor. In this light Juan's simplicity hints at Byron's psychological tension which he attempts to understand and overcome—how his efforts to assert masculinity involve the loss of innocence and lead to the suffering, alienation and exile.

Juan's acquaintance with Englishman Johnson leads to the site of military engagement—the siege of Ismail; but the brutality and pointlessness of mechanic warfare makes him fully aware of the role of national working in modern politics. Before he is dispatched to London, Juan has already completed the performances of diverse public roles appropriate to male fantasy. From a soldier to a courtier, Juan's

selfhood has been gradually modulated to emphasize the potential working of national conscience. In terms of the diversity of male experiences, Juan is comparable to Dr. Faust who lives in pre-nationalism days. With the reinforcement of national border, Juan could no longer relive the usual splendor of masculine pursuit. His encounter with Lord Henry represents a moment of compromise with national interests.

C. The Cold Party Politics: Lord Henry

In the English episode the perspectives of the narrator and the hero converge to project the inevitable reconciliation between the formation of manhood and national conscience. On the fictional level Juan's diplomacy as the envoy of Catherine the Great in London society means that Juan has gained certain measure of international recognition and that the career of diplomacy signifies his more established position which is congenial to the maturity of his outlook. In the state of diplomatic mobility Juan has to behave in a more determined and collected way in order to win over English peers.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honour'd him for his docility;
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop --
For then they are very difficult to stop (XIII,22)

It might be the first time when Juan is being treated as an equal. His inner strength and natural reserve, derived from diverse circumstances, add to his masculine charisma. Even though his girlish face might still incur unnecessary temptation, he at least obtains the approving attention from his English counterpart.

For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a high mother (XIII, 24);

In the higher circle of English society, Juan's masculine evolution comes to a fulfilling point, just like a Freemason going through degrees enough to become

honored in his fraternal order (McGann: 714). In a certain sense Juan's Spanish identity masks his keen vision to question and challenge the validity of English politics; and his presence mediates the distance between the narrator and the poet. His observation of Lord Henry and his activities in the country residence in particular abridges the gap between the exiled poet and his English readers. As a typical English civil minister, Lord Henry is eloquent, good at riding, patriotic and class-conscious.

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel;
And, as he thought, in country much the same --
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
At which all modern nations vainly aim;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the house up later. (VIII, 20)

Under the 'oppressive weight' of 'solitary pride', he tends to draw the judgment of Juan's inner worth on external signs. Considering Juan as a social equal, he still maintains higher self-esteem with his verbal power and inside knowledge. Just as Adeline's social grace is the sign of self-repression, Henry learns to belie his inner shallowness in order to dominate party politics for personal benefits.

He liked to teach that which he had been taught
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a patriot and sometimes a placeman. (VIII.21)

Henry, like Johnson, is politically opportunistic and pragmatic. He pays lip service to the shining patriotic cause with a sharp eye for the accumulation of political advantages. Moreover, the guests at his grand dinner make readers ponder over the nature of English party politics. These 'honorable misters' from 'Parolles', 'Duke of Dash', 'Chevalier de la Ruse', 'Dick Dubious', 'Jack Jargon' to 'Longbow' and 'Strongbow' form a satirical picture of political notables. By recalling his 'days of comedy', Byron presents a more realistic view about the social networking in London. Despite their diverging professional background, what these figures have in common are their wit and oratory. It is imaginable, therefore, that London as the home of such 'a heterogeneous mass' (XIII, 94) boasts of a polished or decorous trapping. However,

these 'conversationists' who enjoy introducing 'le bon mot' to aristocratic community gradually debilitate the city. Byron holds a rather ambivalent attitude to London. He once told James Hogg 'though I have seen parts of the Globe that I like better—still upon the whole it [London] is the completest either to help one in feeling oneself alive—or forgetting that one is so' (*BLJ*, Vol.5, 38). London means contradictions to Byron—the gain of fame and the loss of innocence. The city stimulates his masculine growth and provides him with chances for political exertion but penalizes him for the sexual wantonness and liberal spirits. Even though his banishment partially results from his revulsion against London superfluity, he inconvertibly exists in an imperial cosmos of English consciousness, with its expanding opportunities for aristocracy. The depiction of Lord Henry and his life symbolizes a mental theatre where Byron displays more than simplistic ridicule for superficial life but a deep-rooted yearning for national identification. Just as McGann points out, his return home through *Don Juan* corresponds to his aim to write an epic moral satire (746). In addition,

if Byron's fictional portraits are sometimes modeled on specific persons, and if they are sometimes satirical thrusts at certain definite individuals, they are almost always, as well, stereotypical presentations of social types. Many of the characters in the English cantos are 'notional' figures whose presence helps to define and fill out Byron's satirical portrait of a certain world (758).

Announcing himself 'but a mere spectator', Byron sneers at the fast Regency world.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, War, the taxes, and what's call'd the 'Nation'?
The struggle to be Pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure (XIII, 6)

When England takes on a modern face, it is like a corporate business jointly invested by landed aristocracy and the class of 'new money'. If this country appears rather vigorous, it is the potential competition of interests that keeps the internal dynamism.

In a nutshell Juan's initiation process has undergone three stages: sexual stimulation, military adventures and political schematization. Meanwhile it exemplifies the evolution of masculine desire on the paradigm of the chivalric

self-quest. Firstly the double tracks or motifs of heroic romance—the lure of beauty and the inspiration of ordeals—are interwoven to cultivate the inner strength and mediate the interplay between masculine sexuality and violence. If female personae symbolize the object of masculine transcendence, their beauty, sacrifice and even dominance signify the vulnerability of female body which defines male identity and demands male valor and defense. Juan's prowess is entangled by his passion which is actually part of his heroic endeavor or gesture. In comparison male personae are relatively marginal but play crucial role to intervene in and accelerate episodic progression. Their presence indicates an underlying fear of being feminized, accounting for why the image of female vulnerability is inverted by Juan's mobility.

Secondly Juan heralds a modernized tour d'horizon which is 'conditioned by a growing identification of the male citizen with the state' (Braudy: 282). Like certain mythical figures of modern individualism such as Dr. Faustus, Don Quixote and libertine Don Juan, Byron's Don Juan epitomizes a metaphorical exploration of self. However, this Juan differs from his predecessors in that his perception of self and the world is complicated by a sense of national identity. His repeated fictional acts of the border-crossing dramatize the tension between individual pursuit and national boundary. A cluster of ethnical communities in the mapping of modernity makes it increasingly difficult for individual hero to pursue warrior honor. Juan's pseudo-Spanish nationality, no matter how negligible it is in relation to central narrative, is a necessary structural device to facilitate the panoramic journey of masculine desire.

By the end of *Don Juan*, the hero has undergone a complete course of masculine adventures, the narrative of which establishing the illusory knighthood as the real dimension. What remains deeply ironic is that Juan, despite his shifting roles to redress and revenge, fails to learn to react to the environment in a determined and active manner. If narrative basically dramatizes his disbelief of Cervantes's quixotic tears, the poet now by the end of imaginary cosmopolitan tour comes to terms with the sober reality of the heroic fantasy. The poet's initiative to modernize the 'half-serious rhyme' only ends up with a theatrical panorama, leaving the hero in a

state of inertia. The abrupt ending not only indicates the poet's incapability to finish his epic satire or fulfill his epic ambition but also signals his clear consciousness of the incongruity between the ideal heroic model and the banal reality.

The triangle of the hero, the narrator and the poet is a puzzling point to Byron scholars. Some hold that Juan is 'a pure transitional object' and

the poetic figure through whom the narrator can describe the real historical world of the Mediterranean in the late eighteenth century...[and that] Through the myth of Don Juan, Byron gave a form and an expression not only to his own experience, but also to the experiences, real and imaginary, of a generation and more of these transnational subjects (Donelan:176).

The view that Juan, with his silent passivity, is like a puppet to enact the poet's purpose and intention is only partially valid since it cannot explain the gap between digressive voice and narrative voice. Certain commentators call for the attention to 'autobiographical tone' which balances Juan and the narrator, or the 'real' Byron and 'projected' Byron. 'Juan is a type drawn from Byron's youthful life, and the narrator...is an experienced man of the world derived from his present attitudes' (Nijibayashi, 2004:188). George M. Ridenour points out that 'one way of defining the action of *Don Juan* would be to say that it consists of a process of gradually narrowing the gap between speaker and protagonist' (1960:122). It is hard to define the identity of the narrator. Canto I shows that the narrator must be the friend or neighbor of Juan's father José, being annoyed by Juan's mischief and informed of José's home turmoil (I, 24, 35). However, in Canto II, the narrator's assumed Spanish identity is contradicted by his recollection of English coast. In the digression of the later cantos, the narrator is seen increasingly to take on Byron's tone and address English public readers more directly. The intermingling of Spanish look and English voice, decorated with native details, shows that digression creates a semi-opened 'phenomenological space' in which a 'present self' is able to take a retrospective view into an 'early self'. More than a recalling act, it stands for a self-reflective integration in which the current egoistic subjectivity tends to re-imagine the former alter ego and hold it in half suspension and anticipation. This is a state of constant self-restraint in which the poet exists in a past moment of future speculation. Situated on the margin of imaginary scope, the ego gazes on its former self and seeks to

reinterpret and demystify its existence of mobility. In the English episode which is a typical self-reflection, there emerges the mutual identification of the narrator, the poet and the hero. The combination of fictional self and digressive voices gives free expression to the poet's masculine fantasy and his anxiety towards national awareness.

Byron seeks to prevent

'the nightfall of masculine discourse and with it of the nation itself. In early nineteenth-century England, a strong continuity between the conventions of manhood and the integrity of the nation was a central tenet of virtually all publicly available political positions, from Tory conservatism to agrarian radicalism' (Donelan: 14).

It is understandable that Byron revolts against domestic feminization and that he transfers the pressure of inner fantasy into two thematic units. If digression keeps a record of his discontent, narrative presents a make-believe world in which successive adventures embody certain mode of self-salvation or self-regeneration.

The ideology of adventure is a merchant mentality modeled on chivalry. Michael Nerlich describes the semantic changes in the word *aventure* effected by the courtly romances of Chretien de Troyes (c. 1150-90):

'*Aventure*, which in its literary occurrences before the courtly romance means fate, chance, has become, in the knightly-courtly system of relations, an event that the knight must seek out and endure, although this event does continue to be unpredictable, a surprise of fate.' (Donelan: 19)

Since adventures are presumed to be masculine dominion, what Byron pursues basically is to release sexual repression and reassert masculine supremacy on a trans-national scale.

As the stage of an active writing mind, *Don Juan* contains abundant inter-textual instances in which the voices of the narrator, Juan and the poet converge. In this light Juan's rite of passage or wandering presents a half-imagined and half-realistic self-recollection. On a deeper level, while digression mainly figures the voice of the poet with the occasional asides of the narrator, the voice of the narrative tends to be the interplay of the two. When he is given the fullest scope to experience heroic activities, Juan carries his obligation as a half-real or half-ideal Other to transcend the limiting context of the actual world or help the middle-aged narrator or the cynical poet renew the opportunities. Despite his demureness, Juan is potentially young, vigorous, well-rounded and capable of almost everything. The narrator hovers above him, trying hard to define the distance between himself and an imaginary youthful

past. His gaze towards Juan is intermittently complicated by the memories of the poet, like passionate nostalgia to past aspirations. These remarks momentarily betray his intention to reach a higher level of maturity for Juan as well as for himself. Whenever he designs a new role for Juan, the narrator sets out to satirize this move, making the work a piece of the jesting riddle.

In retrospective Byron is identical to Don Juan to the extent that their exploration for masculine honor involves the evolution in which initial cosmopolitan ideal has been gradually displaced or even replaced by a vision of national commitment. According to Julia Kristeva, the cosmopolitan figure can be defined as 'the alter-ego of national man'.

In her reading, the cosmopolitan adopts various subject positions only to displace them, so that his stance is 'temporary, moveable, changing...it knows neither root or soil, it is traveling, foreign'(Wohlgemut: 11)

Such observation is only half true of Byron's case. If Juan may be seen as the alter-ego of a national man, he can be imagined as the Other self of the poet. It is true that *Don Juan's* poetic development lacks a fixed direction; but its conflicting views and voices come down to the interaction between an exilic national and a longing cosmopolitan, a native outsider and a foreign stranger.

Byron might have gone beyond the English episode had he lived longer; but such extension holds little significance since by this stage Byron has presented a full vision about his pre-exile existence. The temporal distance between the 'present self' and the 'early self' as well as the spatial distance from native isles enable him as well as today's readers to perceive the origin of his exile as a specific case of historical contradictions or romantic chasm. The satirical confessions project up a tumultuous process which individual conscience undergoes in the post-French revolutionary era. Byron represents one of the best 'souls of thoughtful young people in the twenties'; and in a certain sense the vanishing spirit of 'universal benevolence'. When the news of his death reached England, Alfred Tennyson then fifteen, wrote on a rock 'Byron is dead' and said later 'the whole world seemed to be darkened for me'(Perkins, 1967:782). John S. Mill whose mental crisis in the 1820s has been much used to show Wordsworth's redemptive power found more 'solace' in Byron's poetry in his early

years of unhappiness. Like Byron, in the guise of Juan, who mentally revisits London and relives the years of fame, Mill later turns to 'repentant Lake poets', 'painfully finding his way home'. With the dimming light of cosmopolitan ideal, he moves more towards 'the narrower but surer' track of 'national improvement' (Newman: 244). This is a gesture typical of other Regency intellectuals, no matter how reluctant it is. Byron once defines poetry as 'the feeling of a Former world and Future' (*BLJ* 8:37). From an existential point of view Byron is absent from Regency world for he still clings to residual cosmopolitan values. His military engagement in the Greek Independence War exemplifies his reconciliation with the modern moral mechanics of nationalism even though his resistance to such bourgeois ideology marks his spiritual alienation from contemporary society. If Shakespeare embodies a kind of the pioneering genius who strides ahead of his age, Byron is equally audacious with a cold sneer in an age or a nation which seems to embark on a 'glorious' journey of linear 'progression' which now comes to an end.

Against his 'dejection', Coleridge commented after Byron's death 'I dare predict that in less than a century...Byron [will] not[be] remembered at all, except as a wicked lord who, from morbid and restless vanity, pretended to be ten times more wicked than he was' (Rutherford, 266). The history finds his critical jealousy wrong and invalid; more than that, he could hardly imagine the way Byron endures. 'The Isles of Greece' alone, amid his 'garbage'-like writing, gains him international acclaim.

Chapter III 'Isles of Greece' in Context: the Question of Liberal Nationalism

The 'Isles of Greece' per se has a unique position in *Don Juan*. For one thing, it bears immediate textual proof to Byron's commitment to Greek national independence. For another, its formalistic closure in the Haidée episode or even in the whole epic creates an independent narrative space in which either an exclusive reading or an extended interpretation is plausible. The piece of lyric offers a locus of historicity, both fictional and realistic. With the divergent locus of a reader's attention, the central message of national liberty and philhellenic spirit may take on different connotations.

This chapter proceeds to incorporate several interpretations by the Anglo-American critics and Chinese critics in order to explore how the circulation of 'Isles of Greece' is marked by different national anxieties and how perceptive discrepancy is culturally bounded.

I. Reading 'Isles of Greece' in English Contexts

The subject of this section is several interpretations of 'Isles of Greece' which English critics attempt to make. It will explore three contextual possibilities visibly connected with the lyric itself. My introduction of the three views roughly follows this sequence—the lyric itself, its preamble and its conclusive notes. I intend to explore how the meaning of the lyric, despite its pronounced call for national liberation, depends on constant contextual interweaving.

The first focus of analysis is offered by Charles Donelan who highlights the complex psychological reworking of male fantasy underlying the national lyric. In his book *Romanticism and Male Fantasy in Byron's Don Juan* (2000), Charles Donelan argues

In response to the rise of women as an influential audience, to the spread of Romantic poetry and to his own prior success as a poet, Byron shaped his longest poem around an expressly masculine

subject and viewpoint, with the result, *Don Juan*, becoming a uniquely valuable expression of Romantic concern with gender and genre (11).

With an explicit gender focus, Donelan proceeds to address Byron's Don Juan story as an inverted masculine myth and his Don Juan is 'the hero with the feminine attributes of a passive sentimentalist' (18). In this light the Haidée episode is a prominent instance of the masculine identification with the feminine since Haidée is portrayed as 'the most natural of Juan's lovers, unspoiled by society and thus the young man's perfect looking glass' (70). Accordingly within the textual boundary of Haidée's feast, 'Isles of Greece' contains a fantasy structure which is to 'arouse nationalism by organizing male emotions around a political cause.' Images of Greek womanhood are employed to convey the indignation over the loss of ancestral glory (73).

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade --
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves (III, Isles, 15).

The masculine gaze on female body heightens the pain of de-possessing and implies bitter reproach since the spiritual forgetfulness is chiefly nurtured by submissive milking. However masculine invigoration is dependent on maternal nursing just as Haidée brings Juan back to consciousness through her loving attention.

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush? -- Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae! (III, Isles, 7)

The ground of the bygone glory and the fatherly sacrifice is transformed into a matron figure whose magnanimity and strength may provide further impetus to the regaining of the masculine confidence. The feminized images of male fantasy illustrates the intensity of Byron's 'Philhellenic sentiments' and adds certain momentum to 'his actions at Missolonghi' (72).

Donelan also draws our attention to the satirical discrepancy underscoring the delivery of 'Isles of Greece'. In the 'motley crew' of 'dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs', a poet becomes a peculiar fashion of entertainment (III, 78). His very delivery of the 'Isles' strikes a kind of situational irony because none of the party company appears to be 'aware of the enslavement or interested in the liberation of Greece' (Donelan: 73). Even Juan and Haidée show no response to the poignant lyric and are apparently aloof to the feast performance. Meanwhile he turns briefly to the dubious presence of the singer and the absence of Lambro and argues that "'the Isles of Greece' renders nationalism alien by dislocating it from history and asserting its arbitrariness" (73). The identity of the singer shall be dwelt upon later.

I intend to question Donelan's claim that national sentiment is dislodged and alien. The incongruity between Lambro's stern warrior image and Haidée's indulgent merriment already sends an uneasy hint that the daughter does not share father's anxiety over national shame. As a prelude to the feast performance, Lambro's hastening steps represent an urgent drive to put the little island back in order but his anxious move turns out to leave the little island in perpetual desolation. 'Isles of Greece', situated before Lambro's interruption, embodies an ominous sign of the doom of the father and the daughter, which makes the liberation of that land unattainable.

By presenting Donelan's psychoanalytic perspective, I intend to show that 'Isles of Greece' itself can be defined in terms of male fantasy and that the theme of national liberation can be rephrased through the double working of masculine and feminine behavior. In a word 'Isles of Greece' imparts the pain over the loss of ethnical identity and ancestral glory through the recurrent motif of masculine anguish which manifests in a cluster of images such as 'Lethian forgetting', infantile dependence on maternal nursing and fraternal reproach. The national theme finds an individual expression.

In the second place I turn to focus on the preamble—what appears immediately before the 'Isles of Greece' and incorporate it with the biographical evidence. It is commonplace to apply the biographical or historical method to Byron's writing since

many traces of Regency and Continental historical mapping are publicized in a personal way. Biographical interpretation draws on the resource of objective historical occurrences and relocates the lyric into '*the case of the nation*', a term used in *England in 1819* (Chandler, 1998:6).

1819, 'a particularly momentous year' for England, is called the year of 'Peterloo'. 'The extraordinary array of literary work' since then has attempted to represent the Peterloo Massacre which took place on August 16, 1819 (3). Chandler argues that, starting from the Year of Peterloo,

Many of these writings tend to be self-conscious about the collective mobilization of literary talent and energy in which they participated; some make it an explicit topic of their own work. Like the literature of the larger period we call Romanticism, but with a particular intensity, English writing from 1819 is aware of its place in and as history. Much literary work of England in 1819, in other words, seems concerned with its place *in* England in 1819—concerned, that is, with a national operation of self-dating, or –redating, that is meant to count as a national self-making, or –remaking. It is concerned with historical specificity understood as the product of a political activity and with that activity of specifying as it takes place in literary representation itself (5-6).

A case of 'historical specificity' which recurs in Byron's *Don Juan* is the 'Common case of Robert Southey' (353). With the initial satirical 'Dedication' to Robert Southey, Byron unleashes his contempt towards the famous political and literary renegade. In the 'Isles of Greece', the portrayal of a 'sad trimmer' reveals how Byron appropriates his knowledge of the Regency political controversy to make his imagined account relevant to the state of affairs in England.

The island poet, 'an Eastern Anti-Jacobin' by nature, is questioned for his ready talents to serve time and country (III, 79). The singing of 'Isles of Greece', as the proof of his virtuosity of improvisation, is emblematic of Southey's chameleon career from a revolutionary youth to a Tory Laureate.

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd— he knew the way to wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention --

There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

But he had genius, -- when a turncoat has it,
The "*Vates irritabilis*" takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare: --
But to my subject -- let me see -- what was it? --
Oh! -- the third canto -- and the pretty pair --
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause. (III, 80-82)

The identity of a 'sad trimmer', if connected with Robert Southey, will problematize the poet's intention. In 1817 William Smith a MP, upon the publication of a long lost play from Southey's radical youth *Wat Tyler*, launched attack on Southey's renegade misdemeanor. In the *Quarterly Review*, Smith concluded that of all of forms of political expression in the world, 'what most filled him with disgust, was the settled determined malignity of a renegade.' In response, Southey defends,

The one object to which I have ever been desirous of contributing according to my power, is the removal of those obstacles by which the improvement of mankind is impeded; and to this the whole of my writings, whether in prose or verse, bears witness. This has been the *pole star* of my course; the *needle* has shifted according to the movements of the state vessel wherein I am embarked, but the direction to which it points has always been the same (Chandler:355 notes, italics being mine).

Southey attributes his apparent political mobility to the incessant pursuit for the perfection of humanity. Byron is obviously quite familiar with the details of the publicity of the controversy and puts Southey's claim of moral constancy into satirical scrutiny. The explicit metaphor of shifting needle and central pole star is emphasized to create a well-traveled figure whose sophisticated wisdom enables him to survive and flourish over political turbulence. The 'sad trimmer', now being on the remote island, seems to return to the years of valor and enthusiasm and 'agree to a

short armistice with truth' (III, 83). It is highly questionable that this Southey-like poet could ever contemplate over his insincerity and servility. What Byron presents here is a quasi-public stage where the deft social climber seems to exhibit a slight sense of guilty conscience which compels him to seek psychological compensation in the performance.

There emerges another question as to how a reader should interpret 'Isles of Greece' given the unreliable nature of a songster. If one duly identifies him with Robert Southey, it is hard to balance the negative implications with ardent emotions for national liberation. Further the portrayal of the persona is not exclusively the replica of Southey but contains as many traces of Byron as the Laureate. As Linda Marshall observes,

First, he has 'genius', and then, the '*Vates irritabili*' in him likes to have people sit up and take notice. 'In company' the poet is 'a very pleasant fellow'; he has been 'the favorite of many a mess/ of men' whose unreflective 'popular applause' he has won. He is widely 'travelled 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,' and knows 'the self-loves of the different nations,' adapts his conduct to the place...and he can compose diversely in the national genres and forms. For example, 'In Italy, he'd ape the *Trecentisti*'—like Lord Byron, who at the time was composing the vatic *Prophecy of Dante in terza rima*. Now he sings of Greece as he sings as he had 'in his warm youth'...(1985:801-2).

Marshall's explanation seems equally persuasive. Byron might create the 'sad trimmer' in his half image: a second-rate genius, a good talker and an adept traveler. As a true-born nobleman, he does not need 'being lifted into high society' and is privileged to address Southey-like bourgeois poets in a condescending manner (III, 83). The blending of candid self-exposure and self-deception makes it hard to draw a definitive conclusion. A reader is left on his or her own to decide who has been implicated here but finds it better to remain ignorant. However the negative context has captured much of the critical attention to speculate on the satirical intention of 'Isles of Greece'¹⁰. It tends to discourage readers to bear sympathy with Byron's involvement with Greek emancipation if the singing is but a fanciful show of national

¹⁰ Charles Donelan regards this part as 'an attack on Southey and a Byronic self-parody'(72). Jane Stabler discusses briefly in *Byron, Poetics and History* about the discrepancy between negative digressive pretext and the call for a political leader (197). Jerome McGann in *Byron and Romanticism* elaborates on the shadow cast by Southey on the meaning of Isles of Greece.

prejudice. The juxtaposition of the political turncoat and the citizen of the world might be an epitome of Byron's mental mobility and reflects the collated individual memory of the historical occurrences¹¹.

The cluster of contradictions projects a historical background where the ego seeks to retain and reevaluate its earlier stage of growth. It follows that the 'Isles of Greece' may be seen as a crucial point of self-completion which in reality leads to 'a genuine, active involvement with the cause of liberty in Greece' (Donelan: 177). As biographical reading extends the social boundary of literary text, the theme of 'Isles'—its call for liberal nationalism—is accordingly destabilized and complicated. An informed reader needs to weigh the pros and cons of the context to make a balanced evaluation.

So far two methods have been adopted to position the 'Isles of Greece': one, by reading the lyric in the light of male fantasy, I discuss the recurrent motif of masculine anguish which shapes national sentiment; the other, by delving into Romantic intricacies shown by the portrayal of songster, I reveal the potential pressure exerted by historical contradictions on national theme. The 'Isles of Greece' and its possible connection with Romantic renegade Southey are typical of the speedy change of tones and voices. By juxtaposing a songster whose political conviction is constantly wavering with an imagined soldier yearning for strength to eradicate national shame, Byron brings about a surprising shift from burlesque mockery to tragic patriotic call, which 'resist our attempts to know whether or not to take it seriously' (Donelan: 176). To overcome its challenge it is necessary to remember what is reflected 'is the myth of Byron's public life...a tale which sums up, in an English perspective, the meaning of the entire European epoch stretching from the late 1780s to 1818'(McGann,2002:37). This is but one example of 'paradoxes and contradictions' (40).

¹¹ Mobility is defined as 'an excessive susceptibility of immediate impressions—at the same time without losing the past; and is, though sometimes apparently useful to the possessor, a most painful and unhappy attribute'(Byron, 1824). (Steffan,1973:748).

In the third place I now proceed to focus on the digression subsequent to the 'Isles' and to incorporate Byron's poetic claim with the lyric itself in order to explore the reliability of heroic intention. When the performance comes to a close, the narrator seems mesmerized and forgets the supposed nature of the singer.

His strain display'd some feeling -- right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours -- like the hands of dyers.

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper -- even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his. (III, 87-88).

This is Byron's moment of poetic epiphany or apocalypse. On the one hand he appears as impressed with as alert to the performance of a lying poet for his power to manipulate other's feelings. On the other hand he delivers a speech of his literary faith with much earnestness. "Words are things' that survive their source, the 'frail man', and possessing a life and influence of their own, engender thought that links generations" (Marshall, 803).

Though the eulogy of the enduring power of literary composition is an ordinary conceit of men of letters, Byron has long been engaged in the contemplation over the tension between language and reality, or over the dialectics of literary function. Byron, in his usual cynical mood, rarely holds literature or literati with high regard. Just as previous discussions show, he dismisses the bulk of literati as 'scribblers' and regards literature as the vocation below his aristocratic status. He told Murray in 1817, 'But I hate things all fiction...there should always be some foundation of fact for the most airy fabric—and pure invention is but the talent of a liar' (*BLJ*, Vol.5, 203). This comment, like the metaphor 'the hands of dyer', reveals his skepticism towards the

imagination principle which quite a few contemporary poets involuntarily adopt to counter the age's burden and anxiety.¹² If Wordsworthian imagination means a mystical escape from the present hour, Byron's retrospective digressions are decidedly involved with the actual conditions of numerous cultural and social moments. In other words Byron's poems exist as historical contexts or its criticism; and they constantly remind us that human perception survive not on the 'primacy of the Imagination' but on the 'contexts of events'(McGann:157).

Don Juan, with its elastic forms of digression, displays a 'distinct commitment to presentness' or circumstances (Rohrbach, 2007:126)¹³. The sense of present historicity might be what he means by the 'foundation of fact'. Byron's belief in literary 'thingness' makes him resistant to 'airy fabric' or metaphysical poetics; and *Don Juan* epitomizes his epic ambition to transform objective reality by literary force.

As to 'Don Juan'—confess—confess—you dog—and be candid—that it is the sublime of *that there* sort of writing—it may be bawdy—but is it not good English?—it may be profligate—but is it not *life*, is it not *the thing*?—could any man have written it—who has not lived in the world?
(*BLJ*, Vol. 6,232).

Byron's call for serious attention is reinforced by a succession of pressing rhetorical questions. This quotation displays Byron's belief in *Don Juan* as a 'sublime' 'thing' without the denial of its apparent bawdiness and profligate nature. According to McGann, Byron's *Childe Harold* exhibits both Longinian and Boileau's precepts of sublimity. While the former claims 'Sublimity is the echo of a great soul' the latter defines literary sublimity as the content or the object being treated rather as a personal style (11-12). What I want to add is that *Don Juan* carries forward his innate pursuit for a sublime cause or thing. Unlike *Childe Harold*, his early work of the 'most elevated and passionate rhetoric', *Don Juan* is generated out of a leveling force of the circumstances which tend to eradicate his illusions but test his stamina to maintain

¹² In many ways the meaning and significance of context, as appropriate with reading *Don Juan*, is critical of the Romantic imagination principle as a 'creative and an analytic instrument' (McGann, 1976:ix).

¹³ By Byron's 'commitment to presentences', Rohrbach emphasizes that 'in the writing process, the writing subject is the significant locus of historical change' and 'exposes the active life of the writing mind' (127).

spiritual highness (13). It is his compromised attempt to regain the lost domain of heroism as well as his reconciliation with the political circumstances which have frustrated much of his revolutionary pursuit at home and abroad.

This is the turning point in Byron's poetic development. As his political endeavors have repeatedly failed, Byron comes to the new judgment of his literary ability and its constructive potential in his career management. McGann is right to discern that in his early career Byron deems poetic creation as the expedient service to political endeavor, as a means to a public end.

...he writes not to establish a literary reputation or career but to illustrate his political-social aspirations. This is the vocation that will consciously occupy his mind throughout the Years of Fame. As late as 1814, in the 'Dedication' to *The Corsair*, Byron will be publicly renouncing any further poetic performances: 'it is my intention to tempt no further the award of 'Gods, men nor columns.' (McGann, 1976:14-15).

What I hope to add here is that, by the time when 'Isles' was written, the repeated political setbacks in both domestic and overseas situations forced Byron to reconsider the role of poetry in the horizon of heroic ideals. Byron's confession following the heroic lays of Greece may provide us with an even wider scope to judge the meaning of 'Isles of Greece'. This refers to the personal evolution which leads to his resolution to turn his talents of poetic composition into more serious and worthy purposes. Therefore if we remain alert to the shifting tones, it seems that Byron has already foreseen the infinite energy which the lyric may let out. 'The Isles of Greece', despite the dubious identity of the songster, testifies to Byron's growing awareness that the power of words extends the historical imaginary which adds another dimension to measure his personal stature. By this I mean the declaration of literary faith may shed a positive light on the maturing of Byron's poetic consciousness.

Byron's assertion that 'words are things' conspicuously situates him in a 'historical scene of literary activity so preoccupied with its own history-making possibilities, with the illumination that *may* burst forth to change the course of things' (Chandler: 267). In his further exposition of Byron's causes, Chandler argues that Byron shares with Walter Scott the keen awareness of the internal connection between their writing and Romantic historicism.

Don Juan emerges as Byron's ambitious effort to rival Scott's campaign to modernize the writing of epic in the post-Revolution period, and of course Byron was the only contemporary writer with the literary reputation—the 'sign value'—to take Scott on. Unlike Scott, however, for better or for worse, Byron's ambitious effort to modernize the epic after Waterloo has not yet had its George Lukács. In our own century, Byron's literary reputation suffered much as Scott's has done (if nothing like so much as Moore's or Felicia Hemans's), while the reputations of Wordsworth, Blake, Austen, and Keats have all soared by comparison (357).

I quote Chandler's commentary on Byron's epic ambitions at some length here because it briefly states why Byron has been victimized by the absence of sympathetic understanding in the twentieth century and that his epic ambition has been neglected or even repressed by hostile critics. The 'Isles of Greece' is a piece of narrative which has a clear bearing on Byron's poetic ambition; and Byron already envisions its potential impact on future generations. In addition, as the prelude to his Greek cause, the lyric exposes Byron to both illusory and realistic contexts and it illustrates how literary writing exists as context and functions in context.

To sum up, I have taken three steps to present three interpretive alternatives of 'the Isles of Greece'. Firstly, taken by itself, 'Isles of Greece' adopts a descriptive frame of male fantasy to lament the bygone glory of Greece and call for the undaunted struggle for national independence. Secondly, if the preamble of the lyric is taken into consideration, the ambivalent identities of the party poet may cast a satirical shadow on the intense national sentiment. Thirdly Byron's literary conviction that 'words are things' which appears immediately after 'Isles of Greece' tends to counterbalance the negative preamble and highlight the earnest belief in the elevated power of literary writing to make history. Up to this point I have presented three contextual choices pertinent to the 'Isles of Greece' in order to demonstrate that this lyric is one instance of Byronic literary engagement with history. On the comprehensive level *Don Juan* represents the complexity of the temporality projected by Byron's legend and reinforces this legend. 'Isles of Greece' is a rich locus of historicity. On the imaginative dimension it utters masculine anguish over national enslavement. However its earnest national theme is somewhat displaced by the recollection of the literary renegade whose negative influence is later partially mediated and offset by the poet's meditative comments on the power of words. It

embodies more than a textual index to the shifting historical contexts; rather it creates multiple possibilities to investigate the points of anxiety and interest.

In his analysis of *Childe Harold: a Romaunt* (1812), McGann associates its 'passionate declamation on freedom' with Byron's spiritual sublimity, arguing that his elevated articulation and political heroism show 'his attempt to regain contact with the lost sources of greatness' (McGann: 13). Borrowing from *Childe Harold*, he further perceives Byron as 'the true-born son of Greece' and 'the true-born patriot' with his noble ideas of freedom, despite that 'he is not the modern inhabitants of that land' (II, 83, 13). McGann lays emphasis on the significance of liberty to Byron's cultural identification of nationality. Greece, 'the original seat of western ideas of freedom', awaits powerful heroes to deliver it from current decadence. Byron seems to imagine himself as 'the redeemer of the very source of human freedom' (13). The symbolic value of Greece as liberty justifies Byron's devotion to Greek national independence as an English aristocrat. Only by being committed to the cause of Greek national independence can he convincingly maintain his identity as a 'true-born Briton' and establish his country as the qualified and 'vital inheritor of the Greek idea of freedom' (*The Curse of Minerva*, 126; McGann: 14). This part of McGann's judgment on Byron's heroism may be extended to comprehend the contextual ambiguities associated with 'Isles of Greece'. On the one hand, the lyric, in the voice of a soldier, carries forward the passionate denunciation of enslavement. On the other hand, there emerges a perceivable sense of despair and incompleteness wrought by the repeated failures. It may be justifiable to claim that 'Isles' is a late echo of Greek pathos but 'the force of circumstances' experienced by Byron has seasoned the call with wit and irony. In conclusion 'Isles of Greece' demonstrates Byron's personal resistance to the circumstantial pressure, the re-assertion of cultural identity and spiritual stamina.

It should be emphasized that this brief survey elucidates the divergent possibilities to pinpoint the context which is infinitely larger, more shifting than one imagines. Byron's charm lies in the fact that his very existence embodies a legendary social text which interacts with his poetic composition. 'Isles of Greece' is but one

example of the inexhaustible interplay between textual entity and social factors. Without reference to specific contextual elements, it is vain to attempt for the final and definitive meaning. When I begin to examine 'the Isles' lyric in this section, my interest lies in exploring the alternatives to historicize the romantic text. Byron's international charisma and vitality depend on the plurality of meanings derived from equal interpretive access. If Anglo-American textual scholars tend to draw on the most immediate social backdrop of Byron's time, the following readings of 'Isles of Greece' done by early Chinese intellectuals at the opening of the twentieth century enact another kind of legitimate historicity and contextualization.

II. Reading 'Isles of Greece' in the Early Twentieth Century China: Nationalism and the Modern Individual ¹⁴

The cultural relay which 'Isles of Greece' starts in China may flatter Byron's literary conceit that 'a poet's feeling' is the 'source of others'. That Byron is phenomenal is almost a cliché; but it is rather exceptional that his tremendous popularity begins with a short lyric. In "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory", Hans Robert Jauss, one of the chief proponents of Reader Criticism, challenges the validity of conventional history and doubts whether the lexicographical practice of the "annal-like lining-up of facts" is relevant to contemporary existence. "History of literature" in the truly historical sense, he argues, "is a process of aesthetical reception and production that takes place in the realization of literary texts on the part of the receptive reader, reflective critic and the author in his continuing

¹⁴ I owe my debt to Chu Chih-yu (朱志渝) whose doctoral dissertation 'Byron's Literary Fortunes in China' (1995) provides much needed material of early Chinese translations of Byron's verses. I also benefit a lot from Yu Jie's research on the evolution of Byronism as pronounced by early Chinese intellectuals. According to my present research, Yu Jie (余杰) is the first Chinese scholar who uses the term Bai Lun Guan (拜伦观) to theorize the far-reaching impact of Byron on Chinese intellectuals. Much of my argument in this section draws on his essay 'Kuangbiao Zhong de Bailun-Zhige' '狂飙中的拜伦之歌' (The Song of Byron in a Turbulent Era) for its theoretical originality and rigorous reasoning.

production.”¹⁵ If the pseudo- history of ‘Isles of Greece’ were to be compiled, Jauss’s responsive program might illuminate a missing link in the cross-cultural circulation of Romanticism as a European historical momentum. In this section I shall focus on three prominent Chinese intellectual figures whose interest in Byron was unanimously kindled by ‘Isles of Greece’. I shall roughly adopt Jauss’s divisions to present the participation of ‘Isles of Greece’ in the shaping of modern Chinese intellectual outlook since the opening of the twentieth century. This retrospective look into China’s encounter with Byron may expose us to the anxieties of that age—the dilemma of a nation and an individual on the threshold of modernity.

It is not coincidental that Byron’s debut in Chinese intellectual circle was ushered by Liang Qichao(梁启超). The key terms which he distilled from the short lyric were those of a national, a slave and freedom. After the abortive Hundred Day’s Reform (百日维新 1898) in which he played a prominent role, Liang was forced on exile in Japan under the pressure of Empress Cixi(慈禧太后). He was not yet thirty years old by that time; but his political career had come to a standstill. Despite his increasing renown amongst Chinese intellectuals, the first half of his political career was marked with failures: failure to get a Jinshi degree(进士)¹⁶ in national imperial exam, failure to change the status quo in the least way and, failure even to save the life of Emperor Guangxu(光绪皇帝). The exilic experience exerted so much pressure that only in writing could he release his inner anxiety and nostalgic yearnings. One of the most extraordinary books in this particular period was *The Future of New China* which introduced part of ‘The Isles of Greece’ along with a dozen lines of *The Giaour* in his only novel *The Future of New China*.

Such is the aspect of this shore--

¹⁵ Quoted from “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”. *Twentieth Century Western Critical Theories*. Zhu Gang (朱刚). Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press, 2001.

¹⁶ Jinshi Degree was usually conferred to those who excelled in the central examination held by the Ministry of Li or Propriety(礼部) in the capital. In Qing Dynasty candidates who passed the provincial examination(乡试) could gain access to central examination. The most prestigious degrees were conferred to candidates who excelled in Court examination(殿试). Liang attended the central exam in Beijing respectively in 1890 and 1895 but failed to secure the degree.

'This, but living Greece no more!

...

Clime of the unforgotten brave!

Whose land from plain to mountain-cave

Was Freedom's home, or Glory's grave--

Shrine of the mighty! Can it be

That this is all remains of thee?

Approach, thou craven crouching slave:

Say, is not this Thermopylae?

These waters blue that round you lave,--

Oh, servile offspring of the free--

Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?

The gulf, the rock of Salamis!

These scenes, their story not unknown.

Arise, and make again your own.¹⁷ (*The Giaour* Lines 90-91;103-115).

The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!

Where burning Sappho loved and sung,

Where grew the arts of war and peace,

Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung,

Eternal summer gilds them yet,

But all, except their sun, is set.

...

The mountains look on Marathon --

And Marathon looks on the sea;

And musing there an hour alone,

I dreamed that Greece might still be free;

For standing on the Persians' grave,

I could not deem myself a slave.

And must thy lyre, so long divine,

Degenerate into hands like mine?

For Greeks a blush, for Greece a tear.

A tyrant; but our master then

¹⁷ 葱葱猗，郁郁猗，海岸之景物猗。呜呜，此希腊之山河猗。呜呜，如锦如荼之希腊，今在何猗...呜呜，此何地猗，下自原野上山峦猗，皆古代自由空气所弥漫猗，皆荣誉之墓门猗，皆伟大人物之祭坛猗，噫汝祖宗之光荣，竟仅留此区区在人间猗。嗟嗟弱质怯病之奴隶猗，嗟米前猗，斯何地猗并非昔日之德摩比利猗。嗟嗟卿等自由苗裔之奴隶猗，不断青山，环卿之旁，周遭其如睡猗无情夜潮，与卿为缘寂寞其盈耳猗。此山何山猗，此海何海猗，此岸何岸猗，此沙拉米士之湾猗，此沙拉米士之山猗，此佳景猗，此美谈猗，卿等素其谄猗。咄咄其兴猗，咄咄其兴猗，光复卿等之旧物还诸卿猗。

Were still at least our countrymen.

But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning teardrop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!¹⁸

(The Isles of Greece, Stanzas 1, 3; lines 29-30, 36, 65-66, 88-90, 95-96).

A work of traditional Chinese fiction in five chapters, *The Future of New China* begins with a fresh vista which is imagined to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the new China republic. On this occasion, a prominent scholar Mr. Kong Hongdao (孔弘道), the direct descendant of Confucius, is invited to lecture on the turbulent history to establish China as a modern nation. Kong's lecture, in the form of flash-back, is actually Liang's pamphlet to advocate his nation-building design, with the discussion ranging from political parties, constitutional monarchy, civil rights and university education to the cultivation of modern citizenship. Mr. Kong highlights the role of Constitutional Party (宪政党) in mobilizing public morale and cultivating civic virtues and this leads to the personal story of its founder Mr. Huang Keqiang (黄克强). In Chapter IV where Byron's rousing 'Isles of Greece' is delivered, Huang together with his intimate friend Mr. Li Qubing (李去病), upon the completion of their university education in Britain, Germany and France, returns to the northern part of China where the sovereignty of the territory has been conceded to Russia. Liang devotes one chapter of this incomplete novel to their heated discussion about various forms of European political systems and histories as well as the possibilities to transform China from a feudal empire into a modern democratic nation. Soon afterwards as they settle down in a local hotel of Lvshun (旅顺) they happen to overhear the eloquent singing of Byron's verses by a young man in a sad though

¹⁸ These individual lines were paraphrased: '祖宗神圣之琴，到我们手里头，怎便堕落'，'替希腊人汗流浹背替希腊国泪流满面'，'前代之王虽属专制君主，还是我国人，不像今日变做（多尔哥）蛮族的奴隶'，'好好的同胞闺秀，他的乳汁，怎便养育出些奴隶来'，'奴隶的土地不是我们应该住的土地奴隶的酒，不是我们应该饮的酒'。

powerful voice. Both are so mesmerized by its rendition that they feel every word of the poem seems to be addressed to contemporary Chinese in face of enslavement. Just as his name Chen Meng (陈猛) indicates, the twenty-odd boy is shaped as a model of Young China (少年中国)--- handsome, vigorous, and brave and having a keen vision for China's struggle against foreign domination. Huang and Li immediately identify the poem as Byron's *The Giaour* and *Don Juan*. Both reveal their enthusiasm towards this unusual figure whose devotion to Greek liberty is the most admirable achievement to them.¹⁹ Judging from the story, these three young men soon involve themselves in the political campaign to build connections and establish the Constitutional Party in the hope to build a modern nation, free and democratic. Their very names may symbolize their resolution and stamina to sustain the national crusade; and they also demonstrate the hidden masculine anxiety underlying the political activities. By the end of Chapter IV, however, Huang and Li are amazed by a lyric poem written on the wall of a local tavern; and as the poem is presumably written by a lady, their endeavor goes beyond the usual gender division which tends to emphasize that national freedom is masculine-oriented.

Liang Qichao adopts two classical Chinese Qu (曲) tunes which, in his eyes, might be adequate to express the overwhelming feelings—the homage to the glory of forefathers, and the strong appeal to masses to fight for freedom and independence among other things²⁰. In the side notes Liang strongly urges the reading of the original verses for it is most difficult to preserve the poetical flavor in translation.

¹⁹ This episode is briefly retold by John Fitzgerald in 'Nationalism, Democracy, and Dignity in Twentieth-Century China' (from *The Dignity of Nations*, 2006:106). But some details are inaccurate. For instance Huang and Li arrive in Lvshun in the morning and soon they hear the singing in the hotel. They meet the singer, namely Chen Meng later that day in a local tavern instead of the following morning. They immediately identify the song as Byron's poem and feel on their own, instead of being told, that the poem seems to address current China. In addition 'Sino-Russian' border is problematic because that part of territory is conceded to Russia on unequal terms.

²⁰ (沈醉东风)咳，希腊啊，希腊啊.....你本是和平时代的爱娇，你本是战争时代的天骄，‘撒芷波’歌声高，女诗人热情好，更有那‘德罗士’‘菲波士’荣光常照，此地是艺文旧垒，技术中潮，即今在否？算除却太阳光线，万般没了。

As the most influential thinker of Chinese intellectual enlightenment in late Qing period, Liang began to build his political theories of nationalism and statehood as early as 1900. The novel *The Future of New China*, together with a pamphlet 'New Citizenship' (1902), and an academic essay 'New Historiography' (1902), constitutes his comprehensive manifesto of nationalism and civil rights.²¹ It should be noted that Liang was perfectly aware that Byron was a soldier devoted to liberal spirit instead of being a nationalist; but in the view of YU Jie, Liang had ample reasons to take a functional view to read Byron and accentuate his commitment to Greek struggle for independence. The gravity of national crisis placed an unprecedented traumatic pain on individual and national psyche. Since 1840 the countless bloodsheds, plundering and unequal treaties imposed by the Western powers forced a select number of the visionary Chinese intellectuals to establish the devotion to nation as an integral part of Chinese modern character. Liang is definitely one of the earliest representatives. As Chinese nationality was on the verge of the collapse, Liang was most preoccupied with the critical issue of national survival. His judgment that 'Isles of Greece' was written to arouse Greeks against Turkish oppression accords with his nationalistic emphasis even though this is a far cry from the original context.

The portrayal of Chen Meng in *The Future of New China* may illustrate Liang's version of Byron as an individual with strong patriotic inclination. Chen Meng, a fresh graduate from military school, is so disappointed with the rampant corruption of Chinese politics that he refuses to take the office post but travels to Lvshun which is a Russian concessionary region for opportunities to fulfill his revolutionary ambition. Convinced that Russia is one of the most malicious foreign powers, he takes the initiative to study Russian language and investigate the Russian administration in

(如梦忆桃源) 玛拉顿后啊，山容缥缈，玛拉顿前啊，海门环绕，如此好河山，也应有自由回照，我向那波斯军墓门凭眺，难道我为奴为隶，今生便了，不信我为奴为隶，今生便了。摆伦最爱自由主义，兼以文学的精神，和希腊好像有夙愿一般。后来帮助希腊独立，竟白从军而死，真可称文界里头一位大豪杰。他这歌正是用来激励希腊人而作，但我们今日听来，倒像有几分是为中国说法哩！'

²¹ 《新民说》，《新史学》及《新中国未来记》构成梁启超“民族国家主义宣言书”。【余杰：‘狂飙中的拜伦之歌’，p16】

order to acquire enough knowledge in case China is to be split apart. The humiliation he suffers under Russian rule may account for his singing of 'Isles of Greece' for spiritual nourishment. The depiction of Chen Meng, though neither persuasive nor sensational, mirrors an idealized Byronic image being re-imagined onto China's soil. His rich knowledge of the Russian naval power and its domestic turmoil displays his inner reserve and wisdom distilled from perseverance and firm belief in China's future peace and success. If the image of Chen Meng partially reflects Liang's perception of Byron, he attaches emphasis to the national commitment of a modern citizen. It should be admitted that Liang ignores the debauched aspect of Byron's personal life and refashions him into a revolutionary hero with ready sacrifice for public well-being. This is undeniably an idealized image.

Liang's outlook of Byronism is consistent with his preoccupation with national priority. His interest in 'Isles of Greece' accords with his pragmatic view of literature to enlighten the feudal subjects about modern national spirit. The very insertion of the 'Isles of Greece' in a novel epitomizes his principles of 'the revolution in the realm of poetry as well as in novel' to reach the mass readers for the maximum effect²². In the belief that 'Isles of Greece' is to arouse Greeks against Turkish domination, Liang consciously displaces Byron the Individualist but highlights Byron's heroic feats in Greece as the spiritual stimuli of Chinese youth. It should be noted that Liang seems to ignore a crucial element in Byron's career—his attitude to the native British Isles. Throughout his life Byron lived in constant hostility and tension with English public. He could not forgive those critics who directed public gaze upon his private life and spread bizarre rumors all around. As recorded by Danish critic George Brandes, Byron was extremely contemptuous towards public rumoring and claimed that England did not deserve his existence and contribution unless solid evidence could be found to prove him guilty (paraphrased from the Chinese version of *Main currents in Nineteenth Century Literature* Vol.4). That is why he refused several chances to

²² 诗界革命和小说界革命. What I would like to add here is that for Liang, poetry is an elite literary form while novel is more mass-oriented. Accordingly the novel is preferred for the purpose of enlightenment.

return to England during his exile. Even today much of the Anglo-American critical interest in him as a prototype of celebrity culture is parasitic on the details of Byron's moral decadence and theatrical pose²³. The potential impact of his Greek saga on international politics has been largely taken for granted. Liang might never care to know that Byron is more cosmopolitan than nationalistic, as illustrated by my previous discussion. He might deliberately avoid the radical individualism underscoring Byron's behavior; but fashions a new Byronic image which meets China's political need for national independence.

Living in an unprecedented historical stage, Chinese intellectuals of Liang's generation had to face the demise of imperial dynasty, the menacing foreign powers and the disintegration of traditional values. The national crisis was so critical that a workable program of the nation-building was of paramount importance to intellectuals like Liang. Liang viewed nationalism as an effective way to counter the entrenchment of imperialism and to cultivate the cohesive spirits of citizenship. His emphasis on the idea of 'community' or 'collectivism' or 'group' did not contradict his belief in liberal individual values because a new citizen with a clear idea of his or her rights and obligations is fundamental to a modern nation²⁴. Byron was

²³ Books like *Byron's Romantic Celebrity* and *Byromania* draw heavily on life details and public rumors.

²⁴ 梁启超用 '群' 的概念明确民族国家的思想【余杰, p16】 Yu Jie argues that Liang's concept of nationalism is initially a reaction to imperial invasion but it involves a democratic process in which modern citizens enjoy equal standing. I would like to briefly discuss three essays which shed different light on Liang's theory of nationalism. Three critics, Rune Svarverud, John Fitzgerald and Philip Huang (book review) share an emphasis on liberal democracy. They highlight the liberal aspect of Liang's national thinking. Liang in his essay *On New Citizen* advocates that the concept of equality may deliver ordinary people from the servility to hierarchical oppression and that a democratic nation can be empowered by citizens with independent thinking and self-esteem. Svarverud in his conference paper chooses to frame Liang's notion of liberal citizen in Steven Lukes's notion of individualism. His quotation from Kant that 'man exists as an end in itself, and not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will' challenges Liang's idea that a new Chinese citizen is a means to national independence and sovereignty. Such observation is insightful, but neglects Liang's specific historical background. Kant's idea is similar to Confucius's idea of REN (仁).

refashioned by Liang into the model of true sacrifice for liberty⁴ which can be achieved by fighting against other nations.

In retrospective Liang's translation of 'Isles of Greece' initiates a myth-making process; and his idealized perception of Byron should be dismissed as wishful thinking since it is too flattering an image to be true. What I intend to argue is that Liang's Byronic perspective is the self-representation of China's modern historicity; and that it is truer to China's classical ideal of a hero than to the historical Byron; and that it may ironically represent the way in which Byron wishes to be appreciated. By assimilating Byron into his discourse of China's nationalism, Yu concludes, Liang projects the ideal citizenship onto Byron and succeeds in creating a nationalist Byron. Some latter-day critics find that Liang might rely on his student's oral translation to further polish 'the Isles of Greece' and attribute his misreading to his low English proficiency. It may be true, but they also commit a mistake of historical anachronism. His admiration for Byron the Hero instead of Byron the Poet or Byron the Dandy is congruous to his national aspiration and agenda.

Liang's translation soon prompted a fresh run of 'Byron craze' or 'Isles of Greece' craze; and over two decades before the 1930s five complete translations came out. If Liang's literary reworking of 'Isles' laid down a key note for Byron's reception in China in the twentieth century, it was Su Manshu(苏曼殊)(1884—1918) who de-politicized the image and brought the sentimental aspect of Byron into the fore. Su's translation, with a balanced emphasis on diction precision and aesthetic elevation, has been greatly admired and imitated. He was also known for translating Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* besides 'Isles'.

The encounter between Su and Byron in the poetic realm, more than a historical coincidence, reveals a lyric moment marked by the shared and profound pity for self and destiny. On a wintry night, Su accompanied his mother to take a boat trip in the lake of a Buddhist temple. Amid the snowy serenity he sang the 'Isles of Greece',

intermittent with tears, with the melody being mellowed by the waves. Su's discovery of Byron epitomizes his conscious efforts to affirm the value of his existence.²⁵

Su Manshu, born in Japan, was a son of Chinese merchant; but he did not come to China until five years old. The separation from his Japanese mother and his upbringing in wretched loneliness bestowed upon him unconventional melancholy which nourished his love for classical Chinese poetry. The innate tension of the ethnic hybridization contributes to his keen awareness of cultural marginalization leading to his extreme acts for self-assertion. His legends and multifaceted genius still prevail in today's popular magazines: the heart-breaking love experience with his cousin, his outspokenness in anti-Yuan campaign (反袁运动) and his final seclusion as a Buddhist monk²⁶. One of his most quoted lines, "a wanderer, banished from native land" is dedicated to Byron and in a way is his self-portrayal.²⁷ If Liang attempts to cut a Byronic figure needed by Chinese liberation movement, Su partially acts out this Byronic role in the actual historical stage. His legends partially illustrate the painful remaking of a modern citizen from the debris of the past.

The similar life vicissitudes make Su highly sympathetic to Byron and his understanding is an integration of Byron and himself. He describes Byron as such:

Being raised in comfort and pleasure, Byron is an ardent believer of liberty. He is audacious enough to demand diverse forms of freedom without knowing its limits or extremes. One is easily captivated by Byron's poems which are spirited, charming and truthful. With regard to emotional spontaneity and confessional intimacy, Byron's poetry is incomparable. He was doomed in his pursuit for noble endeavor. He went to Greece with the assistance to some patriots fighting for freedom. His life, his commitment, and his poetry are all entangled with love and freedom (Yu, 1999:21).²⁸

²⁵ This part draws on Yu's observation of Su Manshu's Byronic life. He calls it 感情的个人 and emphasizes Su's emotional identification with Byron.

²⁶ From 1913 to 1915 Yuan Shikai, the first President of the Republic of China, accelerated his campaign to restore the monarchical system. His abuse of power to become the emperor roused a huge wave of indignation through China. In 1915 the revolutionary army led by Cai E (蔡锷) launched the attack and succeeded in ousting Yuan from the central stage of China politics.

²⁷ This is a free translation of the following line: "拜伦以诗人去国之忧, 寄之吟咏, 谋人家国, 功成不居, 虽与日月争光, 可也!"

²⁸ 拜伦生长教养于繁华、富庶、自由的生活中, 他是个热情真诚的自由信仰者: ——他敢于要求每件事物的自由——大的小的, 社会的或政治的。他不知道怎样或哪里他是到了极端。拜伦底诗像种有奋激性的酒

Unlike Liang Qichao, Su is fascinated by the sentimental and liberal aspects of Byron's life and writing. In Su's eyes, Byron's unconventionality lies in his resistance to social absurdities or conventions which renders him as charming as Apollo and as brave as Achilles. In Su's view, Byron's passion for women, as conveyed by the lyric 'the Maid of Athens', should not be seen as irresponsible act of aristocratic libertinism but be embraced as frank self-revelation. Well versed in Buddhism scriptures, Su justifies Byronic flaws as something inevitable in the quest for Grand Love. Byron's life presents to Su an actual tragic vision which arises from the irreconcilable conflict between poetic existence and worldly existence. In 1913 two years after the Republic of China was established, Su was extremely indignant with the then President Yuan Shikai's (袁世凱) reactionary politics and the nasty assassination of his political rival. In his anti-Yuan manifesto, Su declared that though he was a Buddhist monk who was supposed to have no secular concerns, he wished to model himself on Byron and rebel against the tyranny. It is said that Su died at the age of thirty five after swallowing 90-odd steamed stuffed buns. It seems rather imitative of Byron but his gluttony may result from his disillusionment and is a mode of self-banishment, dying young but happily.

The critic Zhang Dinghuang (张定璜) argues that both Byron and Su lived in a transitional age when the old traces died away while the budding of new life was yet to emerge and that their individual life was a unique transfiguration of the Zeitgeist—eventful life, enthusiasm for liberty, romantic temperament and the tragic ending. In one of his novels Su classifies poets into two kinds: the poet of Soul and the poet of State. Byron, like Chinese poets Qu Yuan (屈原) and Li Bai (李白), falls into the former category. Hypocrisy of any sort is abhorrent to them; but they are easy prey to emotional impulse. Lacking in in-depth rational or theoretical thinking, they share the disposition towards egoistic sensitiveness and self-indulgent cynicism.

料,人喝了愈多,愈觉着甜蜜的魔力。它们通篇中充满了神迷、美魔与真实。在情感、热诚和自白的用字内,拜伦底诗是不可及的。他是个坦白而高尚的人。当正从事于一件伟大的事业,他就到了末日。他去过希腊,在那里曾助着几个为自由而奋斗的爱国者。他一生的生活、境遇,与著作,都缠结在恋爱和自由之中

Though Su's outlook of Byronism goes beyond Liang's political focus, his version is still the idealized self-projection which blends his tragic vision with therapeutic reading. Su's sympathetic understanding for Byron represents a kind of soul-healing interaction in a turbulent era when only in literary endeavor can a student of a politically marginalized nation find a measure of solace and redemption against the abysmal and traumatic existence. However Su is more than a Byronic poet. He dramatizes the diverse dimensions of the anxieties of China in its route to modernity. Su is forced to negotiate the ideal of a traditional scholar-official with modern ambiguities and to adapt himself to a new mode of historicity. Translating Byron represents his efforts to comprehend and accept the Western historicity on Chinese terms. It is reductive simply to describe Su suffering from a lack of macho spirit because his religious seclusion and early death eventually illustrate how difficult it is to fulfill such an individual transformation. Su's contradictions are an epitome of the nation's ambiguities.

The 'Isles of Greece' as Byron's debut in China was a discovery of national sensibility and it provided Liang and Su with a point of historical reference to address national predicament and appease individual anguish. By exploring the relevance of the 'Isles of Greece' to collective awareness and personal experience, both of them corresponded to their Slavic counterparts who also suffered greatly from imperial domination since the mid-nineteenth century. The similar experience of humiliation, coupled with the tendency of sentimental melancholy, nurtured in them an instinct of rebellion. This is what Lu Xun will show in his reading of Byron which ushers him in a shared passage of historicity unfolding the existential anxiety of a modern individual.

His essay "On the Power of Mara-poetry" (摩罗诗力说) highlights the spirit of rebellion and resistance and connects Byronism with modern existence.

When his essay "On the Power of Mara-poetry" was published in 1907, Lu Xun (1881-1936) was in his late twenties. A regular reader of the *New Citizen Journal* edited by Liang, he did not enjoy the national renown Liang won at the similar age.

He was three years older than Su who was already an active figure in the circle of the Chinese students in Japan. His youth seemed to be wasted and his attendance in medical schools in Tokyo and Sendai (东京和仙台) seemed to bring him nothing but humiliation and insults of the local residents. He even failed to get an academic degree which was the eternal hard currency for livelihood. He was poor and living prospect was bleak; however the new Western notions such as social Darwinism and Nietzsche's superhuman philosophy and Tolstoy's Humanism threw him into a kind of metaphysical ecstasy. He cut off his pigtail once he arrived in Japan, an act symbolic of his denouncement of the feudalistic doctrines and conventions; but it took him some time to find new nutrients for his spiritual growth. Byron kindled his speculative passion about himself as well as China.

The very word 'Mara' in the title indicates Lu Xun's mental precision with which he captures Byron's spiritual charisma. Derived from Sanskrit, Mara means 'heavenly daemon' and might be the Buddhist equivalent of the biblical Satan; and Byron personifies the evil genius of Mara figures. In its association with Byron, Mara power can be approached in three ways. First of all it signifies individual resistance to and rebellion against repressive forces which may refer to the oppression of nation, community, or even the grand narrative of 'history' and 'morality' on selfhood. As a social rebel, Byron stands for a force subversive of historical pacifism, a prophetic existence and a rejection of mass consumerism. Lu Xun, by connecting Byron with the Chinese spirit of knighthood, highlights the hostility between the individual talent and the collective whole in a true sense of modernity. In line with the ruling chivalric spirit, Byron assists the weakling and shatters the chain of social conformity. His life takes the primary form of resistance against mounting public opposition. This holds true of Lu Xun. Throughout his life Lu Xun resorted to writing to engage with various forms of fighting until the last moment. In September 1936 Lu Xun, despite heavy illness, wrote an article called 'on Death', which ends: 'I have many enemies with

verbal attack on me. If young friends ask why, I may feel at a loss. Upon the second thought, I decide not to interrupt their attack but forgive none of them'.²⁹

Lu Xun once recalled that 'it is true that Byron's poems often won many young readers. As for myself, I still remember clearly how his poetry invigorated my soul and mind; and his portrait in Albanian turbine was particularly exciting.' However, any rebel is doomed to be a pathetic loner.

Secondly, the Mara spirit manifests itself in the single-handed combat. Existence in solitude or alienation is the normal state of modernity. 'On the Power of Mara Poetry' contains the sequence of biographies of Mara poets who are in essence modern loners. Byron is but one of them. The history of human civilization is marked by a genealogy of madness in which the repression of genius and the retaliation against natural talents are commonplace. From Childe Harold to Manfred and Don Juan there emerged an invisible self-revelation which kept track of the metamorphosis of the genius, from its genesis then to its revenge down to its reconciliation and demise. Byronic spiritual strength must encourage Lu Xun to carry on the impossible program of intellectual enlightenment. The more perceptive a pioneer is, the more repressed his talk and actions will be. The Maniac in Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* (《狂人日记》) might be the direct descendent of Mara poets. The public charge of insanity gives rise to a case of claustrophobia which makes the genius a victim to utter alienation and seclusion.

Thirdly a Mara poet, on the highest level, is a soldier in spiritual realm dedicated to intellectual freedom and humanity. The call for spiritual soldiery is the most important extension of the Byronic spirit on the threshold of China's modernity. Lu Xun's understanding of Byron has some effect on his growth as the great thinker. To Lu Xun two thousand years of feudal tradition rendered ordinary Chinese people thoughtless and numb. The spiritual and emotional paralysis constitutes the foremost barrier to the birth of the modern China. Only the superhuman with independent

²⁹ 杂感《死》，文章末尾说：“我的怨敌可谓多矣，倘有新式的人问起我来，怎么回答呢？我想一想，决定的是：让他们怨恨去，我一个都不宽恕。”【余杰：p15】

thinking and infinite stamina could shoulder the responsibility to enlighten the masses and to cultivate the love for truth and beauty. The task to break the spiritual manacles calls for fearless pioneers. They are the heralds of new thinking no matter how devastating they are to customs and conventions. Their genius and innate courage forbid them to remain silent and their prophecy is too shocking to be accepted. Inevitably they are loners at least in their lifetime. Lu Xun's identification of Byron as a Mara poet marks a crucial point in Lu's understanding of what constitutes a modern man. In an age of despair and a nation of deformity, Lu Xun is committed to a lifetime mission to emancipate Chinese people from the feudalistic bondage. He embarks on a journey with no destination in sight. He has to bear the suspicious glances, malicious reproaches and even the cold shots. He carries a crusade to shake the public from numbness but he receives the hostility in return.

Lu Xun's outlook of Byronism predicts Byron's relevance towards the individual dilemma of modernity. Byron, if perceived as the shared locus of historicity, is the integration of a rebel, a loner and an intellectual. In a sense both underwent the transition from ancient circular temporality to modern linear progression. Despite the huge temporal gap, both dwelt in the age of revolution which put an end to the circular evolution of the ancient dynastic regime yet were uncertain about future paradigm of temporality. Lu Xun's investigation into Byron might make him keenly aware of the destructive power brought by modernity to traditional Chinese society as well as of the inevitable tension between the enlightened few and the sepulchral masses. In a sense Lu Xun insightfully recognizes the value of Byron as a modern cultural phenomenon of the earlier period since Byron personifies the tension between individual talent and collective consensus, between high culture and mass consumption, between humanitarian values and historical materiality. Lu Xun's accurate observation of Byron reveals the mental altitude of which he is capable.

In brief I intend to emphasize that, in bringing three Chinese intellectual pioneers into close scrutiny, one is able to identify 'Isles of Greece' as a shared locus of modern historicity. In the 'Mara Poetry' Lu Xun believes that one needs to seek the new voices from the 'Other' land because Confucian classics have been exhausted

and could no longer make the proper diagnosis of Chinese ailments³⁰. The collective reading of 'Isles of Greece' and the discovery of Byron signal the anxieties of Chinese intelligentsia to the crisis of modern nationhood. There are very few Chinese intellectuals who, in the first half of the twentieth century, or even longer, have not been encouraged by the Byronic myth. As discussed in the Foreword, in 1924 the popular magazine *Fiction Monthly* gave a special issue in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of Byron's death. The unanimous acclaim which Byron enjoyed in the early modern China reflected the double anxieties of Chinese modernity. The awakening of national awareness appeared simultaneously with that of individual consciousness but the former received more urgent attention than the latter did. Liang's national agenda and Su's self-absorption, coloring their respective reading of 'Isles of Greece', demonstrate the dual states of *Zeitgeist* or 'fin de siècle' mentality—individual decadence and national awakening. In a certain sense, their insight made Lu Xun mentally prepared for unveiling the complexities of intellectual enlightenment and its pressure on selfhood. In addition, it was in their exile in Japan that these Chinese came to know and read Byron and they tended to draw on Japanese scholarship to understand the subversive force of modernity. Therefore the 'Isles of Greece' signals a telling moment when Chinese intellectuals began to participate in the circulation of modern historical momentum.

As the common case, the 'Isles of Greece' and its Byronic extension retained a passage of the intellectual innocence of Chinese mentality on its route to modernity. The celebrative tendency towards Western discourse shared by three versions of Byronism can be interpreted in two ways. For one thing, well versed in Confucian classics, the three scholars still resorted to the central tenets of Chinese moral values to refashion Byron's image. One can reach the state of immortality by three means—by moral code, by remarkable achievement and by the power of words.³¹ An individual whose action is consistent with his verbal or literary claim is worthy of public admiration; so his works are a reliable proof of his steadfastness and

³⁰ 求新声于异邦

³¹ 三不朽，即立言，立行和立德。

commitment to the highest ideal. In the centralized system of Chinese monarchy, an imperial scholar-official deems the three principles of immortality as the highest state of personal existence. To some extent, three Chinese figures share with Byron the same literary faith that words are things and the proof of individual integrity. Though the style or tone of *Don Juan* may vary from satirical or farcical to serious or sublime, a piece of writing can illustrate the individual pursuit, as evidenced by the 'Isles of Greece' and Byron's Greek heroic feats.

For another the celebrative attitudes can be seen as an effective strategy to establish the new paradigm of discourse legitimacy. The collapse of Confucian value structure made it ever more pressing to justify a new world order as well as a new mode of historicity. The Western civilization, on the more advanced stage of progression, won more admiration from the younger generation. For them to affirm the potential value and merits of an external rival was the first step to rejuvenate the diseased internal structure. The tendency to eulogize still prevails today and its effect is to be assessed.

I wish to highlight two points by juxtaposing English and Chinese readings of the 'Isles of Greece'. Firstly the diverse interpretations in cross-national contexts demonstrate that the circulation of Byron is subject to the disparate contexts of the national cultural inheritance and that there is no definitive interpretation.

The 'Isles of Greece' lyric in the original textual backdrop is the performance by an unreliable songster. English literary critics are more sensitive to the implications of negative elements on emotional intensity. It is one of the salient features of the current Byron critique to highlight his theatrical pose and to treat him basically as an actor than as a poet. Their attention to the narrator's performative subjectivity arouses their skepticism towards Byron's moral outlook and his deceptive masquerade. The familiarity of native English readers with Byron's personal details preconditions their evaluations of his poetry; and it also makes it difficult to isolate his poems from the corresponding situations. Secondly the Chinese context, with the initial absence of biographical details, represents the negation of the biographical interest, which helps to restore Byron to his poetic stature. The debut of the 'Isles of Greece' in the *Future*

of New China may also be conceived as a poetic performance. Chen Meng sings, probably with no audience in his room but accompanied with his own musical instrument, to release his intense overflow of emotions. His audiences in the neighboring room are immediately captured by the lyric itself and show no suspicion that the singer may bear an ulterior motive. By isolating the lyric from its original text, Chinese critics reaffirm the poetic vision of Byron. Over the years the accumulated information of Byron's scandalous life did not corrupt the innocent faith of Chinese intellectuals in their early idol; rather they put laurels onto him and reshape him in their own image and seldom doubt if he was but a poor shadow. One may ponder over these contrastive visions and wonder which is well-reasoned but finds neither of the readings satisfactory. The point of my comparison is not to judge the analytic merit but to emphasize the historical awareness of critical anxiety. English critics need to consider the distance between poetic subjectivity and biographic elements in order to give an objective rating to Byron's writing while the Chinese critical interest in 'Isles of Greece' testifies to their central concern in national independence and emancipation.

Conclusion

The thesis seeks to accommodate the Byronic controversy within an organizing pattern of modernity—nationalism. Three dimensions of the controversy make it appropriate to employ the perspective of nationalism to demystify Byronic legends and explore its implications. The first is factual. The fact that Byron is more favorably perceived and enjoys a better reputation in countries other than England has long been taken for granted and should require a deeper reflection. The difficulty which one has in justifying Byron's writing in terms of High Romantic poetic principles is as problematic as the poet's exclusion from the country. The Byronic controversy evolves around the notion of nation. The second is contextual and theoretical. It concerns whether the present theories of nationalism can offer a contextual frame in which Romanticism can be temporally or aesthetically interpreted. Gellner's notion of high culture and Anderson's concept of imagined community illuminate how Romanticism can be nationalistically defined and narrated. The third is textual and existential. Given its episodic structure and autobiographical nature, *Don Juan* can be positioned in a distinct historical contingency of national identification. With its immediate reference to the contemporary world, *Don Juan* is the manifestation of national imagining as resistant to exilic existence.

In the Introduction I seek to build up a general mechanism behind Byronic utterance noted for both aesthetical and thematic mobility. The momentum of nationalism as an emerging social drive found poetical expression. Individual efforts to regulate the constant flow of historicity, in the case of *Don Juan*, lead to three narrative forms which correspond to three types of temporal vision. The digressive commentary represents the first level of existential temporality—the actual social ambience of England. The substantial part of the digressive details helps to reconstruct a limited national mapping as recollected by Byron whose contradictions symbolize an epochal divide. As the Italian Giuseppe Mazzini observes, 'Byron not only appears at the close of one epoch, and before the dawn of other', but that he lived 'in the midst of a community based upon an aristocracy which has outlived the vigor of its prime'. Some critics go further to pin down the divide as that between the

'aristocratic' Regency and the bourgeois Victorian society (Wilson: 16). By sorting out domestic social and cultural currents, I specify two modes of historicity – residual cosmopolitan nostalgia and the rise of the bourgeois public sphere—as explicit driving forces of the historical transition. Byron personifies the hidden clash between the decline of aristocratic values and bourgeois ascent. The life in the post-French Revolution era is delineated in much suspicion and contempt. Scientific innovations and political renegades were part of the symptoms of the chaotic modernity. When he focuses on bluestocking ladies and public sphere, Byron explicates how female dominance gradually deprived him of the usual aristocratic pejoratives. While Cervantes and Don Quixote are suggestive of his residual cosmopolitan outlook, Byron seeks to, in the elaboration of personal discontent, present a masculine rationale against the feminized national culture. Various social tendencies and forces constitute the basic backdrop of the reflective yet imagined social atlas. In brief the digressions acquaint readers with a concrete national vision which generates personal alienation.

The very title—*Don Juan*—is highly suggestive. For one thing the titled hero bears little resemblance to the libertine figure notorious for excessive sexual transgression. For another the author does not impose moral censure on the fictional hero; rather he presents the metaphorical justification for aristocratic libertinism. In other words Byron seems to relate this figure with himself and to insinuate and answer one question—how is Byron banished from native isles, physically and spiritually? In digression Byron presents an actual national reality which gradually displaces his Whiggish cosmopolitan ideals. The rise of intellectual ladies, together with the increasing influence of middle-class morality, represents the most tangible part of national historicity. Being situated in the transition to the modern order, Byron has been unconsciously involved with the ongoing flow and keeps track of concrete signs of the leveling forces of nationalism. If the digression displays his resistance to nationalism as a new organizing form of modernity, Byron invents a retrospective temporality where his alienation can be traced by stages.

The second level of temporality is the fictional growth of masculinity and the

imaginative formation of national vision. The narrative of *Don Juan* involves the initiation process in which Juan's interaction with both female characters and male figures prepares him for an emerging national consciousness as crucial to the maturing of his masculinity. What Byron constructs in the narrative is a fictitious past being refashioned in the panorama of nations. The maturing of masculine identity is inextricably connected with the affirming tendency for national identification. In terms of character portrayals, the separate female and male domains share a process from the rejection to the embrace of native roots, from the negation to the affirmation of national bonds. If the lure of love and beauty and the inspiration of heroic honor are the conventional motifs of masculine pursuits, Byron's Don Juan undergoes such transformation in a national manner. Juan's grand tour from Christendom to Orient and his return is marked by national signposts; and the repeated acts of border-crossing symbolize the simultaneous process of national characterizing and masculine growth.

The flow of the progressive historicity manifests in both national forms and manly conduct. From pastoral Greece to Turkish harem to Russian despotic court and to English stage of party politics, from the 'primitive' to the 'advanced' society, Juan takes turns to perform various roles which display social expectation for manhood in the accumulation of the worldly wisdom. Juan's rite of passage—sexual initiation, surviving shipwreck, the trial of exotic love and battlefield and diplomacy—resembles typical Byronic existence of mobility which fosters and reinforces national subjectivity. As the narrative is multi-national, nationalism as an existential subjectivity has been imaginatively transmitted in the course of writing and reading. The ideal of the Cosmopolitan émigré, as being enacted by Juan's fictional growth, gradually disintegrates but evolves into the competition of national interests.

'Isles of Greece' is the most obvious link between *Don Juan* and nationalism; and it adds an alternative yet prospective dimension to perceiving the modern conflict. By reading the short lyric of nationalism in both Anglo-American and Chinese critical perspectives, I highlight it as a fixed locus of historicity, with divergent contextual sensitivity. On the Anglo-American side, as the contextual focus shifts from fictional

to socio-biographical and to existential level, the meaning of the lyric varies with complication. From the perspective of male fantasy the 'Isles of Greece' gives vent to the frustrated masculine aspiration of national independence; and Lambro's approaching threatens to interrupt Haidée's feast and metaphorically signals the lack of macho spirit in the small island. However the dubious identity of the songster throws the positive and elevated liberal spirit into doubt and ridicule. The biographical reading, beyond rigid textual limits, positions the 'Isles of Greece' in a much broader social domain which destabilizes the theme of national freedom and turns it into an impromptu of national prejudice. The turn of the poetic tone, when the delivery of 'Isles of Greece' ends, renders it possible to read the patriotic lines with seeming earnestness. The assertion of the poetic faith that 'Words are things' makes its readers half hanging for another point of reference—Byron's global career and his literary conviction. Byron, ever since he had left England, was constantly pursuing for 'a good cause to die in'. 'Byron's noble cause was that of 'Greek independence' (Chandler: 353). In terms of the personal evolution, 'Isles of Greece' anticipates the lyric 'On This Day I Completed My Thirty-Sixth Year'; and both are the crucial indexes of Byron's determination.

In its participation in global historicity, 'Isles of Greece' is a Byronic invention which reveals the third dimension of his personal cosmos which resembles a triangular construct. Firstly the digression offers a meditation on the actual state of affairs of the Regency England; and the very recalling stands for implicit national identification. Years of exile must have made Byron, more than ever, acutely aware of his spiritual ties with native land. As a member of English peerage he is undoubtedly a natural heir of English nationhood but he is equally intolerable of the bourgeoisie ascent and their control over the ruling ideology. His ambivalent attitude towards emergent imperial nationalism is partially reflected by his impatience with bluestocking ladies and political renegades. Secondly the narrative demonstrates a cosmopolitan resistance to the middle-class tenets of nationalism. Juan's scenario turns out to remind readers of the frustrated Byronic vision of masculine pursuits. Modernity, as organized in national norm, renders the cosmopolitan ideal no longer

attainable; and for Byron it is 'a world that he could neither tolerate in its new historical unintelligibility nor fully resolve into a sustainable grammar of motives' (Chandler: 353). Chandler's remark contains half truth. Despite its 'unintelligibility' Byron discovers a site of meaning in Greece to survive the violence of historicity. Thirdly 'Isles of Greece' is a coincidental revelation of the third dimension of Byronic historicity—national independence of the ethnical community. This short part of Byron's life path (1823.8-1824.4) endures the test of time as it foresees the major theme of global history since the latter part of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century. China's response to 'Isles of Greece' illustrates how writing can help understand history and history can be read as a kind of the extended textuality.

The 'Isles of Greece', in the reading scene of China, circulates and transfigures a shared case of the modern historicity. Liang Qichao's reworking of the 'Isles' rescues it from its original negative context and highlights the theme of national freedom. His introduction, without consideration to Byron's tension with his mother country, shapes him into the leading epitome of national spirit. He initiates a myth-making process which exhibits the pressure of early Chinese modernity. The sudden collapse of the ancient imperial system and the disintegration of feudal values forced Chinese intellectual pioneers to seek the new voices to understand the 'unintelligibility' of modernity. When a young man replaces 'the trimmer poet' to deliver the 'Isles of Greece' in a classic Chinese lyric form, Liang creates an imagined model citizen of the future republic and makes him the advocate of 'the Spirit of Age'—national independence. Consistent with his nation-building design, Liang's reading of 'Isles of Greece' lays down the keynote of nationalism for the subsequent readings of Byron in China. Su Manshu adds a personal touch to the collective spirit of nationalism. For Su, the reading and translation of Byron's poetry is an empathetic act or a trans-historical dialogue with a figure of 'Other' for self-identification. Su extends the 'Isles of Greece' and discovers Byron as the psychological therapy for his traumatic experience. The readers of Su's translation and poetic writing may come to realize that Su in his diverse roles represents an internalized Byronic historicity in which the

turbulent transition endows both men with similar romantic contradiction. His upbringing in classic Chinese culture shapes his perception of Byron with typical idealized Chinese features. Byron symbolizes for Su a new form to articulate personal anguish; but he seems unable or reluctant to break loose from such narcissistic indulgence. It is Lu Xun who partially discovers and explores Byron's relevance to Chinese modernity, or more explicitly, to the pioneers of intellectual enlightenment. As his early literary manifesto, 'On the Power of Mara-poetry' presents a brief history of reading Byron especially in many Slavic countries. It represents a moment when Lu Xun reinterprets Byron in an international dimension to survive the crisis of representing modernity. Byron is viewed as the prototype of the Mara poets who are simultaneously a liberal fighter, a loner and an intellectual enlightener. By reading Byron as well as Byronic poets Lu Xun reveals a disturbing aspect of modernity—its oppressive pressure towards individual consciousness. By invoking 'Mara poets', Lu Xun elevates Liang's national focus and Su's personal identification to a philosophical level. It indicates the simultaneous awakening of national awareness and selfhood. More than that, Byron signifies one historical possibility which mediates the tension between masses and emerging historicity. He should possess visionary power and spiritual stamina to fight against public apathy and guide mental Exodus. Above all, what the three writers share is a distinctive Byronic stamp which informs the respective self-portrayal. Since the late Qing dynasty social turmoil has plunged Chinese intellectual circle into an unprecedented crisis—a fundamental crisis of representation. The collective enthusiasm towards Byron reveals general anxiety towards the remaking of national and individual identity.

As the starting point of Byronic circulation in China, 'Isles of Greece' gives expression to China's collective anguish on the threshold of modernity and makes Byron a celebrated figure. This has not been seriously challenged until the nineteen eighties. The lyric of the national freedom has been rephrased and reinterpreted by Chinese social reality and literary tradition. On the one hand the grim political state at the turn of the nineteenth century imposed double humiliation on the first generation of the intellectual pioneers, national and masculine. They were a group of the

expatriate students in Japan who might resemble their European counterparts. 'Excluded and alienated from politics, these intellectuals became restless under the impact of Enlightenment rationalism and sought in romantic fantasies a solution to their discontents' (Smith, 1998:99). 'Isles of Greece' helps to release their shared discontent over loss, humiliation and marginal position. Fortunately they soon stepped out of the circle of Byronic fantasy and gained more spiritual manna than the short lyric could offer. On the other hand their Byronic perception is the selective projection of Chinese heroic ideals—political obligations, literary refinement and mental perseverance. Though they have different perspectives, they share a common orientation to make a myth. However Byron never, in the slightest degree, lives up to the image of individual integrity, though his short lyric of nationalism does express their 'masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope' (Smith:208). The critic Yu Jie(余杰) coins a term 'Bai Lun Guan'(拜伦观)to theorize the unique cultural phenomenon—a cross-cultural and trans-historical interaction between Chinese modern intellectuals and Byron. Liang, Su and Lu Xun's introductions of Byron(-ism) are characterized by intellectual innocence in China's initial stage of encountering the West. Such tendency of idealizing and romanticizing the exotic Other is highly problematic because it reveals a national mentality which seeks to redefine its position in the wide spectrum from self-admiration to low self-esteem. The difficulty to define oneself results from the inability to reconcile deep-rooted chauvinistic pride with the humiliation of the imperial downfall. In discovering Byron, however, the first generation Chinese intellectuals accurately pinpoint their position in historical urgency. Without the critical constraint of the institutional academia, they enjoy more intellectual autonomy which enables them to find the new sources of historical legitimacy. Though their perception of Byron or Byronism is not historically true, they recreate a Chinese legend of Byron which is truer and more meaningful to the immediate Chinese circumstances and cultural heritage. Unfortunately, if from 'Isles of Greece' they evoke national spirit to muster the masses, they also start a process of mystifying Byron in the metaphorical level. This is a suggestive metaphor in parallel to China's modernization. Nationalism as a

'product of the discontents of modernity' means to traditional agrarian societies the full-range westernization (Smith: 97). The 'Isles' and its extended reading offer to modern China three key terms, namely, national independence, romantic Self and Mara poets. Even though more materials about his scandalous life have been unearthed, the official image of Byron in Chinese anthology remains unchallenged. The point I want to make is not to replace Byronic liberal spirit with something more interesting; rather it is more valuable to ponder over the underlying mystifying or celebrating tendency typical of the contemporary Chinese understanding of the West. To examine how Byronic idolatry has been subject to the demystification by English critics of Romanticism may help to check the academic idolatry of the West.

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