Apostrophizing Byron: The Rhetoric of Troping and the Making of Chinese Modernity through Lyric Translation

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Given Herder's insight that one way to effectively establish national identity is to look into poets who are capable of telling ancient stories and bringing them back to present readers, this article focuses on the unlikely technique of apostrophe in lyric translation as the means by which English Romantic poet Byron was assimilated into the Chinese socio-historical context. Drawing on Kenneth Burke's tripartite theory of portraiture, which tends to lock the text into a "drama of human relations" with a "socioanagogic mode of analysis," the article argues that translation reconciles two uses of apostrophe in lyric traditions: a poetic convention that is "a relic of archaic beliefs" and an optative signifier of "the power of poetry to make something happen." The analysis shows that by wittingly adopting archaism, namely, by seeking a dynamic equivalence between the refrain word xi *in* sao *poetry that originated in the* Chuci *tradition and the poetic device of apostrophe in Western Romantic poetry, Hu Shi (1891–1962) interpolated the exclamation tradition of Chinese poetics into Byron's poem "The Isles of Greece," thus rhetorically eluding the risk of making every apostrophe "an invocation of invocation." It was in this way that Chinese modernity was made, and a more problematized version of the poem was passed along to the intended Chinese readership through the target language text.*

Keywords: English poetry / Byron / translation into Chinese / literary influences / apostrophe / mimetic reconfiguration / allusion

But as evil cannot exist without good,
so unexpectedness must arise from expectedness.
Edgar Allan Poe

Itha a sha'ab yumān arād al-hiyāh …
If, one day, the people will to live …
Abou el Kacem Chebbi

Introduction

Lyric and revolution are never antonyms. The opening lines of the poem "The Will to Live" (1933), written ninety-two years ago by the Tunisian poet Abou el Kacem Chebbi, was reincarnated in the closing part of Tunisia's national anthem in the 1930s, and again in the 2010–2011 demonstration slogans. Since the 1930s, it has been circulated on the tips of millions of tongues, written on protest banners, and even proclaimed "the folklore of global protest music" (Omri 138) and adopted by the International Solidarity Movement. As Mohamed-Salah Omri argues, "at its beginning, as at its height, the [Tunisian] revolution was expressed in poetry" (138). Yet from the beginning, revolution has never been a legitimate child of poetry. The nexus between the two is not necessarily in the literal meaning of poetry, but in the moral and emotional impact of lyricism itself. Especially when a poetic text undergoes the constant flux of socio-political change, the personality of the text coalesces into that of an agent, exerting both emotional and moral impact upon the reader.

To illustrate my point, I want to zero in on one key figure in China's revolutionary moment, the quintessential Romantic poet George Gordon Byron (1788–1824). Although it would seem unusual to regard an English Romantic poet as a genuine force in the context of revolutionary China, Byron remains unique in expressing his poetic momentum and public presence through the times and spaces of English-Chinese translation. As a matter of fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in his transformations in twentieth-century China and their still unfolding aftermath, Byron has become an accurate index of the spirit of resistance in one of the most chaotic times in Chinese modern history: the New Culture Movement (*xin wenhua yundong*, 新文化運動), also known as the May Fourth Movement (*wusi yundong*, 五四運動), mindful of the involvement of many May Fourthians (i.e., new intellectuals pursuing the "May

Fourth spirit" [*wusi jingshen*, 五四精神]) in the political demonstrations around May 1919.[1]

My concern here, however, is not Byron's revolutionary impact on modern Chinese literary history, as with other Western men of letters to be introduced through translation to China. Given Herder's insight in his seminal treatise "Results of a Comparison of Different Peoples' Poetry in Ancient and Modern Times" (1797) that one way to effectively establish national identity is to look into poets who are capable of telling ancient stories and bringing them back to present readers, this article focuses on the unlikely technique of apostrophe as the means by which English Romantic poet Byron was assimilated into the Chinese socio-historical context through transculturation. The article draws on Kenneth Burke's tripartite theory of portraiture, which tends to lock the text into a "drama of human relations" with a "socio-anagogic mode of analysis" (Rueckert 107), and demonstrates the role of apostrophe in the zone of translation. Though apostrophe as a lyric device has long been reduced to an insignificant master trope, namely a mere figure of speech, by literary critics, it bears special meaning with its newly acquired role as a rhetorical mediator between the personality of the text and the personality of the poetic agent.[2] My perspective is

[1] The New Culture Movement, which promoted a new mindset and laid the cultural groundwork for the subsequent May Fourth Movement, is a progressive, nationwide sociopolitical movement that boosted new learning and scientific understandings of the individual and the world in a fledgling modern China during the early twentieth century. There are innumerable signs demonstrating the mutual support between the two movements. Following the failure of the 1911 revolutionary attempt to establish a republican government in the hope of salvaging late imperial China from its subordinate international position, a liberating, democratizing movement broke out as a protest against the announcement of the terms of the Versailles Treaty that concluded World War I, and continued through the 1920s. The May Fourth intellectuals blamed traditional Chinese culture (such as classical Chinese writing system and the Confucianist social system) for the dramatic fall of China into subjugation. In order to catch up to Japan and the Western Powers in military development and industrialization, the new intellectuals readily embraced Western concepts like democracy and science and launched the vernacular language movement to popularize *baihua* (the vernacular) as a replacement for *wenyan* (the classical language) in writing. The momentousness of the events equals if not surpasses the more commonly known revolutions of the century. Their participants were eyewitnesses of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and the end of imperial China, laying crucial foundations for modern notions of human rights and equality by challenging traditional Confucian values (Maissen and Mittler 83–85).

[2] On the final stage of developing his dramatistic poetics, Burke promoted a "universal methodology for exploring the personality of a given text" (Rueckert 106), a concept that is discussed in "The Language of Poetry, 'Dramatistically' Considered"

not unlike that of Jonathan Culler, who moves from the poem's performance to its effect on us, thus incorporating a linguistic reading of apostrophe into the celebration of the lyric par excellence's ability to predict the mystification of semantic meaning by means of a fictional, apostrophic/atemporal time.[3] I submit that cultural-historical conditions further complicate this linguistic presentation in lyric translation and render apostrophe a symbolic and performative move. This move disrupts the narrative temporality that often stabilizes a poetic text in relation to its poetic agency within the source language text.

(1955). Working with a universal definition of a text as an "organically interrelated structure of terms with a beginning, middle, and end," Burke proposes that "to the traditional three 'offices' of the poet and orator (all discourse, really)—to teach, to please, and to move or persuade—we need to add a fourth if we are to do justice to the range and complexity of poetry" (106). This fourth office, Burke says, is "to portray," and portraiture is "a three-headed proposition" used to discuss "(1) the unique personality of a given text as an organically interrelated structure of terms with a beginning, middle, and end; (2) the personality of the text as a revelation of the personality of the agent who enacted it; and (3) the agent, scene, and act relationship as a revelation of the personality of the sociopolitical scene (the social hierarchy and the hierarchic psychoses that are always part of it)" (106). All of these (the symbolic action, the agent, and the hierarchic scene), according to Burke, are made possible by language and infused with it. As William H. Rueckert points out: "Burke's tripartite theory of portraiture makes it possible for him to begin an empirical analysis of a text in terms of what it literally is: a verbal or linguistic action, the end result of which is a certain structure of organically related *terms* in a set order. … In moving from the personality of the text to the personality of the agent whose symbolic action it is, the pentad and ratios are brought into analysis in order to establish and study the unique ingredients of personality (psychic and physical) that are necessarily reflected in the words, the terms of the text. Words contain other words, Burke says, and words bring a lot of foreign substances into a poem with them, all of which indicate both the choices the agent made when creating the poem as well as the historical accidentals always present in any language" (106–107). Yet Burke does not rest here. As he considers a poem as "the verbal symbolic action of an agent in a scene," he is taken deeper into the inwardness of a poem by acknowledging the resources of language as "a formidable arsenal of analytic tools" for the critic to make use of (107). A classic example of how Burke proceeds can be found in his Keats essay and in the *Faust I* analysis that is the second part of this essay. As he does in his "Ethan Brand" essay, Burke usually begins with the verbal, symbolic action, moves to a consideration of the personality of the agent whose symbolic action it is, and finally, moves to a consideration, "by use of the pentad," of the nature of the sociopolitical scene that is embodied in the text and then to the interactive relationship that necessarily exists between the agent and the scene (107). Text in translation sophisticates the process and expands the latitudes that Burke's move of portraiture could cover.

[3] In contrast with Paul de Man, who mystifies (and celebrates this mystification of) the meaning-making process.

This article thus argues that the translation of Byron in twentieth-century China, with the case of Hu Shi (胡適, 1891–1962) in particular,[4] serves as an alternative to the black-or-white dichotomy that Jonathan Culler imposes on apostrophe as either descriptive (i.e., an emotional signifier embedded in and naturalized by the conventional subject of sublime poetry) or ritual (i.e., a master trope for the conditions of communication). In other words, the paper argues that translation reconciles two uses of apostrophe in lyric traditions: a poetic convention that is "a relic of archaic beliefs" and an optative signifier of "the power of poetry to make something happen" (Culler 140). By seeking a dynamic equivalence between the refrain word *xi* (兮) in early Chinese poetry and the poetic device of apostrophe in European Romantic poetry, Hu Shi's translation of Byron legitimizes a different discourse of apostrophe, in which the apostrophic vocative ability to make things happen, to build poetic relations, or to reflect the "conjunction of mouth and happening" (140) always hinges on its function to embody "poetic tradition" and "the spirit of poesy" (143). By wittingly adopting archaism and interpolating the exclamation tradition characteristic of Chinese poetics into an English text, Hu Shi rhetorically eludes the risk of making every apostrophe "an invocation of invocation" (144). Culler's distortion of Quintilian's notion of apostrophe, which features valediction, is useful for understanding China's revolutionary moment, since it was not until Chinese and Western poetic traditions met in translation that apostrophe took on its new role of mediating foreign poetry in China. In this way, what Du Bois calls "double consciousness"[5] is achieved in the affective process of translating

[4] Hu Shi was an instrumental figure in the New Culture Movement. He compares the Chinese New Culture Movement with the European Renaissance, and elucidates as follows: "(1) both set out to replace classical literature with a new literature in the living language of the people—the vernacular; (2) both were movements of deliberate protest against established cultural ideas and institutions, and of conscious emancipation of the individual from the bondage of tradition; (3) both were 'humanist' movements" (Maissen and Mittler 85).

[5] In his effort to examine and explain the depressing effect of white supremacy on black subjectivity and collectivity, Du Bois addresses a problem that resembles the one Freud confronted years later in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917). Basically, both struggled to understand "how one might develop or find a practice for converting one relation to loss into another" (Flatley 117). For Du Bois, as for Freud, a difficult, ambivalent loss (or the rejection by one that is being addressed) is preserved through a process of internalization, producing what Du Bois calls "double consciousness." I believe that a similar effect is generated in the translation process to be discussed in this paper.

Byron, which transfers the personality of the source language text into that of its agent, by means of which a more problematized version of that personality is passed along to the intended Chinese readership through the target language text.

First off, and not altogether incidentally, Byron in translation opens up a space for debate on the ultimate function of apostrophe in lyric poetic traditions. To borrow Quintilian's succinct definition in the classical context of forensic oratory, the "figure which the Greeks call *apostrophe*" initially refers to a "'diversion' of speech (*sermonem a persona iudicis aversum*)" that "redirects the speech [from the 'proper' listener] to someone other than the original hearer" or to the "intended hearer" (Kneale 143). As Jacques Derrida has shown, voice (plus voicing) "has always been privileged in Western culture as a guarantee of truth, consciousness and being" (141). This tradition of privileging voice over writing in the Western poetic tradition and in the Western literary tradition in general further facilitates our historical understanding of the disputed presence of apostrophe in the Romantic poetic tradition, as the pragmatic function of the term gradually came to be a mixture of commentary and articulation of feelings such as grief and indignation by means of an address to certain addressees. As a counterargument to Jonathan Culler's view, apostrophe is "far from being [a useless and embarrassing figure] avoided by critics," but rather has a "distinguished tradition of [address and] commentary" (141). This "utility" of the figure has been regularly and systematically acknowledged by classical writers ranging from Cicero and Quintilian to rhetoricians of the Renaissance and eighteenth century (143). Hu Shi, by borrowing *xi* from early Chinese poetry—typical of the exclamation tradition in Chinese poetics—in his translation of Byron, suggests to a Chinese audience that Greece in Byron's "The Isles of Greece" is identified with modern China not only in terms of a similar sociopolitical crisis, imminent reform, and revolutions, but also in that both civilizations have lost touch with their art and traditions. Considering this possibility of merging Chinese and European poetic traditions in the specific site of China allows us to tease out precise values from an entangled cultural and historical mass. In other words, in the specific context of revolutionary China, an alternative apostrophic discourse that takes advantage of both the exclamation tradition in Chinese poetics and the much disputed tradition of apostrophe in English Romantic poetry is given full play. Since it is not until the two traditions converge in translation that the term apostrophe adopts its new mediating role between foreign poetry and Chinese revolution during the late imperial

and early Republican period, Culler's distortion of Quintilian's notion of apostrophe, which features valediction, paves the way for this process of apostrophic transculturation.[6]

Chuci (楚辭, *Verses of Chu*, *Songs of Chu*, or *Elegies of Chu*; hereafter *Songs of Chu* as the optimal choice)[7] is a type of poetry that flourished in the Chu (楚) region, which was situated along the Yangtze River in southern China and was known for its shamanistic practices during the Warring States period (approximately 403–221 BCE). The majority of the poems were collected in the anthology *Chuci zhangju* (楚辭章句, *Commentary Edition of Chuci*), in which the most significant poem is

[6] The concept of "transculturation" was coined in 1940 by the Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz, who intended to describe the phenomenon of merging and converging cultures and explain the stages and results of cultural contact among people brought together by European colonial expansion into the Caribbean. Transculturation encompasses more than acculturation and deculturation. It merges these concepts and additionally implicates a consequent creation of new cultural phenomena (neoculturation), which can often be the result of colonial conquest and subjugation as postcolonial races struggle to regain their own sense of identity. As a contribution to the study of Cuba and to the general field of Social Sciences, and more essentially, an epistemological stand advancing the understanding of Latin America through Latin American theoretical tools, it remained rather dormant until Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama re-elaborated the notion in 1982 and applied it to Latin American literature. Rama's particular elaboration of the concept attempts to explain the way in which some Latin American authors incorporate diverse elements in their work of indigenous cultures—words and grammatical structures, for example—while, at the same time, adopting and adapting the literary techniques from the European and US literary avant-gardes. Both Neil Larsen and Antonio Cornejo Polar called into question these earlier articulations of the concept, criticizing that they entail a form of hegemonic aesthetic for Latin America's peripheral Modernity. Instead of what Ortiz and Rama see as an illusion of harmonic synthesis, Cornejo Polar emphasizes the contradictory and conflictive nature of Latin American literature and culture, suggesting "heterogeneity" as the proper alternative to a conceptualization that is otherwise reminiscent of the problematic notion of assimilation. The Chinese Byron at play in translation is not unlike Latin America's peripheral Modernity here. The heterogeneous representations of Chinese modernity, which is determined by the national crisis entailed by the invasion of the Western imperialist powers, is fully evinced by the transculturation of apostrophe in the translation of Byron.

[7] One of the earliest anthologies of Chinese poetry. Authorship aside, dating the works in the *Chuci* has long been a bone of contention. Renowned for his longing for ideals and patriotic spirit, Qu Yuan, a high minister and patriotic poet in the ancient State of Chu during China's Warring States period, is credited with composing a large part of the poetry collection. The works in the *Chuci* feature a unique romantic idiosyncrasy characterized by rich mythological allegories and symbolism of folk songs, unwonted surreal touches and imaginative twists, and particularly the use of the auxiliary word *xi* at the end of lines.

"Lisao" (離騷, "On Encountering Trouble"), the crowning achievement of the genre and presumably composed by Qu Yuan (屈原, c. 340–278 BCE). *Sao* (騷), the second character of its title, is often used to refer to the entire *Chuci* repertoire and any work written in the *Chuci* style, the so-called *sao* poetry (*saoti*, 騷體), a rhyme-prose style of the state of Chu during the Warring States period of imperial China. As a product of the Chu culture in the south, *Chuci* poems differ drastically from those in *Shijing* (詩經, *The Book of Poetry*)[8] in both content and form. In content, the influence of shamanism dominates many of the early poems in this genre, the "Jiuge" (九歌, "Nine Songs") being a remarkable example of such portrayals of religious rituals and performances. In the long narrative poem "On Encountering Trouble," Qu Yuan developed this occult lineage with an "unprecedented autobiographical framework and voice" (Cai 36), which has evidently exerted tremendous impact on Chinese intellectuals' engagement with apostrophe in their translations of Byron, especially Hu Shi's. In form, *Chuci* poems are marked by longer lines than those in *Shijing*, with stanzas often containing either six or eight lines alternating between six and seven characters. Another prominent formal feature of the genre, namely the use of the refrain word *xi*, which constitutes the most conspicuous idiosyncrasy of Hu Shi's translation of "The Isles of Greece" (i.e., 吾慷慨以悲歌兮, 耽憂國之磈磊), also occurs in the *Shijing* and other earlier texts but did not become a constant until it was applied to *Chuci*. The function of *xi* is thought to be mostly musical and to indicate "a drawn-out sound similar to the *a* in modern Chinese" (37), which also resembles the interjections in Western lyric poetry.

Rhythmic repetition is the way of early communication in Chinese and Western oral traditions alike. By strategically placing "rhyme, alliteration, assonance, reduplication, refrain, and the like" to articulate important meaning and retain "carefully articulated thought" in "mnemonic patterns," people in the oral age believed that "rhythm aids recall, even physiologically," and that "serious thought is intertwined with memory systems" (Sun 34). This time-honored rhythmic tradition, including refrain and incremental repetition for the purpose of rhetorical exclamation, came to be reinforced in the notion of poetry

[8] Believed to have been compiled in the early Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE) and traditionally attributed to Confucius, *Shijing* is the earliest known anthology of Chinese poetry, with poems and songs dating from the eleventh to seventh centuries BCE. Acclaimed to be the fountainhead of the Chinese literary tradition, it has been canonized as one of China's Five Classics and is a foundational text in classical Chinese literature, recording social realities and cultural values of the age.

in the Chinese literary tradition in that the character for poetry *shi* (詩) had gradually evolved to become interchangeable with *zhi* (志), which means "to remember," "to record," and most importantly, "to cherish in the mind." In effect, in addition to poetry, "practically all the important metaphysical compositions of ancient times [in China], including the *Laozi*, the *Xunzi*, the *Zhuangzi*, the *Huainanzi*, and the *Yijing* (the *Book of Changes*), employ rhyming language in whole or in part" (35). As the modern Chinese scholar Wen Yiduo (聞一多, 1899–1946) and the modern philologist Wang Li (王力, 1900–1986) have both verified, not only did the rhyming language dominate poetry and other rhyming compositions long before unrhymed prose works in the Chinese literary tradition, but it literally permeated "the writings of high antiquity in China" (35). In Chinese versology, the mode of rhythmic repetition has always been "intimately intertwined with both ease in memorizing and the articulation of important meaning" (35). It is this very fact that renders rhythm and pronunciation in Chinese poetry important for the translation of Byron's poetry in the eventful historical context of modern China.

The primary role of the exclamation tradition in Chinese poetics, in light of the tradition of apostrophe in Romantic poetry as its Western counterpart, was to establish a rhythm for poetry that was suitable for the Chinese language. During this process, "the interaction and mutual influence between words and music drove poetic imagination as it redefined and clarified rhythm and tone" (Gu 53), lending Chinese poetry a performative and ritualistic nature. Formative Chinese poetry (similarly to the ancient Semitic, Greek, and Latin poetry) based its rhythm on an imitation of music "that featured verbal repetition and duplication" (54). To create poetic flow, the main poetic form of *Shijing*, the first collection of Chinese poetry, was four characters per line with alliteration in order to accommodate the singing of contemporary music that contained lyrics. As Chinese pronunciation grew longer and more complex, poets had to create increasingly varied beats to deliver poetry, which gave rise to empty words (words void of meaning) like the refrain word *xi*, a primitive poetic delivery that poets and critics usually called *yi chang san tan* (一唱三歎, "singing in one note or line and sighing in three").[9] However, "this complete unison of music and

[9] A typical example is the *Shijing* poem "Wang feng: Cai ge" (王風 采葛, "Folk Song: To Gather Dolichos"), in which the formalistic function of exclamation words is ostensive: "Bi cai ge *xi*, yi ri bu jian, ru san yue *xi*. / Bi cai xiao *xi*, yi ri bu jian, ru san qiu *xi*. / Bi cai ai *xi*, yi ri bu jian, ru san sui *xi*." ["There he is gathering the dolichos! A day without seeing him, is like three months! / There he is gathering the

poetry did not last as long as the Latin tradition of the Middle Ages" (55), as the *Shijing* style evolved into the *Chuci* style and the use of the empty, duplicated exclamation word *xi* (originally derived from musical imitation) became part and parcel of a poetic composition that emphasized its verbal rhythm. *Xi* in *Chuci* thus not only regulated the rhythm of the poetry but also created a sort of verbal parallelism, which stemmed from its stable position, often at the end of a half line and the end of the line.[10] Unlike European poetry that was composed with multi-syllable words, most Chinese words up to the medieval times were single syllable,[11] which meant that exclamation and empty words in later *Chuci* poetry formed rhythmic contrasts in the same way that Germanic languages employ multisyllabic words in modern poetry (56). The fact that the exclamation word and other "empty" words in Chinese classical poetry tended to play a phonetic role yet had no or very little semantic function (59) coincides with Culler's view that apostrophe acts either as a trope for "poetic pretension" (i.e., a sign of the poet as not merely a poet but the embodiment of poetic convention) or for "apostrophic fiction" (i.e., a poetic sign that initiates communication between the addressor and the addressee, evokes poetic act or presence, or completes self identities by addressing thus interiorizing the external), both of which are marks more of dramatization than of semantic meaning (Culler 143, 145).

As L. M. Findlay reminds us in the article "Culler and Byron on Apostrophe and Lyric Time," Culler isolates apostrophe as a particular rhetorical device in an attempt "to expose the complicity of poets and critics in the creation and perpetuation of the myth of lyric timelessness" (Findlay 336). Findlay maintains that Culler's theoretical and practical ruses, though claimed to have a profound lineage in classical rhetoric, are seriously biased in favor of the more recent philosophy on writing and difference such as Derridian *écriture*, which characterizes any sign system that generates meanings by means of a paradigm of differentiated signs. It is in this light that Culler deems "'the poetic pres-

oxtail-southern-wood! A day without seeing him, is like three seasons! / There he is gathering the mugwort! A day without seeing him, is like three years!"]

[10] A typical example is Liu Bang's (劉邦, 256–195 BCE) "Da feng ge" (大風歌) in *Chuci* style: "Da feng qi *xi* yun fei yang. / Wei jia hai nei *xi* gui gu xiang. / An de meng shi *xi* shou si fang!" ["Rise a great wind, oh! It drives the clouds away. / Return to my birthplace, oh! The world is under my sway. / Where can I find brave soldiers, oh! To defend the distant borders today!"]

[11] China's "medieval" period encompasses "roughly the first millennium CE, following the Qin-Han foundation of the empire, and leading up to the transitional period of the Song" (Wang and Morrow Williams 1).

encing of the lyric subject' (to use Murray Krieger's apt designation) … an act of inscription occasioned by that subject's absence"; or rather, apostrophe for Culler is an "invocation of invocation" and "nothing need happen in an apostrophic poem" owing to the fact that apostrophes are mere master tropes for "the temporality of *écriture*" (336). Findlay argues that Culler's definition of apostrophe is most problematic in terms of his misreading of Quintilian in commenting that "apostrophe is different [from other tropes] in that it makes its point by troping not on the meaning of a word but on the circuit or situation of communication" (337). To put it another way, the apostrophic "O," whether expressed or implicit, is "devoid of semantic reference" (337). Findlay objects that though Quintilian, speaking of oratory, defines apostrophe as the "diversion of our words to address some person other than the judge," he never denies apostrophe's ability to make semantic meaning: Quintilian even insists that apostrophe can be "more pointed and forceful than customary locution (*acrior … atque vehementior*)" because "it raises questions about the speaker's sense of his audience" by establishing a new decorum of address to prepare its highly-likely-to-be-startled audience with the rhetorical device *prosopopoeia*, namely, an "imaginary person speaking on behalf of the accused" (337–338). Findlay argues that successful apostrophe, addressed to the judge as one would expect, tends to destroy the whole force of a text with its unnatural diversion in locution, but it also renders apostrophe part of the larger structure of exordium, as "what is heard apostrophically by one or more select addressees is also overheard by the remainder of the exordium's original audience" (338). Therefore, by restoring Quintilian's notion of apostrophe from Culler's distortion, we may arrive at the conclusion that apostrophe is by no means a mere master trope of communicative situations "devoid of semantic reference"; rather, "the *turning away from* the judge is not a rejection of him but a specially deferential act of rhetorical inclusion made possible only by virtue of judicial privilege in the hearing and interpretation of testimony" (338). Through careful consideration of the ways in which Byron arbitrates between apostrophe and temporality, Findlay's critique designates a direction for alternative interpretations of poetic apostrophe that bypass the shopworn tendency of criticism to pigeonhole apostrophe as a type of escapism. That said, he offers no resilient "mediation" (353) that compromises apostrophe's vocative power to signify a declension from diction to valediction, from speech to event, and its symbolic representation of poetic tradition. With that in mind, the subtle relationship between poetry and revolution in late Qing and early Republican China

complicated the matter, for this subtlety blurs the distinction between the descriptive and the ritual and gives birth to a new apostrophic discourse in peripheral spaces (such as lyric translation) that straddles both sides of the fence, which is the inevitable consequence of the merging of the exclamation tradition in *sao* poetry and the tradition of apostrophe in the Western lyric.

Apostrophizing Byron and the making of Chinese modernity through lyric translation

In modern Chinese literary history, the late Qing writers have been the only generation "to put more emphasis, at least for a time, on the introduction and translation of foreign works than on their own creative writing" (Yu 80), for the introduction of foreign works was conceived of as a "weapon" in social reform. Since the second decade of the twenty-first century in particular, it almost became an imperative for "the cultural content and themes of translated works" to "align with China's social reality and cultural values, becoming the main consideration in translation choices" (Li 155). In addition, to "match one's deeds with one's words has since ancient times been held a virtue by Chinese men of moral integrity" (Yu 79), thus the transference of the socio-political values of selected foreign texts and the personalities of certain foreign poets became essential to highly successful literary exercises during the final years of the Qing dynasty and early Republican China alike, such as the circulation of Byron's "imitation of revolutionary Greek ballad" (McGann 44), "The Isles of Greece" (1819), which played a seminal role in promoting the Byronic spirit in early modern China. The poem, which is essentially an "admonishment" and "fulfillment" of Byron's "highest poetic ideals," is "sung by a Romaic poet in the late 1780s to an audience of his fellows who live quiescently under Turkish rule" (45). The purpose of the poem is to call them "from their lives of pleasure and political degeneracy to take up a more strenuous and principled course of action" and thus "to raise the Greek national consciousness" (45).

The leader of the previously mentioned translation trend in early modern China, Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873–1929), quoted "The Isles of Greece" in the second half of his first novel *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji* (新中國未來記, *The Story of New China*) from 1902, presenting the original English text and providing a verse translation of the poem. One of the founding members of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's (孫

中山, 1866–1925) revolutionary organization in Japan, Ma Junwu (馬君武, 1881–1940), equally moved by "The Isles of Greece" and unsatisfied with Liang's partial and almost "tandem" translation (Gibbs Hill 32), rendered the poem into Chinese in its entirety three years later, utilizing the advantage of his mastery of English. This time, it was published in the literary magazine *Xin wenxue* (新文學, *New Literature*), an indicator of China's cultural modernism at the time but no longer extant today. The first systematic introduction of Byron's poetry was the collection *Bailun shixuan* (拜倫詩選, *Selected Poems of Byron*) edited by Su Manshu (蘇曼殊, 1884–1918), which was published in 1909. As the first important Byron translator in China, Su is the only translator of those mentioned in this paper who read Byron extensively and is comparable himself to Byron in multifarious ways. That said, the essential reason why Su was fascinated by Byron's work lies in a parallel between the Turkish conquest of Greece and the corrupt rule of the Manchus, against which Su arduously fought in his youth. As Su himself remarks, Byron's poem "The Isles of Greece" would incite his nationalistic indignation in a way "as if [turning] to a pre-existent pattern of his own suffering which afforded him both self-expression and catharsis" (Yu 88). "The Isles of Greece" became so popular after Liang's initial translation attempt that five complete renditions came out over the next two decades, "while Byron's other works were barely translated" (83). As a matter of fact, most Chinese readers learned about *Don Juan* and Byron through this "thrilling, immortal lyric" (83). It is not out of the question that it was Liang's version of "The Isles of Greece" that set off the "Byron craze" or "'The Isles of Greece' craze" and set the tone for the Chinese image of Byron. Yet, it seems more notable that a conscious adoption of (Quintilian's) apostrophe had already surfaced in Liang's translation of the poem. By interpolating comments on the original poem from two protagonists of the story, Liang manages to contextualize his translation of Byron in light of the Chinese people's pursuit of freedom and independence. Interestingly, Ma Junwu, regardless of his contempt for Liang's translation, inherits this awareness and makes it even more tellingly expressive in the title of his own translation, "Ai Xila ge" (哀希臘歌, "The song, Alas for Greece"). As Chu Chi Yu points out, later translators have followed suit by using either "Ai Xila" (哀希臘) or "Xila ge" (希臘歌), which gives impressive prominence to the political meaning created by a single closing interjection "alas," namely *xi* (兮), which shows up in every other line of the translated text (83–84).

Hu Shi, whose English was better than that of the aforementioned translators and who was obviously more familiar with English literature, translated the poem in 1914 when he was a student at Cornell University in the United States. Though relying largely on Liang Qichao's translation and mistaking the poem for a long play rather than part of *Don Juan*, Hu's translation shows in its preface a fairly measured appraisal of Byron and his position in English literature. Chu Chi Yu holds that Hu's translation differs from other translators, who "borrowed Byron's poem to voice their own views," and that Hu did the translation "merely as a literary exercise" (Yu 90). Yu argues further that the poetic form Hu used, *saoti*, has its own failings because while the archaic rhyme scheme allowed Hu more freedom in line length and the number of lines per stanza, the liberty he took also put him at risk for misreading the poem's original meaning. However, a closer analysis of Hu's translation reveals that to the contrary, it is the very form of *sao* poetry, and the merging of its exclamation tradition and the tradition of apostrophe associated with the Western lyric form adopted by Byron that generated new meanings and elevated Hu's rendition to a higher realm of the poetic world (*shijing*, 詩境).

As noted earlier, Culler misinterprets Quintilian's notion of apostrophe as "different [from other tropes] in that it makes its point by troping not on the meaning of a word but on the circuit or situation of communication" (Findlay 337). The apostrophic "O," whether expressed or implicit, is "devoid of semantic reference" (337). Nonetheless, Quintilian, though essentially speaking of oratory, defines apostrophe as "more pointed and forceful than customary locution" because "it raises questions about the speaker's sense of his audience" (337) by establishing a new decorum of address. Successful apostrophe is by no means a mere master trope of communicative situations "devoid of semantic reference"; rather, the gesture of *turning away* is not a rejection but an "act of rhetorical inclusion" (338). In Byron's poem "The Isles of Greece," there is no overt apostrophe except for occasional dithyrambs to the isles of Greece. Yet in Hu Shi's translation, the adoption of the refrain word *xi*, which is characteristic of *saoti* and can be deemed the counterpart of an exclamatory *ah*, *alas* or *O* in Western poetry, gives the original poem a fresh new depth that is by no means an unintentional misreading of the poem. Take the following stanza as an example:

The Scian and the Teian Muse,
    The hero's harp, the lover's lute
Have found the fame your shores refuse.
    Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest." (Byron 179)

悠悠兮, 我何所思	I recall things a long long time ago
荷馬兮阿難	Homer and Anacreon
慷慨兮歌英雄	Singing about fervent and gallant heroes
纏綿兮敘幽歡	Relating moving stories about love
享盛名於萬代兮	They enjoy fame through ten thousand years
獨岑寂於斯土	But their place alone is silent
歌聲起乎仙島之西兮	Their songs started from the west of the Immortal Islands
何此邦之無語	Why is their place alone mute? (Hu 390; Yu 91)

As an English poem, "The Isles of Greece" is written in folk-song style and, in the original context of *Don Juan*, was sung by a wandering singer figure to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. As shown in the excerpt above, the words are simple and the meter is regular, with each stanza containing six lines in iambic tetrameter (with an *ababcc* rhyming pattern), which constitutes a complete thought unit in itself. More crucially, there are "few variations of form throughout the poem" (Yu 93). As Chu Chi Yu mentions in his discussion on the first translations of Byron, form "presents the greatest challenge to all translators, especially those dealing with two languages like English and Chinese which are generically unrelated and rhythmically remote" (92). In spite of the fact that the pre-May Fourth China was one of the most open and receptive periods in modern Chinese history, the literary world was dominated by "highly developed genre concepts" and no ready-made classical Chinese poetic form was available which suited the translation of Byron's verse, considering the few variations of form in the original poem and the frequent form variations of its Chinese counterparts, ranging "from the earliest *Book of Songs*, five-character line *gu shi* (ancient poems) and *fu* (rhyme prose) of the Han dynasty, through the seven-character regulated verse of the Tang dynasty, to Song lyrics and the lyrical songs of Yuan drama" (93). At the beginning of the twentieth century, these forms were the only ones the translators were familiar with, and which readers would accept as poetry. To adhere to these strict prosodic formulae, the early translators all used one of the basic forms of verse translation proposed by James S. Holmes, the "analogical form" in imitation of archaism, the effect of which is "to

bring the original poem within the native tradition, to 'naturalize' it … in a period that is inturned and exclusive, believing that its own norms provide a valid touchstone by which to test the literature of other places and other times" (Holmes 97). Given these norms, which were exclusive to a period that tended "to have such highly developed genre concepts that any type of form other than the analogical would be quite unacceptable to the prevailing literary tastes," (97) "communicative" rather than "semantic" translation, to borrow Peter Newmark's terms, was almost inevitable (Yu 93). Although towards the end of the Qing dynasty the scholar poet Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲, 1848–1905) had initiated a poetic form that tested his political ideas in the form of the five-character ancient poem, using colloquial language, Byron translators like Hu Shi were more interested in emulating traditional art forms to generate an "authentic" Chinese poetry that communicates feelings authentically. With that in mind, the new genre that Huang strenuously promoted was, in the early Byron translators' views, not necessarily communicative, owing to his aim to break away from the traditional poetry and to explore "what the ancient people did not have."[12] This is because Huang's bold formulation was so experimental that there was no conjunction of speech (mouth) and events (happening). It naturally follows that when translating "The Isles of Greece," Hu Shi's choice of *saoti* is a meticulous consideration of the text's and the form's "compatibility with new approaches and the supposedly innovatory role that it may assume within the target literature," in which there happened to be "turning points, crises, or vacuums" (Even-Zohar 47). It is safe to say that the creative employment of the refrain word *xi* in the above quoted stanza, which illustrates Greece's animated response to the lyric songs coming from Byron, a poet of England, tactfully maneuvers between Quintilian's notion of apostrophe and Culler's interpretation. When Byron's invocation to Greece is implied in the rhetorical mark *xi* exclusive to the Chinese poetic context, the two apostrophic discourses of "poetic pretension" and "apostrophic fiction" (Culler 143, 145) merge and engender a new textual personality that seeks its poetic agency in Hu Shi, the translator who personifies the intimacy between foreign poetry and the revolutionary nation-state at the climax of its socio-political transformation. Moreover, the cultural-historically conditioned linguistic presentation of the apostrophic in Hu's translation also atemporally juxtaposes the present modernizing, revolutionary China in

[12] Though Huang's experimental stylistic reform based on his famous slogan "My hand writes my mouth" somewhat echoes Byron's poetic claim "to forsake the pen for the sword" at times of domestic trouble and foreign invasion.

turmoil with Byron's absent poetic Greece. This juxtaposition mediates poetic power by internalizing the tension underpinning the synchronic contingency of the social movements in Greece and in China into a dialectical, reversible alternation between two apostrophic commands. This mutuality combines the evocative power of apostrophic expressions in Byron's poem and Hu Shi's translation into one central issue with one dramatic stroke. On parsing Hu Shi's annotation of the above quoted stanza, Chu Chi Yu laments that the first line and "ten thousand years" in Hu's translation are simply redundant. Then he offers a further critique that though the last two lines succeed in retaining most of the original's words, to replace the word "echo" with "start" (起) is a detrimental loss due to its indication that "Greece is unresponsive to the song coming from the west (England/Byron)" (Yu 91). While Yu finds the whole meaning of the stanza to be incorrect in Hu Shi's rendition, it is arguable that these alterations are intentional adaptations to the apostrophe of the *saoti* that Hu adopts.

More significantly, in light of Quintilian's definition of apostrophe, the formal equivalence between apostrophe in English Romantic poetry and *xi* in Hu Shi's *saoti* translation of "The Isles of Greece" shatters what Hu calls the "narrow-mindedness" of Byron (Lee 128) and ruptures the formal restraints and thematic limitations of the original poem. This is also a crucial place where the alternative discourse of apostrophe amalgamates poetic tradition and contingent events and generates new meanings. To further clarify my point, it is necessary to recount the historical context of *sao* poetry. For example, to explore Hu Shi's "unfaithful" translation of Byron's lyric stanza above, one has to be fully aware of the *wu*'s (巫, the Chinese word for "shaman") ability to communicate with supernatural beings, as well as several important features of "Nine Songs," the source of which is Qu Yuan's widely influential political poem "On Encountering Trouble." The central motif of the poem is a love quest, which is conducted in a peculiarly shamanistic style: "The protagonist [the goddess] rides on supernatural creatures, crosses between heaven and earth, and commands the natural world to be at her service" (Cai 39). The quest, however, "fails because her lord breaks his promise," which "produces a profound melancholy that informs the entire verse" (39). This failure also causes "a temporary estrangement from her lover-deity" (39). Yet, despite all the disappointment, she remains loyal to him in the end. Qu Yuan appropriated this motif in "On Encountering Trouble," making it into the central metaphor of his relationship with his monarch and state. As we shall see, Hu Shi also drew inspiration from this dialogical relationship

in his translation of Byron's poem "The Isles of Greece," but what is different is that whereas in "On Encountering Trouble," Qu Yuan uses apostrophe performatively to address an intended self with the refrain word *xi*, in Hu Shi's translation of "The Isles of Greece," apostrophe, or rather, the interjection *xi*, *turns away* from the original audience of Byron's poem and is used instead to address the poem's intended Chinese readership. In the original first line ("The Scian and the Teian Muse"), which directly evokes the spirits of the poets supposed to have been born on Scios (a medieval name for Chios) and Teos, a subjectivity from nowhere intervenes (*wo* [我] or "I" as in 悠悠兮, 我何所思, "I recall things a long long time ago"). Though "The Isles of Greece" is one of the best-known instances of a poem-within-a-poem in the English language tradition, for which reason the addressees are sometimes ambiguous due to complex perspectives and heteroglossia, this intromission would be misleading if we only envision this "I" as a court poet entertaining partying Greeks without giving consideration to the recurrent motif of *xi* from the *sao* poetry form being adopted. Furthermore, despite the fact that Hu Shi correctly understood the muses in the first line to refer to Homer and Anacreon and made Byron's symbolism explicit in the second line of the translation, it is conspicuous that he rendered Anacreon, the great Greek lyric poet notable for his drinking songs and hymns, as 阿難, the Chinese transliteration of "Ānanda," one of the principle disciples and a devout attendant of the Buddha. For one thing, Ānanda literally means "happiness" or "bliss," which is the closest to Anacreon's role within the nation in a geopolitical sense. Additionally, to keep Homer while replacing Anacreon with a religious icon in Asia is sinicization. This helps to explain why Hu Shi, who was well-versed in English, would "misread" "your shores refuse" as "ten thousand years," and "misinterpret" the word "echo" as "started." All these alterations are in preparation of a "double consciousness" (Flatley 117) aroused by the interpolated apostrophe—the refrain word *xi*—that communicates a meaning-making diversion in the locution of the court poet. On the one hand, Hu interjects *xi* into the poem to address China as a modernizing nation-state through the uncanny intervention of 我 ("I"). This mediation renders apostrophe part of the larger structure of Byron's discourse of sarcasm in "The Isles of Greece," which otherwise conveys a melancholy sentiment that overshadows his disappointing relationship with the state that the poet had been fighting for, as well as his own nation. This shared failure to communicate with an intended audience is mirrored in the interplay of apostrophe and a rhetorical, constructed geopolitical proximity through translation. After all, China

as a civilization has certainly existed for "thousands of years," and the Greek Muses' songs did "start" from the west of China, if the audience to whom the court poet in Hu Shi's translation chants is the Chinese audience. As Lefevere notes, "the poetics consists of both an inventory component (genre, certain symbols, characters, prototypical situations) and a 'functional' component, an idea of how literature has to, or may be allowed to function in society" (Lefevere 4). Given its apostrophic function, the refrain word *xi* in Hu Shi's translation of "The Isles of Greece" is by no means a mere master trope of communicative situations "devoid of semantic reference" (Findlay 337); rather, the *turning away from* the Greek audience is not a rejection but "a specially deferential act of rhetorical inclusion" (338) made possible only by virtue of a double consciousness of melancholy embedded in the *Chuci* version of the poem. If "the style is the man" (Guo 889), the poetics Hu Shi employs in his chosen text has successfully transplanted his own personality and socio-political concern as a translator into Byron's poetic agency. This use of apostrophe from the Chinese poetic tradition testifies to a third space, that of translation, that exists between the apostrophic dichotomy raised by Culler.

Conclusion

As T. S. Eliot remarks in the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," tradition does not belong to the past despite its considerable affiliation with the past. It has wider significance: "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry. If we attend to the confused cries of the newspaper critics and the susurrus of popular repetition that follows, we shall hear the names of poets in great numbers" because poetry "is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (Eliot 17, 21). This sacrificial depersonalization of individual poets beyond the limits of space and time is also the continuation (and renewal) of tradition in its "much wider significance" (14). In his essay "Cognitive Mapping," Fredric Jameson also suggests that "one requires a cognitive map of social space for a sense of agency in the world more generally" (Flatley 77). The function of this map, Jameson says, is "to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole" (77). In other words, "in its negotiation of the gap between local subjective experience and a

vision of an overall environment, the cognitive map is an apt figure for one of the functions of ideology, which is, in Althusser's now classic formulation, 'the representation of the subject's imaginary relationship to his or her real conditions of existence'" (77). Hu Shi's translation of Byron, which depersonalizes the poet through the liminal but mutual space of apostrophe, not only suggests the potentiality of translation as an arena for an individual identity struggle but also identifies classical lyricism as a crucial access point through which the social moorings of poetry are viable and representable in a global context. Thus, Culler's theory on apostrophe is too provincial when it comes to a more universal cultural context. As a formal feature of the lyric, the apostrophic does germinate new meanings, for "the circulation of world literature is in fact part of the communication and interaction between different cultures" (Guo 887).

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Apostrofiranje Byrona: retorika tropov in ustvarjanje kitajske modernosti skozi prevajanje lirike

Ključne besede: angleška poezija / Byron / prevodi v kitajščino / literarni vplivi / apostrofa / mimetična rekonfiguracija / aluzija

Glede na Herderjevo stališče, da je eden od načinov za učinkovito vzpostavitev nacionalne identitete preučevanje pesnikov, ki so sposobni pripovedovati starodavne zgodbe in jih obuditi pred sedanjimi bralci, se razprava osredotoča na nenavadno tehniko apostrofiranja pri prevajanju lirike kot sredstva, s katerim se je angleški romantični pesnik Byron asimiliral v kitajski družbeno-zgodovinski kontekst. Članek se opira na tripartitno teorijo portretiranja Kennetha Burka, ki s »socioanagogičnim načinom analize« teži k umestitvi besedila v

»dramo človeških odnosov«, in pokaže, da prevajanje usklajuje dve uporabi apostrofe v lirskih tradicijah: pesniško konvencijo, ki je »ostanek arhaičnih prepričanj«, in optativni označevalec »moči poezije, da nekaj doseže«. Analiza dokazuje, da je Hu Shi (1891–1962) z zavestnim prevzemom arhaizma, namreč z iskanjem dinamične ekvivalence med refrensko besedo *xi* v *sao* poeziji, ki izvira iz tradicije *Chuci*, in apostrofo v zahodni romantični poeziji, interpoliral vzklikalsko tradicijo kitajske poetike v Byronovo pesem »The Isles of Greece« (»Grški otoki«) in se s tem retorično izognil tveganju, da bi vsaka apostrofa postala »klic klica«. Tako se je ustvarila kitajska modernost, bolj problematizirana različica pesmi pa je bila prek besedila v ciljnem jeziku posredovana predvidenemu kitajskemu bralcu.

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original scientific article
UDK 821.111.09-1Byron:81'255.4=581
DOI: https://doi.org/10.3986/pkn.v48.i3.09