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writers' lives

George Gordon, Lord Byron

乔治·戈登·拜伦

MARTIN GARRETT

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I can not ^{talk} speak of love to thee
though you art young, ^{gay & free} ~~as~~ fair & fair!

There is a spell, but don't see

off genuine Love
~~that should~~

~~What~~ - bids a genuine love

And not that a spell invitation could
be held, that -

For thee to wish a new
Teacher, whose name was
that woman who was in Galilee
and truth itself abiding

can last a year - before

The woman's heart 'there' only

Admit not these ^{last} in f

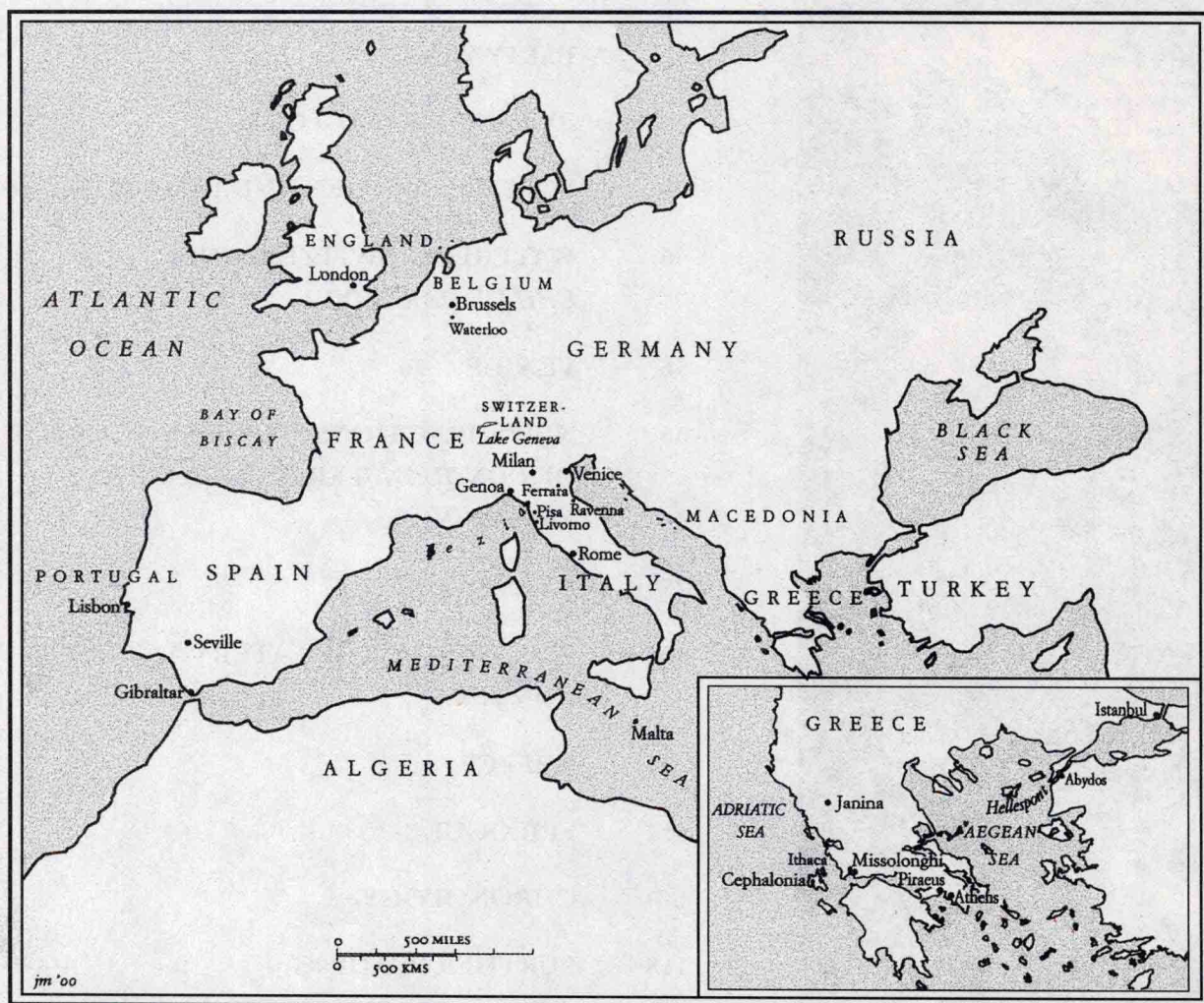
Yours worth ^{others love} ~~the~~ all,

Peribane tis fa fisaed, tumbana

But: false or true then can't tell
So much heart then from all to fear
In that unconquerable shell

George Gordon, Lord Byron

Maps of Great Britain,
right, and Europe,
below, showing places
where Byron lived or
visited.



总序

普通中国读者，包括英语专业的学生，对于英国文学的了解一般只限于个别经典作品，而对作家其人其事及其整个文学创作情况所知甚少。其中部分的原因是文学史家们编写的英国文学史往往注重介绍作品的情节内容，对作家的生活经历、作品的具体创作过程着墨不多。上海外语教育出版社从英国大英图书馆出版社(The British Library)引进出版“英国作家生平丛书”，弥补了这方面的缺憾。该丛书以图文并茂的形式讲述莎士比亚等14位英国著名作家的生平故事，同时穿插介绍他们的作品，有助于充实读者对英国文学的认识。

英国文学源远流长，经历了长期复杂的发展演变过程。在这个过程中，文学本体以外的各种现实的、历史的、政治的、文化的力量对文学发生着影响，而作家个体的独特生活遭遇也是造就文学杰作的一个重要因素。“英国作家生平丛书”对14位名家的传记式介绍，充分展示了这一点。戏剧方面，莎士比亚是英国文艺复兴时期最杰出的剧作家，他当过演员，其作品思想内容深刻、艺术表现手法精湛，历经几个世纪长演不衰。诗歌方面，浪漫主义诗人华兹华斯、柯勒律治、拜伦、济慈的不同身世对他们的诗歌创作及艺术风格产生深刻影响；维多利亚时代诗人伊丽莎白·巴雷特和罗伯特·布朗宁的爱情故事是英国文坛的一段佳话。小说方面，狄更斯是19世纪英国最伟大的小说家，他的许多小说以孤儿为主人公，这与作家童年时代的一段不幸经历有关；康拉德来自波兰，将自己奇特的身世背景和航海经历交融在字里行间；女作家奥斯丁、玛丽·雪莱、勃朗特姐妹、伍尔夫以女性特有的视角和敏锐的观察描摹人性与社会，思考妇女的生存状况，她们的小说无论在思想主题、题材表现方面，还是在叙述手法上，都有创新，对推动英国文学的发展作出了突出贡献。

“英国作家生平丛书”原版由大英图书馆出版社出版，体现出图书馆出版物的特点。书中配有大量的插图，有些是珍贵的手稿，有些是罕见的照片，有些是博物馆或美术馆珍藏的油画和素描，让读者有幸一睹作家的风采，产生直观的感觉。这些插图带有不同时代的印记，营造出浓厚的历史感。丛书的作者均为专业领域里有着较深造诣的学者，对史料的掌握系统全面，他们用生动的语言娓娓讲述作家生平事迹，点评具体文学作品，书末还附有供读者进一步阅读的书单，推荐了有代表性的文献，对英语专业学生撰写课程论文或毕业论文很有帮助。

“英国作家生平丛书”内容有趣，插图精美，文字简洁，兼顾普及性和专业性，是学习和了解英国文学的良师益友。

王守仁

南京大学

导 读



乔治·戈登·拜伦 (George Gordon Byron, 1788-1824) 是英国杰出的浪漫主义诗人。他出生于伦敦一个破落的贵族家庭，自幼患有跛足，一直生活在母亲的谩骂和迁怒中，但逆境造就了其敏感、自尊、好强、孤傲、反抗而又悲观、阴郁的性格。没落贵族的寒酸生活使他从小饱尝生活的艰辛。10岁时，拜伦幸运地承袭爵位，成为第六代拜伦男爵并得到两处产业，之后他逐渐染上了贵族子弟豪华放荡、纵情声色的习气。他曾就读于剑桥大学三一学院，21岁进入英国议会成为上议院的议员。他以议员身份发表演说，抨击政府当局的血腥镇压政策，公开支持工人运动。后来，他在国会演说时继续抨击政府对爱尔兰的压迫和奴役政策，因而遭到伦敦社会的围攻。他们以其婚变为由，对他大肆毁谤和攻击。无奈之下，拜伦于1816年愤然出走，永远离开英国，从此开始了异乡探求生命和信念的浪迹生涯。身为异乡客，他仍坚持革命思想，积极参与欧洲各国人民的解放斗争。在日内瓦，他还结识了雪莱夫妇，并受到雪莱的无神论和乐观主义思想的影响。

早在学生时代，拜伦就开始写诗，读书期间发表了诗集《闲散的時刻》(*Hours of Idleness*, 1807)，遭到《爱丁堡评论》(*Edinburgh Review*) 杂志的攻击。面对学术界的围攻，他以长诗《英国诗人和苏格兰评论家》(*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809) 进行反击，引起轰动，初次显露出其诗歌才华和讽刺锋芒。该诗讽刺了英国文坛的权威，批评了湖畔派诗人，同时特别强调文学的社会内涵和诗人的社会责任，在当时产生了很大的影响。

大学毕业后，拜伦曾于1809年至1811年间游历欧洲大陆，足迹踏遍西班牙、葡萄牙和希腊等国。在希腊，他创作了长诗《贺拉斯的暗示》(*Hints from Horace*, 1810)，继续对垄断英国文坛的湖畔派诗人进行抨击，提出诗歌“要忠于生活，要有社会使命感”的诗学主张。旅欧期间，他还写出了长诗《恰尔德·哈罗德游记》(*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*) 第一、第二章（第三、第四章分别完成于1816年和1818年）。诗的前两章在1812年一问世就轰动文坛，风靡全国。这是拜伦早期的作品，也是其成名作，以抒情的口吻记述了主人公游历和旅居欧洲诸国的见闻和观感。诗歌中的恰尔德·哈罗德是个孤独失意、多愁善感的贵族青年，对上流社会的生活感到厌倦，性格忧郁、孤僻，简直“心是冰冷的”，“眼是漠然的”，这在一定程度上也反映了诗人自身的某些思想情绪。

随后，拜伦又相继推出了6部气势宏大的“东方叙事诗”(*The Oriental Tales*): 《异教徒》(*The Giaour*, 1813)、《阿比多斯的新娘》(*The*

Bride of Abydos, 1813)、《柯林斯之围》(*The Siege of Corinth*, 1816)、《海盜》(*The Corsair*, 1814)、《莱拉》(*Lara*, 1814)和《帕里西纳》(*Parisina*, 1816)。这些作品以东欧、西亚一带为背景,充满异国浪漫情调。诗歌中还塑造了一系列孤行傲世、富有叛逆精神的主人公形象。不过,他们的反抗总是与孤独、忧郁结合在一起,乃至傲世独立,离群索居,并以悲剧而告终。

拜伦离开英国后曾一度在意大利定居,期间还创作了一系列剧作,如《曼弗雷德》(*Manfred*, 1817)和《该隐》(*Cain*, 1821)等,并开始创作其代表作《唐璜》(*Don Juan*, 1818-1823)。1823年7月,拜伦移居希腊,支援希腊人民反抗土耳其统治的斗争,翌年病死于希腊营地。

浪漫主义诗人大都坚信,神奇的想象力能使诗人洞察感官世界以外的神圣真理,因而总把想象看作是精神的最高领域。与之相比,拜伦的浪漫主义有着独特的个性,他热爱诗歌艺术,但更注重人生实践,他并未刻意塑造想象中的人物和景象,而是着眼于活生生的人和存在着的事物。他从古典主义诗人那里吸取刻画现实、批判现实的讽刺艺术。他曾在给朋友的信中写道:“哪怕是最缥缈的空中楼阁必须有现实来做基础,至于纯粹杜撰,那只是骗子的伎俩而已。”拜伦崇尚古典艺术,对德莱顿和蒲伯尤为推崇,并效仿他们使用英雄双韵体描绘现实的生活,其早期诗歌创作基本采用这一形式。

拜伦虽然强调艺术的现实性,但非常注重情感的宣泄,重视热情。他常在书信里谈论诗的创作,并明确表示:“诗是感情激动的表现。”他的《唐璜》中还有专节谈论热情,其中写道:“诗人心中压抑不住的热情,发而为诗歌,好比汹涌的波涛冲击着海岸一样。只是这种热情与想象是分不开的。”在拜伦看来,诗就是“想象的熔岩,只有让熔岩喷发出来,火山才能免于爆发”。


拜伦的诗歌充满抒情,热情奔放和自由是其主要特征,这使他成为19世纪初期最具魅力的英国诗人。他的《她在美中行》(*She Walks in Beauty*, 1814)是一首歌颂女性恬美的抒情诗。拜伦的情诗更是优美动人,不仅赞美情人的形体之美,而且歌咏爱情的纯真执着以及爱情的阴暗与忧郁。组诗《希伯莱曲》(*Hebrew Melodies*)中的《我心境阴暗》(*My Soul Is Dark*)和《当初我们俩分别》(*When We Two Parted*, 1808)都是以爱的悲哀为主题,写出了失恋者心中的哀曲,情意绵绵,凄楚清婉,读来催人泪下。后者开篇“默默无言地流着泪”与结尾“含着泪,默默无言”遥相呼应,很好地衬托出眼前难以言表的凄凄哀恸。

拜伦作品中的主人公大多以抗议者、叛逆者的形象著称。那些富有个人叛逆性的“拜伦式英雄”就是指与社会对立、孤独的反叛者,非凡、坚毅、高傲并经常以救世主形象出现的人物。虽然评论界并未看好这一形象,甚至还颇有微词,但“拜伦式英雄”确实已成为追求个人自由和个性解放、叛逆的代名词。拜伦的诗歌艺术以及其充满革命与浪漫爱情的一生,颇有传奇色彩。拜伦不愧为一个孜孜不倦的探索者,不断探求人生的意义、自由和爱情的真谛,其奋斗目标永远指向亟须开掘的新的艺术天地。

这部由大英图书馆出版社推出的《乔治·戈登·拜伦》融作家生平、创作主题、思想背景与学术争鸣于一体,书中记载的大量掌故和趣闻更是引人入胜,是一本图文并茂的文学入门书,也是拜伦爱好者与研究者的必读文献。

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Introduction

‘The great object of life is Sensation’, Lord Byron declared to his future wife in September 1813:

to feel that we exist, even though in pain. It is the ‘craving void’ which drives us to Gaming, to Battle, to Travel – to intemperate but keenly felt pursuits of every description whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment.

Byron aged 26, 1814, at the height of his popularity, in a painting by Thomas Phillips.

Newstead Abbey

This craving for sensation could be explained in rather simple psychological terms: Byron needed to assert his identity having lost his (in any case unreliable) father in infancy or, he was lame and needed to prove himself just as active and able as others. It can also be explained more broadly as characteristic of its time. The writings of eighteenth-century philosophers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had promoted the importance of individual feelings and sensibilities, and, at least at the beginning, the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte had seemed to promise the fulfilment of such individual liberty. Disappointed at the more complicated reality of events, a number of English writers, including William Wordsworth, had turned their back on their own youthful 1790s faith in revolution and unfettered personal responses. Byron’s generation, too young actually to have seen the revolution turn sour and not yet entirely convinced that Napoleon was more pragmatist than idealist, were readier to proclaim the power of ‘sensation’.



Whichever explanation one prefers, Byron at times derived similar stimulus or 'agitation' from his many sexual relationships and, usually more lastingly, from writing poetry. This last was an activity which he insisted was inferior to military or political action. But he also insisted that it was inescapable: that it was 'the lava of the imagination whose eruption prevents an earthquake', preventing the poet simply going mad. He often expressed scepticism about the idea of poetry as a sacred calling – as it was, for instance, for Wordsworth – yet he experienced a similar compulsion to write it. Byron has joined the list of poets we usually call 'the Romantics' but he could be downright derisory about other Romantics and had boundless respect for the more classical 'Augustan' poets against whom they – and in practice he – were in many ways reacting.

Byron's life exhibited similar paradoxes. He participated in idealistic love and casual sex, was bisexual, by turns an ascetic and a libertine, idle and furiously productive, a religious sceptic who admired Roman Catholicism, an aristocrat and a republican. This extravagantly contradictory figure has always been the delight of biographers; more people have heard that he was 'mad, bad and dangerous to know' (as Lady Caroline Lamb put it) than have read the poems. But the work and the life need not be separate: the work often explores versions of Byron's own life and opinions, contradictions and all. Byron's best poems refuse to avoid paradox. And in thus refusing easy answers he is arguably as much a modern poet as a Romantic or an Augustan.



Early Years

The Byrons were well known for their recurrent financial problems, sexual promiscuity, and drinking. The 5th Lord, the poet's great-uncle, killed a fellow landowner in a drunken argument in 1765 and, judged guilty only of manslaughter by the House of Lords, withdrew to Newstead Abbey, his ancestral home in Nottinghamshire, where he presided over its steady dereliction and impoverishment. Once keen on bombarding model boats on the lake at Newstead with a small cannon, as he became poorer he was reduced to such amusements as keeping crickets and staging cockroach races. He disinherited his son for rejecting marriage with an heiress – the sort of woman the poet was to call 'a golden dolly' – in favour of a love-match with his equally poor cousin Juliana. The family fortunes ought to have revived when Juliana's brother Captain John Byron (1756-1791) married two fairly 'golden' brides in succession – Amelia, Marchioness of Carmarthen, who died soon after the birth of their daughter, Augusta, in 1784, and in 1785 Catherine Gordon, an innocent young Scotswoman whom he met at Bath, centre of fashion and marriage-making.



Catherine Gordon, daughter of the 12th laird of Gight in Aberdeenshire, was very proud ('as haughty as Lucifer', said her son) of her descent from King James I of Scotland. More important, as far as her husband was concerned, was the £23,000 she brought him. He ran through much of it during their short marriage. Sometimes known as 'Mad Jack', he was an ex-army officer addicted to gambling, women, and high living. Mainly to avoid creditors, the couple moved several times between

Catherine Gordon Byron, the poet's mother, by Thomas Stewardson.

John Murray

England, France, and Scotland. (The ancestral estate at Gight soon had to be sold.) John Byron remained in France while Catherine gave birth to their son, the future lord and poet George Gordon Byron, at lodgings in Holles Street, London, on 22 January 1788. After this the captain appeared, intermittently, only in order to charm yet more money out of his wife. She protested violently at his foolishness but gave in; fortunately, knowing her own weakness, she had her remaining £4,222 of capital securely placed in the hands of trustees in March 1788. She grieved when the feckless husband died at Valenciennes, by dissipation or suicide, in 1791. But later, in her explosive moods, she would, says Byron, 'rake up the ashes of my father', abuse him and say, with strong Scottish emphasis, that her son would be 'a true Byrrone, which is the worst epithet she can invent'. George, who was two years old when he last encountered his father, later claimed 'I perfectly remember him; and had very early a horror of matrimony, from the sight of domestic broils' [quarrels].

Catherine Byron's black periods – mother and son too had their 'domestic broils' – were perhaps congenital but were exacerbated by her rather neglected childhood and troubled marriage and by her son's own wilfulness and love of mischief. People who knew Byron in Aberdeen, where he and his mother lived from 1789, remembered him pricking her fleshy arm with a pin as they sat in their pew at Old St Paul's Episcopal Chapel and interfering with a mill-wheel by 'pittin' bits o' sticks and orra things' in it. Bored during a visit to Lady Abercromby of Birkenbog, he put his coat and hat on a pillow and launched it from an upper room 'with a shriek ... in the hope of persuading his mother that he had accidentally fallen'. One reason for his need to let off steam in this way was his sensitivity about his lameness and the pain caused by attempts to treat it. There has been some debate about the exact nature of the condition, but we know that his right foot turned inward. Corrective footgear did little to help and perhaps even made matters worse. For much of his life he remained sensitive about the way he walked. As a child he allegedly shouted 'Dinna speak of it!' at a woman who had the temerity to allude to it; he had learnt more stoicism and more wit by the time he wrote, in 1811, that 'in another existence I expect to have *two* if not *four* legs by way of compensation'. Some have attributed Byron's melancholy, his sexual over-activity, or his poetic ability to his foot; more certainly there was a compensatory element in his passion for riding, boxing, and long-distance swimming.

After some limited early schooling, Byron was sent to Aberdeen Grammar School in 1794. The curriculum at this time consisted almost entirely of Latin; the rest of his education happened mostly at home. He read widely, liking especially history and the Old Testament, the whole of which he had apparently read by the age of eight. Richard Knolles' *General History of the Turks* (1603) was one of the works



which predisposed him towards his later interest in things eastern. Another legacy of these Scottish years was a love of mountains and waters. He retained in particular a strong impression of Lachin y Gair (or Lochnagar), with its 'eternal snows', towering 'so majestically above the rest of our Northern Alps'. The poem 'Lachin y Gair' included in Byron's *Hours of Idleness* (1807) dwells nostalgically on such scenes.

If Byron felt nostalgia for the land he left at the age of ten, he remembered with much more intense feeling his precocious love, possibly at the age of seven, for his cousin Mary Duff. 'I recollect all we said to each other, all our caresses, her features, my restlessness, sleeplessness....How the deuce did all this occur so early?'

Castle Street, Aberdeen, in 1812. In some moods the adult Byron dwelt fondly on the fact that he was 'half a Scot by birth and bred/A whole one' (Don Juan, X.17).

*The British Library
2370.b.4*

West view of Newstead Abbey, c.1815. The 'grand arch ... once screen'd many an aisle' of the medieval abbey. (Don Juan, XIII.59).

Newstead Abbey

he wondered in his journal in 1813. 'I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterwards; and yet my misery, my love for that girl were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever really been attached since'. Hearing later of her marriage 'was like a thunder-stroke – it nearly choked me'. Byron had sought, as often afterwards, an ideal love unlike his all-too-human relationship with his mother. Another early relationship proved more traumatic: starting when he was about nine, he explained to his friend Hobhouse, 'a free Scotch girl' – his nurse May Gray – 'used to come to bed to him and play tricks with his person'. This activity – now classifiable as child abuse – continued for perhaps two years until she was dismissed when the boy at last complained about her conduct (including 'perpetually beating him' when drunk) to John Hanson, the solicitor who looked after the Byrons' financial and other affairs.

Byron's life and his mother's changed suddenly when, in May 1798, he succeeded as 6th Lord Byron on the death of his great-uncle. The ten-year-old was,

