

Byron's Thyrsa Poems: Unfurling Retrospect, Tribulation, and a Quest for Resilient Forces

Jie-Ae Yu

(Changwon National University)

Yu, Jie-Ae. "Byron's Thyrsa Poems: Unfurling Retrospect, Tribulation, and a Quest for Resilient Forces." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 44.1 (2018): 67-86. This article aims to examine how Byron's Thyrsa Poems depict the speaker's perception of bereavement, his distress caused by the mortality and changeability of human affairs, and finally his vibrant search for resilient forces. Among Byron's early works, the Thyrsa cycle establishes the protagonist's diverse recollections of past affection and his heavy heart, which are resolute in overcoming the deeply ingrained affliction in his mind. The author germinates, in the series of Thyrsa odes, his later works charged with a variety of the speakers' encountering adversities, and their exuberant reactions to such a tough struggle with freedom of will. The protagonists of the Thyrsa poems prefigure how they reserve their painful hearts and simultaneously show a way of undertaking spiritual autonomy in order to be liberated from their current adversities. The paper also considers how Byron foreshadows their ironic consequence of such utmost endeavors. (Changwon National University)

Key Words: Thyrsa Poems, Memory, Perception, Adversity, Reinforcement

I

In his letter to Thomas Moore on 1 November 1811, Byron writes his admiration of Samuel Rogers, evaluating their "past correspondence as one of the happiest events" of his life (*BLJ* 2:122). In accordance with another of his missives sent to

John Cam Hobhouse on 16 November 1811, Byron highly regards Rogers's *The Pleasures of Memory* published in 1792, and praises its author for "a most excellent & unassuming Soul" (*BLJ* 2:129). Byron's awareness of *The Pleasures of Memory* provides a foundation for the three Thyrza poems, namely "To Thyrza I," "Stanzas," and "To Thyrza II" penned in November-December 1811. What *The Pleasures of Memory* chiefly concerns is that, as he proclaims in the "Analysis of Part I" (*The Pleasures of Memory* 1:6), Rogers traces "many sources of pleasures" in "the perception of any object," particularly in "the celebrated scenes of antiquity" and the "ruins of their ancient oak" (1:7, 9). His recognition of "ruins" takes on nostalgic sensitivity in "the internal operation of the mind" (1:6). The author "recalls the far-fled spirit of delight; / Instills that musing, melancholy mood" (1:19).

Byron adopts the intriguing relationship between remembrance and its significant impact on the mind of man. However, where Byron departs from Rogers's work is to take the deaths of the beloveds of poetic speakers as the main objects of their memoirs. These recollections cause his intrinsic ordeals to continue and be overcome in the end. In dealing with this matter, Byron, as Anne Falloon argues, resonates and transfigures into Thyrza (Falloon 23) a real person who was alleged to be his intimate male friend—John Edleston, a Cambridge University chorister who died of consumption in October 1811 immediately before the composition of the Thyrza works. Whereas Rogers finds in natural ambience "temper'd gleams of happiness" (*The Pleasures of Memory* 1:15), Byron focuses on both the speaker's depression, caused by the loss of his comrade Thyrza, and his consequent affliction imposed by the grievous recollection about him. Despite the differences between the two authors, Byron, who greatly appreciated Rogers's poem, was still affected by his awareness of the role of "ethereal power" to stimulate "the heart's light" upon the taint of "melancholy mood" (*The Pleasures of Memory* 1:11, 19). In dealing with the relation between the two conceptions of remembrance and perception, Byron, who was preoccupied with Augustine's religious works since the age of 20 (*BLJ* 2:147), also reworks this philosopher's key discourse on "mental trinities" that memory,

perception, and will are intimately connected with each other (Augustine, *On the Trinity* 299). Byron's last piece *Don Juan*, especially Canto Thirteen, indicates his evident interest in "Augustine's confessions." Augustine perceives his loss of righteous mind and behavior, but eventually restores his worn-out spirit and produces a dynamic vigor of repentance and love. What Byron establishes in the Thyrza poems through his reuse of Augustine is that, in treating the speakers' perception of the deceased person with an elegiac mood, he associates the adverse occasions of distress with a resolute pursuit of spiritual reinforcement.

Regarding reviewers' commentaries on Byron's deployment of the three intertwined conceptions in the Thyrza poems, few critics of his era paid attention to this aspect; unfortunately no journal article is found to suggest the significance of the series of the Thyrza poems within Byron's works. The commentators of our time, such as Rolf Lessenich, Clara Tuite, Anne Falloon, and Allen Brooke have briefly mentioned the Thyrza cycle, but their perspectives are bound up with their preconceptions of the writer's personal ambience (Lessenich 141, Tuite 63, Falloon 16, Brooke 369-70) particularly his "homosexual" obsession (Brooke 372) with Edleston. However, among modern reviewers, it is Bernard Beatty and Nicholas Gayle who deal with the poems in good-depth, departing from the author's "unprecedented intimacy with the choir man" (Bainbridge 22) in terms of the literary impacts of the Thyrza works on the "preoccupations and insights of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*" (Beatty 85) and "a metaphor of spiritual strength" in the character Aurora in Canto XV of *Don Juan* (Gayle 20).

Despite the insightful remarks of Gayle and Beatty on Byron's "use of remembrance" motif (Beatty 86) and the significant influence of the Thyrza poems on *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, both Beatty and Gayle have overlooked how the concealed memory is associated with other related ideas in the Thyrza works. This article will scrutinize how these works embed the intertwined conceptions of the speaker's perceptions of mortality, its adverse repercussion upon him, and his vigorous resistance against the customary reaction of sorrow, all of

which are portrayed in a poetic form of ode. The paper will also explore how Byron's Thyrza cycle foreshadows its three entwined conceptions manifested in his subsequent poems of the 1810-20s. Composed before Byron's early Turkish tales of 1812-3 and *Hebrew Melodies* of 1814-5, the Thyrza works prefigure the repressed submission of the speaker's heart to a sense of guilt involving the unanticipated calamity of a beloved, via the form of the speakers' address to the bereft. In addition, the Thyrza poems are charged with the speaker's perception of spiritual domain, which Byron manifests for the first time in *Hebrew Melodies* and his later works including *Don Juan*.

II

One of Byron's adolescent poems "Remembrance," written in seven lines when he was eighteen, shows his first evident infatuation with the subject matter of recollection, which he develops vastly and significantly in his numerous later works right up to his death. In this work, the speaker was preoccupied with what he saw in his nightmare which, in accordance with Jerome McGann's commentary, might resonate the "marriage" of Byron's most "beloved person" - Mary Chaworth, who has become the source of inspiration for his early elegiac works (*CPW* 1:356). The protagonist's "private enclosure of memory" (Beatty 91) on his unrequited love and fatal hearing of her permanent engagement disrupts his current life with bitterness: "days of happiness are few / Chill'd by misfortune's wintry blast, / My dawn of life is overcast" ("Remembrance" 3-5, *CPW* 1:5-6). The speaker's devastated reaction to the loss of his lover to another man in "Remembrance" has totally eliminated the seeds of "Love, Hope, and Joy" by driving him to conclude "alike adieu!" ("Remembrance" 3-5, *CPW* 1:6).

The poem "Remembrance" provides literary mottos such as memory and distress for Byron's three subsequent Thyrza works penned 5 years later, namely "To Thyrza

I," "Stanzas," and "To Thyrsa II," versed in more than 50, 30 and 50 lines respectively. In the Thyrsa cycle, Byron remarkably develops his coherent thematic concerns such as the concepts of memoir and suffering. However, he, instead of pessimistic perspectives, endorses the question of the possibility of hope and spiritual reinforcement amidst of the bitter memories. As Bernard Beatty pertinently suggests, the Thyrsa poems "helped to fashion the later accomplishment" (91) of the author, who diversifies their poetic situations with life vicissitudes and man's vigorous pursuit of liberation.

It is noticeable that "To Thyrsa I" has a poetic form of ode different from the speaker's own lyrical account in "Remembrance." The speaker articulates, without any conversation, his deep moaning at the bereavement of his lover. Byron's utilization of ode, in which a speaker addresses his main message to either a person or thing, sets up the protagonist's expression of his emotional distress at the death of his bosom friend who, as aforementioned, has been alleged to be John Edleston, a choir member at Cambridge University where Byron attended for his undergraduate education from 1811-3. The writer's use of the ode form intensifies the speaker's torment and dilemma which disclose his current psychological condition to his intimate but deceased friend. In *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*, Stuart Curran argues the function of the ode form in Romantic poetry, emphasizing that it involves "sophisticated occasions for a pitched battle" (71), whose metaphorical suggestion means "internalized tension" (73) in the mind of the speaker. Curran's remark is appropriate because in the case of Byron's "To Thyrsa I," the prominent function of the ode form is to bring forward the protagonist's "self-dramatized center" (Curran 74) on which he performs the "irreducible complexity of human experience" (74). Indeed, Byron dramatizes the protagonist's unreserved grief toward the comrade gone past, which left him to reflect on the purpose of his current life after such bereavement:

Without a stone to mark the spot,

And say, what Truth might well have said,
 By all, save one, perchance forgot,
 Ah, wherefore art thou lowly laid?
 By many a shore and many a sea
 Divided, yet belov'd in vain;
 The past, the future fled to thee
 To bid us meet — no — never again!
 Could this have been — a word — a look
 That softly said, 'We part in peace.

("To Thyrsa I" 1-10, *CPW* 1:346)

The speaker's perception of the undeniable "truth" about the mortality of his comrade generates an internal affliction of holding him "in his heart" ("To Thyrsa I" 16, *CPW* 1:346). His relentless "silent Sorrow," caused by his "death" ("To Thyrsa I" 13, 20, *CPW* 1:346-7), brings a discord into his mind, for the terrible acknowledgement of transience makes his memoir of affection bleared and eventually destructs his earlier love "in vain." In accordance with Nick Gayle, Byron's treatment of the "memory of the heart (21) continues until his final work *Don Juan* Canto 14, where his remembrance of the previous love evokes his amiable sentiment to lay the "bridge to Aurora Raby" (24), the last home of his spiritual affection.

Despite the soothing sensitivity aroused by his recollection, the protagonist's memories in "To Thyrsa I" plunge him into the pit of torment, since they are normally linked with the "death" of the object of his affection (Lessenich 142). Looking at his close friend "lowly laid" ("To Thyrsa I" 4, *CPW* 1:346) never ceases the distress associated with his unremitting struggle with maintaining his relieving of past contentment. What he chiefly recognizes during his adversity is to admit "ubi-sunt," the sense of loss of the time when they got along with each other in his presence:

Those eyes proclaim'd so pure a mind,

Ev'n passion blush'd to plead for more.
 The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
 When prone, unlike thee, to repine
 The song, celestial from thy voice,
 But sweet to me from none but thine;
 The pledge we wore — I wear it still,
 But where is thine? Ah, where art thou?
 Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
 But never bent beneath till now!

("To Thyrza I" 35-44, *CPW* 1:347)

Reminiscent of the traditional literary motto such as a sense of bereavement in Old English poems, for instance *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, the speaker's recalling of the "eyes," "tone," and "sweet" voice have imposed "the weight of ill" in his mind, deploring at the irrevocable existence of his beloved. He bears to confront the absence of his comrade with a stiff upper lip, whatever fate comes upon him. This reserved passion of grief leads to similar adversity of protagonists in subsequent works like *The Giaour* and *The Corsair*. The underlying difference between "Remembrance" and the Tales, in the manifestation of the speaker's retrospection, is to emphasize his "guilt-ridden conscience" (Paterson-Morgan 45) with regard to the death of his lover in the latter case. Their lead characters suffer from their ineradicable taint of memories of Leila and Medora, who died but affect their "sinking heart" forever (*The Corsair* I:323, *CPW* 3:361).

Whereas the speaker of "Remembrance" is afflicted with the loss of his friend, Byron, in subsequent works, encompasses the problem of internal complexity like "the immedicable soul's anguished sin" (Paterson-Morgan 45). The protagonists of *The Giaour* and *Lara* confess to the deceased lover their lack of commitment and courage to protect them from a murderer or self-destruction. Not only in the Turkish Tales of 1812, but also in his works of the mid-1810s and early 1820s, Byron extends the range of the speakers' memories into social and national spheres as in *Hebrew Melodies* and *Ode on Venice*, by dealing with the collective retention of

people on previous deprivation in Israelites' community, Venetian city, or the Roman Empire.

Byron's poem "Edleston," composed in late 1811 or early 1812 (*CPW* 1:459) after hearing the traumatic news about the death of his close friend in Cambridge in May 1811, shows the "immediate and anguished" aftermath of the ineradicable pain on his heart (Falloon 22). The speaker in another Thyrsa cycle recalls a similar sentiment of distress in the mind of the Prisoner of Chillon and Francis Foscari. They suffer from great misery after the deaths of three younger brothers in the *Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) and Junior Foscari in *The Two Foscari* (1822) due to unfair treatment of the contemporary ruling class. Byron's prosaic style of the poem, written in Italian and entitled "Edleston," articulate the direct and detailed psychological condition of his affliction: "as often as I lament you, dearest one, and your fate, this grief of mine grows more strongly upon me [. . .] I am wretched; only groans" (*CPW* 1:459). In comparison with the unreserved way of expressing his "grief" in "Edleston," "To Thyrsa I," written slightly later, establishes in a repressed and figurative manner the speaker's wriggling with the entwined sentiments caused by the huge grief of the fatality, and its subsequent repercussion of anguish. The reserved manner in an ode poetic form germinates a sustaining motif in two more Thyrsa poems as well as in his later dramatic works:

Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
 But never bent beneath till now!
 Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
 The cup of woe for me to drain.
 If rest alone be in the tomb,
 I would not wish thee here again;
 But if in worlds more blest than this
 Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
 Impart some portion of thy bliss,
 To wean me from mine anguish here.

("To Thyrsa I" 35-44, *CPW* 1:347)

In his letter to Robert Charles Dallas, written on 11 October 1811, Byron revealed his shock and soreness, which are resounded in "Edlestone": "I have supped full of horrors [. . .] It seems as though I were to experience in my youth the greatest misery of age" (*BLJ* 2:110). In addition to the outspoken expression of wretchedness in the work, this missive indicates the unbearable convulsion upon his sensitive heart, which was charged with his mutual endearment. When it comes to "To Thyrsa I," one of the remarkable things is the introverted way of undertaking the wounded heart. "The weight of ill" and "the cup of woe" register the speaker's way of taking the distress into his deep sentiment, which becomes a significant motto of "silent suffering" in his later poems ("Prometheus" *CPW* 4:6).

The speaker's eagerness "to wean" from his "anguish" is not articulated but reserved in his tormented soul, and this introverted attitude is reenacted in Harold of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Cantos III-IV. He suppresses a sense of isolation from his society due to their preconception of his "solecism" (Elfenbein, "Romantic Poetry" 90), feeling as if he is "as a weed" (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* III:16, *CPW* 3:77). This portrayal of unspoken distress is well established through the protagonist of "To Thyrsa I" among Byron's early works. The painful voice from the speaker's suppressed stance in this ode seems irremovable so long as he is alive. This upholding of his heavy heart is further expressed in another poem of the Thyrsa cycle entitled "Stanzas," where a protagonist moves to put his utmost endeavor on current issues while undertaking the seemingly irresolvable problem of suffering.

The speaker's chief concern in "Stanzas" is to react to his distress caused by the mortality of his bosom friend and struggles with overcoming the adverse fortune. The main difference between "To Thyrsa I" and "Stanzas" is that he, unlike the protagonist of "To Thyrsa I," looks into his afflictive heart in detail by associating with the effect of music. As John Clubbe suggests by "Byron's musical references" (168), the dominant sound images in "Stanzas" are utilized for unfolding the procedure of the speaker's response to his reclusive pain. The close link between the

heart and auditory image of music is taken for the first time at a personal level among Byron's works, which contrasts with the "social aspect of music" in *Hebrew Melodies* (Yu 45) for strengthening the pleasant memories of the Israelites on their past splendor. The protagonist of "Stanzas" reveals, via the indicative sound of music, an individual domain of frustration, but is simultaneously determined to use "memory" as a "part of the armory of the awakened heart" (Beatty 87) against the irrevocable occasion:

Away, away, ye notes of woe!
 Be silent thou once soothing strain,
 Or I must flee from hence, for, oh!
 I dare not trust those sounds again.
 To me they speak of brighter days:
 But lull the chords, for now, alas!
 I must not think, I may not gaze
 On what I am, on what I was.
 ("Stanzas" 1-8, *CPW* 1:349)

In Byron's letter to Francis Hodgson on December 8 1811, he encloses this "sad" poem (*BLJ* 2:140), deploying the speaker's perception of the paradoxical impacts of music on his suffering heart. Byron develops the protagonist's perception of music in his poetry collection of *Hebrew Melodies* composed between 1813-4, in which he emphasizes the "diverse functions of music" in "personal, social, and national domains" (Yu 29, 43, 45). However, what Byron accentuates in the earlier poem "Stanzas" is the speaker's ironical attitude toward musical notes. In one sense, his wish for the silence of the "notes of woe" unveils his afflictive inner state, which is eager to "flee" from his assimilation to the mournful sound. In another way, his contrary eagerness is to hear music for reminding him of "brighter days."

However, the speaker of "Stanzas" realizes the latter desire to be an illusionary expectation because he conceives its fulfillment to be impossible so long as his "peculiar intensity and unprecedented intimacy" (Bainbridge 21) have to be bound

up with the actuality of the bereavement. He anticipates a melodious music which recovers his pleasant memory of the foregone event, but in another sense, he grasps the limitation of such amiable sound and realizes that any music will not console his wretched state of mind impacted by his painful memoir of the transience of life:

The voice that made those sounds more sweet
Is hush'd and all their charms are fled;
And now their softest notes repeat
A dirge, an anthem o'er the dead!
Yes, Thyrsa! yes, they breathe of thee,
Beloved dust! since dust thou art;
And all that once was harmony
Is worse than discord to my heart!
("Stanzas" 9-16, *CPW* 1:349-50)

Despite the speaker's affirmative recognition of "the voice" which is heard through his imagination, it disappears and "all their charms" become blurred. This embarrassment does not last long since it is quickly overlapped with a "dirge" designed as an "anthem o'er the dead." His realization of the unanticipated consequence of "the discord" of the music to "his heart" embeds his unspoken ordeal to confront his ceaseless difficulty with converting his sorrow into a joy. Byron depicts this limitation of the listener's perception and attitude in experiencing the power of music in this poem, but he later propounds the role of music in healing one's heart and directing it to a "bursting spirit" ("The Harp the Monarch Minstrel Swept" 11, 18, *CPW* 3:290).

Byron's "Stanzas" proceeds to lay bare the intensity of the distressing heart of the speaker. This dark internal aspect, represented as "some of the most personal poems" (Levine 130), unfolds his persistent attitude toward the dead as well as his own distress. His self-consolation by regarding the deceased Thyrsa as a "lovely dream" and everlasting "star," however, becomes unstable and chaotic, since his

remembrance of him is still tied up with real life to confront the absence in a sensory manner:

Sweet Thyrza! waking as in sleep,
 Thou art but now a lovely dream;
 A star that trembled o'er the deep,
 Then turn'd from earth its tender beam.
 But he, who through life's dreary way
 Must pass, when heav'n is veil'd in wrath,
 Will long lament the vanish'd ray
 That scatter'd gladness o'er his path.

("Stanzas" 25-32, *CPW* 1: 350)

The speaker's further realization of the "lament," which he seems to hear from his absent friend, is founded upon "life's dreary way" which, he believes, is still placed before the bereaved. His belief is apparently realistic and does not involve the world beyond actual life. His preoccupation with the gloomy thought anticipates the "oppressed of the earth" (Kelsall, "Byron's Politics" 53), for instance the protagonists of Byron's domestic poems "Epistle to Augusta," *Parisina*, and *The Prisoner of Chillon*. Byron further elaborates on their tormented spirit which is fated to bear until the right time arrives for their liberation. Byron's description of such bitter heart and its boundary, however, does not indicate the protagonist's resolute determination to liberate from the present moment. Prefiguring *The Bride of Abydos*, *Lara*, and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Cantos I-II, Byron's "Stanzas" initiates the boundary of the heart in overcoming the negative condition necessitated by the discordant recollection.

Byron's "To Thyrza II" is paralleled to the aforementioned Thyrza poems in that it largely concerns how the speaker evolves his attitude toward the time of afflictive moments caused by remembrance. However, unlike the two Thyrza works, this ode brings forward the protagonist's searching for resilient force amidst suffering and its

impact on his heart, which sustains to be investigated in Byron's later works from the mid 1810s until the final Canto of *Don Juan*. The commencement of the work registers the similar perception of the poetic speaker regarding the "pangs that rend my heart in twain / One last long sigh to love" ("To Thyrsa II" 2-3, *CPW* 1:350). Where this poem and "To Thyrsa I" is different in commencement is that the latter endorses the wrecked sentiments of sorrow and pain, whereas the former shows the protagonist's vibrant attempt to be "back to busy life again" because he believes that it "suits" him "well to mingle now / With things that never pleas'd before" ("To Thyrsa II" 5-6, *CPW* 1:351). His expectation of peace consoles him to enjoy the present moment. This attitude of resignation is linked with one of the protagonists in Byron's later dramas, Sardanapalus who indulges his "mode of life" to "eat and drink" as the "rest's not worth a fillip" (*Sardanapalus* I, i. 252, *CPW* 6:252). Sardanapalus admits man's transience and wishes to resign from the "bonds of "patriarchal duty" (Kelsall, "Byron and the Women of the Harem 168), whereas "To Thyrsa II" focuses on the speaker's pursuit of pleasure, but eventually closes with chaos about choosing such a way of life:

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring'
 Man was not form'd to live alone:
 I'll be that light unmeaning thing
 That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
 It was not thus in days more dear,
 It never would have been, but thou
 Has fled, and left me lonely here;
 Thou'rt nothing, all are nothing now.

("To Thyrsa II" 9-16, *CPW* 1:351)

The speaker's realization of "nothingness" is recovered shortly, for his memory of the dead turns all "smiles" into weeping while he thinks he has gone off and "left" the protagonist lonely here. By contrast with Sardanapalus's resignation at his life filled with "mortal misery" (*Sardanapalus* I, ii, 352, *CPW* 6:33), the speaker of

"Stanzas" does not feel free from his deeply ingrained distress necessitated by the past days "dear" to him.

"Stanzas" investigates the speaker's irremovable burden (that Thyrsa "has fled"), permanently disrupts his radiant spending of time. His consciousness of "nothingness" is also in stark contrast with Sardanapalus's hedonistic concept of "luxury in pleasure" (Elfenbein, "Byron" 62). He seems unable to escape from his constant sorrow, except some of thought like divine contemplation free from worldly concern. The author initially treats the limitation of one's sadness connected with the weakness of man's sensitivity to loss:

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
 The smile that sorrow fain would wear
 But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
 Like roses o'er a sepulchre.
 Though gay companions o'er the bowl
 Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
 Though pleasure fires the madd'ning soul,
 The heart - the heart is lonely still!

("To Thyrsa II" 17-24, *CPW* 1:351)

Byron re-endorses the power of the music of the "lyre" upon the speaker's "madd'ning soul," augmenting its bitterness that "mocks the woe that lurks beneath" the bottom of his heart. The underlying difference of the function of music deployed in "To Thyrsa II" is that the protagonist maximizes the ironic consequence of his dependence on the soothing effect of the "lyre." Like "roses o'er a sepulchre," the musical instrument brings a discordant sound into his "sense of ill," which does not appear to be cured in any way possible. The "heart" of the speaker is left with loneliness, whereby his experience of "sorrow" from hearing music apparently leads his "heart" to be "lonely still." Like in "Stanzas," the protagonist of "To Thyrsa II" falls into sadness whilst accessing the mournful notes, whose effect deepens his

distressful heart.

The dark recognition of deeply rooted anxiety does not continue in "Stanzas," but is directed to generate "sublime" power (Mathijsen 41) to escape the enticement of depression. The speaker's heart is filled with "a heavenly light" into his "pensive eye" which also communicates with "Thyrza" assumed to reside in afterworld. His struggling heart in this world does not seem bearable, hence he is searching for another realm where his broken heart is rejuvenated with the force of reinforcement. Byron's evident interest in the divine presence in *Hebrew Melodies* is here prefigured via the resilient attitude of the protagonist of "Stanzas" toward his current tribulation:

On many a lone and lovely night
 It sooth'd to gaze upon the sky;
 For then I deem'd the heav'nly light
 Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye:
 And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
 when sailing o'er the Aegean wave,
 'Now Thyrsa gazes on that moon—'
 Alas, it gleam'd upon her grave!

("To Thyrsa II" 25-32, *CPW* 1:351)

Byron's recurrent motif of "fever's sleepless bed" ("To Thyrsa II" 33, *CPW* 1:352), which leads to "many a lone and lovely night," ironically generate the speaker's eagerness to search for the "sky" which stands for the world beyond the present distress in his heart. The pictures of Cynthia's noon" and "Aegean wave" also denote where his soul saunters and attempts to liberate from worldly matters. This optimistic attitude toward the loss of his internal pleasure departs from the repressed torment of the protagonists in his early Tales such as *The Giaour*, *The Corsair*, *Lara* and *The Bride of Abydos*, where they do not exert their choice of action in suffering from past memories. Byron's "To Thyrsa II," however, deals with his distress as serious as in two aforementioned poems, but the distinctive change in the speaker of "To Thyrsa II" shows a more complex psychological condition, since its

protagonist determines to seek the way of liberating himself from adverse fortune. This work plays a role in foreshadowing "a nameless and eternal thing" ("When Coldness Wraps This Suffering Clay" 31, *CPW* 3:302) and the "untrodden spheres" of "immortality" ("If That High World" 5, 15, *CPW* 3:291) in the poems of *Hebrew Melodies*.

Byron's religious tendency, as shown in his letters and journals (*BLJ* 1:14-6, 2:99, 9:45-7), deploys the holy light which is linked with a different image but similar connotation of a "lovely bird, with azure wings" in *The Prisoner of Chillon* (10:268, *CPW* 4:12). The bird symbolizes spiritual vigor for the prisoner to survive, despite his abhorrent state of confronting the continuous deaths of his siblings: "a light broke in upon my brain, —it was the carol of a bird" (*The Prisoner of Chillon* 10:251-2, *CPW* 4:12). Byron anticipates the speaker's sense of "light" into the darkness of the protagonist's heart. The mental spark brings a remarkable "change" into the structural arrangement of the poem once filled with gloomy development of the inner state:

Thou bitter pledge! thou mournful token!
 Though painful welcome to my breast!
 Still, still, preserve that love unbroken,
 Or break the heart to which thou'rt prest!
 Time tempers love, but not removes,
 More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
 Oh! what are thousand living loves
 To that which cannot quit the dead?
 ("To Thyrsa II" 49-56, *CPW* 1:352)

The speaker's perception of "heavenly light" is, however, unstable, since it falls into chaos which dismantles the peace of his mind. His return to a recognition of Thyrsa as a "bitter pledge" and "mournful token" ironically becomes "painful welcome" to his heart. This bleak awakening resonates the afflictive moment of bereavement depicted in the first two poems about Thyrsa, but the third reveals a different realm

of attitude of the speaker by incorporating another territory of celestial entity about his existence in the ethereal world after death. This transcendental consideration of his identity provides the speaker with consolation, which Byron later develops in the tragic situations of protagonists such as the prisoner, Tasso, and Mazeppa in his works of the mid and late 1810s. The speaker once revealed to Thyrza his "heart that gave itself with thee is silent," but now he becomes confident that he would "preserve that love unbroken," and that "time tempers love, but not removes / More hallow'd when its hope is fled." His grievous internal state turns out to be so divine that it surpasses the current pain necessitated by the boundary of mortality. He becomes aware of the eternal mind of Thyrza with whom the protagonist sustains his wretched way of life with positive conception that the "love" between them would not be affected by the vicissitudes of time and circumstance. This realization is one of the most remarkable changes in the speaker's attitude among the three Thyrza poems. The protagonist's reinvigorating hope goes beyond his gloomy heart which was torn apart and appeared to be forever constant. Indeed, his new awareness of Thyrza's "heavenly" substance rejuvenates vibrant spirit of resilience to overtake his ineradicable memoir and ordeal by augmenting the range of his consciousness of Thyrza's mortal territory into another realm of his spiritual perseverance.

III

This article has examined how Byron's Thyrza poems depict the speaker's recollection of past events regarding his close relationship with a bosom friend, affliction by an adverse fortune encumbered by his bereavement, and strong wish to be liberated from the apparently irremovable burden of his heart. The author pursues his coherent thematic concern with loss and vicissitude, which was established in his first collection of poetical anthology, *The Hours of Idleness* where he inculcates the idea of memoir of what happened on persons or conspicuous ancestors. In this initial

collection of earlier poems, Byron's portrayal of loss focuses on the current occasions of one's death and immediate grief via the form of representation of the speaker's bitter emotional aspect in a general voice. What is noticeable in the Thyrza works is that they register the poetic form of ode in which the speaker sets up a more intimate dialogue between himself and the listener—the deceased person. The speaker's nostalgic and calamitous sentiment becomes more intimate and straightforward since he enters the invisible world of communication between the two persons in spite of no audible reaction from the departed recipient. Byron's deployment of the ode form is effective in unfolding the speaker's bottom of the heart associated with the Romantic spirit of accounting the speaker's unique individual experience at a personal level.

The writer's incorporation of the grievous recollection, penned in the ode form, extends into his domestic poems of 1816 after his self-exile in April 1816, for instance "To Augusta" where the speaker is so sympathetic to the crash of Augusta's public fame due to the speaker's involvement with guilt and then expresses his sense of penitence for having imposed utmost calamity upon her. In addition to the turbulent works of 1816, his later dramatic works features the protagonists' addresses of his memoirs on the previous glories of a city or nation to Venice or the Roman Empire. The Thyrza works certainly establish the private level of retrospect which will be expanded into social and national domains in the author's various later works where the extent of the speaker's memory is diversified and propounded. In addition, Byron's deployment of remembrance in the Thyrza poems contributes to anticipating a further intertwined correlation of the speaker's retentiveness with his perception of the irreducible torment caused by his keen sensitivity to deprivation and nothingness.

Byron's Thyrza poems intensify the internal struggle of the speaker particularly with the vicissitude of human endeavors and their ironic emanations. The inner affliction, linked with the speaker's cognizance of mortality, shows the paradoxical facets of renunciation and defiance against his inexorable preeminence of discomfort ceaselessly affected by the bereavement of his close friend. The speakers of

"Stanzas" and "To Thyrsa II" deal with the dilemma of reacting to their own freedom of choice between action and inaction. The discordant response within the speakers becomes a recurrent motif in many other subsequent dramatic works of Byron, such as *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, *Werner*, and also *Don Juan* particularly Cantos I, II, VII-VIII, and the English Cantos where the protagonists are commonly afflicted with the conflicting heart torn between their resistance to the bereft moment and vibrant defiance against the wretched circumstance. The Thyrsa poems also embed, for the first time among the writer's works, a clear indication of the speakers' invigorated awakening into the ephemeral substance of the bereft. Byron's last composition of "To Thyrsa II" brings forward the germination of his contemplation into the unfathomable territory of human experiences beyond this world charged with perpetual bereavement, adversity, and vicissitude.

Works Cited

- Augustine. *The Trinity*. Trans. Edmund Hill. Brooklyn: New City Press, 1991. Print.
- Bainbridge, Simon. "Lord Ruthven's Power: Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Doubles and the Byronic Imagination." *The Byron Journal* 34.1 (2006): 21-34. Print.
- Beatty, Bernard. "'Accomplished verse' and 'awakened hearts': Byron's 'Thyrsa Poems'." *The Byron Journal* 33.2 (2005): 79-96. Print.
- Brooke, Allen. "Byron: Revolutionary, Libertine, and Friend." *Hudson Review* 56.2 (2003): 369-76. Print.
- Byron, George Gordon. "To Thyrsa I," "Stanzas," "To Thyrsa II," and other works. *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*. Vols. 1, 3, 4, 6. Ed. Jerome J. McGann. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, 1991. Print. Abbreviated as *CPW*.
- _____. *Byron's Letters and Journals*. Vols. 1, 2, 9. Ed. Leslie A. Marchand. London: John Murray, 1973, 1979. Print. Abbreviated as *BLJ*.
- Clubbe, John. "Review of Wilson's *Byron: Heritage and Legacy*." *The Byron Journal* 36.2 (2008): 167-8. Print.
- Curran, Stuart. *Poetic Form and British Romanticism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986. Print.
- Elfenbein, Andrew. "Byron: Gender and Sexuality." *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Ed.

- Drummond Bone. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 56-76. Print.
- _____. "Romantic Poetry and the Standardization of English." *The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry*. Eds. James Chandler and Maureen N. McLane. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008. 76-97. Print.
- Falloon, Anne. "Byron's Week in Middleton." *The Byron Journal* 41.1 (2013): 15-27. Print.
- Gayle, Nicholas. "Byron, the matchless lily and Aurora." *The Byron Journal* 44.1 (2016): 15-26. Print.
- Kelsall, Malcolm. "Byron's Politics." *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*. Ed. Drummond Bone. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 44-55. Print.
- _____. "Byron and the Women of the Harem." *Rereading Byron*. Eds. Alice Levine and Robert N. Keane. London and New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. 165-74. Print.
- Lessenich, Rolf. "Byron: the Sanity or Madness of Same-sex Love." *The Byron Journal* 44.2 (2016): 139-49. Print.
- Levine, Alice. "Byronic Annotations." *The Byron Journal* 35.2 (2007): 125-36. Print.
- Mathijsen, Marita. "The taming of Byron in the Netherlands." *The Byron Journal* 41.1 (2013): 35-48. Print.
- McGann, Jerome. "Commentary." *Lord Byron: The Complete Poetical Works*. Vol. 1. Jerome J. McGann. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. Print.
- Paterson-Morgan, Emily. "'This all blasting tree': Byron, Thalaba, and the Upas Tree myth." *The Byron Journal* 44.1 (2016): 41-51. Print.
- Rogers, Samuel. *The Pleasures of Memory*. London: Thomas Bensley, 1801. Print.
<https://archive.org/details/pleasuresmemory02rogegoog>. Web on 10 August.
- Tuite, Clara. "Tainted Love and Romantic Literary Celebrity." *ELH* 74.1 (2007): 59-88. Print.
- Yu, Jie-Ae. "Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* and the Manifold Repercussions of Music." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 42.4 (2016): 29-47. Print.

유지애

주소: (51140) 경남 창원시 의창구 창원대학교 20 창원대학교 인문대학 영어영문학과

이메일: jieae@changwon.ac.kr

논문접수일: 2017. 12. 23. / 심사완료일: 2018. 01. 30. / 게재확정일: 2018. 02. 10