

Byron's *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*: Unfurling Perceptions of Glory and Territory of Human Endeavors

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Yu, Jie-Ae. Byron's *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*: Unfurling Perceptions of Glory and Territory of Human Endeavors. *The New Studies of English Language & Literature* 69 (2018): 275-293. The main purpose of this article is to examine how Lord Byron's early work, *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*, explores the characters' pursuit of glory for their nation and the limitation of their endeavors in encountering irresistible, tragic circumstances. The main figures, such as Nisus and Euryalus, embody man's diverse stances to unanticipated occasions manifested in the course of undertaking warfare. In dealing with this matter Byron, who had an evident attentiveness to reworking the classical resources of his predecessors throughout his career, adopts the accounts of Nisus and Euryalus treated in Book 9 of Virgil's *The Aeneid* with reference to thematic concerns, plot structure, and characterization. In *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*, Byron substantiates his previous avocation by scrutinizing the vibrant perspectives of the two characters in the pursuit of a glorious cause for their country, while focusing on their close allies and friendship during the foray through which the dislodged Trojans constituted themselves among the inhabitants of Italy. (Changwon National University)

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I

In his Newstead Abbey poems collected in his first published anthology of 1807, *The Hours of Idleness*, Byron portrays how his glorious ancestors, embodied through the gigantic architecture of the religious institution, not only prospered their political and religious hegemony but also undertook its unanticipated decline due to the rise of King Henry VII during the Reformation. "Leaving Newstead Abbey" (composed in

November 1803) and “Elegy on Newstead Abbey” (written between 1803 and 1806) clearly show the speakers’ recognitions of the mutability of man’s pursuit of glory and its boundary which might have occurred during warfare: “Thro’ thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle; / Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay” (On Leaving Newstead Abbey” 1-2). “Elegy on Newstead Abbey,” penned after the poem, reiterates the growth and decline of man’s enterprises for the glorification of their forefathers and established organizations. It accentuates “the lapse of time” manifested in “fast falling, once resplendent dome” (“Elegy on Newstead Abbey” 1, 14). Byron’s emphasis on the “shades of heroes” (“Leaving Newstead Abbey” 21) is situated in his spatial attentiveness associated with his recognition of the “decay of his ancestors’ historic residence” (Yu, “Newstead Abbey Poems” 87).

Among the collected works of *The Hours of Idleness*, it is in *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* that the author dramatizes, aside from the desolation of the antecedent abode, man’s volitions and actions which happened in warfare. Byron’s focus on man’s vital activities and his complex psychological phenomena foreshadows the subsequent motif of the struggling relationship between human fate and willpower which are scrutinized through various characters affected by social, political, religious, and psychological domains. One of the underlying features in *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* is to establish the intimate relationship between the two heroes so as to embody Byron’s persistent consideration of the irresolvable relationship between human willpower and its adverse and unexpected forces. Byron’s final work, *Don Juan*, queries this same matter, but his investigation of the issue has not been resolved, rather become more complex. The significance of the earlier poem *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* is to prefigure the cause and boundary of the power of man’s free will. The characters’ pursuit of the glorification of their nation is deployed, but they reveal different attitude toward the

irreducible power of human resolution in overcoming the adversity and unexpectedness of one's occasions. Regarding *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* Byron's letter dated 22 January 1813, written to Thomas Moore, also manifests his alertness to "fame," "friendship," and "felicity" (BLJ 3:67) in constructing the lead figures and plot structure of the work.

In reference to the critical views of Byron's time on *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*, a commentator who contributed to *The Anti-Jacobin Review* (1807) mentions his adoption of the "spirit of the original" piece of Virgil's *The Aeneid* (407). Another reviewer for *The Beau Monde* (1807) praises "the poet's imagination" to rework the classical resource (88), which was evaluated favorably for his "school exercise" (88). Among modern commentators few reviewers, except John Clubbe, have made a direct literary link between *The Aeneid* and Byron's adapted work. Judith Herz points out "the Ovidian model of erotic love" in "*The Aeneid's* description of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus" (10). James Nohrnberg mentions Nisus's sacrificial attempt to "save Euryalus" (24) in the mythical narrative of the Latin work. By contrast to these perspectives, Clubbe brings in the subject of "Byron's use of glory" (167) in an interpretation of *The Aeneid*. Despite their useful remarks, this paper will inquire in what aspects the writer perceives and adopts the original version and how his formulation of the three elements contribute to the development of his subsequent works of the 1810s and 20s. It will examine how Byron's deployment of the two figures reveals their coherent and diverse attitudes toward glory, destiny, and the boundary of human efforts set in unanticipated circumstances.

II

Byron's early poems, dated 1803 and anthologized 4 years before the first poetical collection *The Hours of Idleness* published in 1807, are

characterized by the speaker's nostalgic and bitter memoirs of his past experiences by way of recollecting the separation or tragic bereavement of his close friends and relatives. This distressing atmosphere becomes one of the recurrent themes throughout Byron's literary career until his last piece *Don Juan* in 1822-3. "Then Peace to Thy Spirit," "Remembrance," and "To Mary Charworth" commonly treat the speakers' perceptions of loss of pleasant moments with their emotionally attached figures such as school mates and female mistresses. Pondering over the deceased characters, the speakers are willing to accept the transitory aspect of human life with resigned meditation on the great virtue and renown of their name. "Soliloquy of a Bard in the Country," however, reveals the speaker's lament at the vicissitude and temporariness of man's pursuit of glory when he notices the fruitless and self-centered ambition of a poet in the past: "If you your great protection still withdraw, / Whose Praise is Glory, and whose Voice is law! / Soon must I fall an unresisting foe" ("Soliloquy of a Bard in the Country" 73-5).

While dealing with the glorification of a bard, the author declares the probability of his miserable death when spoiling the significance of glory for the poet which, he believes, should be applauded and evaluated for "their amorous flames in verse" ("Soliloquy of a Bard in the country" 17) by general readers living in the current and future world. The speaker's attitude toward the bard's eagerness to search for his own self-centered objective, indicated by "bread" (24), features his cynical tone, seriously questioning "where Beauty forms the shield" and also raising the problem of "moral's shocking" (36, 44). As in his later work *The Prophecy of Dante* published in 1821, Byron discerns "the humble offering" of his "Muse" (65), where the speaker believes in the everlasting glory and "resilient spirit" of the bard (Yu, "Perceptions of Decline" 73), who looks into truth and wisdom to "undergo mortality" and "irreparable wrongs" (*The Prophecy of Dante* II:7, 18).

In *The Hours of Idleness*, Byron sustains the speaker's elegiac contemplation into the bereavement of contemporary figures who possessed a great social distinction. Both Newstead Abbey poems and elegiac works present how the speakers reveal their "sentiment and expression" (*The Poetical Register* 538) concerning the mutability of man's renown inscribed in the ancient architecture. They are aware of the transitory feature of one's obtainments which will eventually pass away with the wreck of time for future generations. The ruined site evokes the speaker's desolated sentiment impacted by "life-extinguished clay" ("Elegy on Newstead Abbey" 30). The speakers' contemplations on the destructive power of fate are expanded into the range of human occasions by bringing in the deaths of their close comrades. The difference of the elegiac odes in *The Hours of Idleness* from Byron's earlier works, like "Then Peace to Thy Spirit," "Remembrance," and "To Mary Charworth," is to emphasize the speaker's glorification of the virtues of the dead.

In "Epitaph on Friend," the speaker's lamentation at the loss of his friend is charged with his belief that the deceased mate would "bless my aching sight, / Thy comrade's honor, and thy friend's delight" ("Epitaph on Friend" 9-10). Whereas the Newstead Abbey poems, set in the ruined architectural surroundings, groan at the limitation of human desire to search for their political and religious power, the elegiac odes in *The Hours of Idleness* concentrate on the amicable relationships by which one remembers another's virtuous behavior in the past. Via a short piece of a poem about distress and bereavement, one's righteous deeds in life are highly evaluated via the epigram on the tomb. "On the Death of a Young Lady" concludes the speaker's "remembrance of those virtues dear" which "call forth my warm affection's tear" ("On the Death of a Young Lady" 21, 23). Byron's interest in the glorification of human beings in the elegiac poems is enriched through his persistent reading of ancient Greek

and Latin writers, for example Homer and Virgil in both poetical and dramatic works.

Throughout Byron's literary career, his preoccupation with the aforementioned ancient authors allows him to adopt their works for his literary purposes. Both his early and later works reveal his evident interest in the thematic concerns, plot structure, and characterization taken from classical resources. Unlike in his later dramatic works of the 1820s, influenced by Horatian poesy regarding dramatic writing, Byron was fascinated by Virgil in *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* where he, for the first time, refers to the story of the two main figures by reusing Book 9 of Virgil's *The Aeneid* written between 29 and 19BC. Byron extends his persistent interest in the theme of glory in man which he dealt with in his earlier poems via the elegiac ones. In a letter to Edward Noel Long dated 15 April 1807, Byron refers to the literary source of *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*, saying that this work is taken from "Virgil" but is "enlarged and altered" (BLJ 1:11).

As in his later historical tragedies, where he reworks Laugier's *History of the Republic of Venice* in *Marino Faliero*, Mitford's *History of Greece* in *Sardanapalus*, and Daru's *History of Venice* in *The Two Foscari*, Byron's adoption of the classical writers, among his earlier works, is foreshadowed in *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*. Byron, who has a huge interest in Virgil's *The Aeneid* (BLJ 1:115, 118, 125), deploys thematic motifs like the two soldiers' dedication to the Trojan battle and their "intense friendship" (Lee 78) until their deaths. Byron's unique perception of the glorification of human beings and its decline continues in his first published anthology.

Byron's adoration of Virgil is associated with his preoccupation with the theme of glory, utilizing that recurrent notion of *The Aeneid*, its structural pattern, and characterization. Byron's dislike for a poet, who has no belief in his own vocation, does not apply to Virgil, whose work

ignites his literary imagination and leads to the establishment of the chief story of Nisus and Euryalus. In the original script of the Latin work, more people such as leaders and soldiers appear, but the number of Byron's characters is vastly reduced to focus on the words and acts of the chief figures, like Nisus and Euryalus, to manifest their stance to the overweening working of powers beyond their freedom of choice.

During Byron's school life, he was preoccupied with a number of Latin and Greek works (*Prose* 1-7) whose main contents were adopted in his later works. Virgil's version of the story of Nisus and Euryalus, who were the Trojan warriors, registers numerous characters in lines 168 to 534. Virgil illustrates with the "mission, raid, and death" (*The Aeneid* 9:168) of Nisus and Euryalus, "whose lives are sacrificed to the eventual establishment of the Roman Empire" (127). By contrast, Byron's poem concentrates on the two lead figures Nisus and Euryalus, despite his allocation of a little space for Hyrtacides (another warrior) and Euryalus's mother. What Virgil largely deals with is the severe warfare of the Trojans against their enemies the Rutulians, led by Fadius, Herbesus, and Abaris. In treating the ruthless war between the two sides, the Latin author raises the subjects of glory and friendship, "eulogizing the Trojan soldiers Nisus and Euryalus" (Ortis 133). Virgil's deployment of the interruptions of Aletes, Ascanius, and Rhoetus contributes to intensifying the dramatic roles of Nisus and Euryalus particularly in their vibrant activities dedicated to the victory and renown of their nations.

Byron was keen on the notion of glory in his early works, such as the Newstead Abbey poems collected in the 1807 edition of *The Hours of Idleness*. Jerome J. McGann claims that this volume has "several homoerotic poems" (3), but has dismissed other significant aspects of Byron's persistent themes in his first collection of poetry. In particular, when reading Virgil's account, Byron scrutinizes the ideas of war and the key characters' attitudes toward their honor pursued by bravery and

a sense of resolution. Nisus, in Virgil's account, is filled with his adoration of glory in the midst of joining the battle, despite, as Judith Herz argues, his concern about the eventual "death" of Euryalus (10). Nisus is obsessed with searching for the great cause in leading his soldiers. His passion is directed to save his nation from the invasion of his opponents; his inward state of attachment to Euryalus does not show itself seriously because his desire for sacrificing himself for his country is stronger than his "male friendship" (Song 690). The conversation between Nisus and Euryalus in Virgil's work indicates the great commitment of Nisus in searching for glorification in a national sphere:

[Nisus says] 'Listen to what I'm now
Thinking, and what purpose comes to mind. The army
And the council all demand Aeneas be recalled,
And men be sent to report the facts to him.
If they were to grant what I suggest to you (the glory
Of doing it is enough for me) I think I could find a way,
Beyond that hill, to the walls ramparts of Pallanteum.'
Euryalus was dazzled, struck by a great desire for glory.
and replied to his ardent friend at once like this"
'Nisus, do you shun my joining in this great deed,
then, Shall I send you into such danger alone?'

(*The Aeneid* 9:191-201)

In addition to the emphasis on Nisus's pursuit of glory, Virgil's construction of "epic hero" (Ortiz 135) also accentuates his cherish for his own honor. While Nisus mentions the significance of the renown, he takes pride in his impact on other people by virtue of careful concern. Virgil explores Nisus's relationships with nearby persons, whereas Byron heightens the "male friendship" and "catastrophe" (*BLJ* 1:125) between him and Euryalus:

If chance or some god sweeps me to disaster,
I want you to survive: our youth is more deserving of life.
Let there be someone to entrust me to earth, my body
Rescued from conflict, or ransomed for a price,
Or if Fortune denies the customary rites, to perform
Them in my absence, and honour me with a stone.
And don't let me be a cause of grief to your poor mother,
My boy, who alone among many mothers dared to follow
You, without thought of staying in great Acestes's city.
But the lad said: 'You weave your excuses in vain,
my purpose won't change or yield to yours. Let's hurry.'

(*The Aeneid* 9:212-22)

The underlying concepts of Virgil's *The Aeneid* play a vital role in establishing Byron's portrayal of Nisus's quest for the renown and cordial alliance with Euryalus. Byron, however, associates Nisus's intentness with his conceptions of destiny and human volition. Nisus in Byron's *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* reveals a similar stance possessed with the conception of "glory" (Clubbe 167), yet is practically aware of the "dark abysses" of his pursuit (168) in confronting external and unanticipated circumstances. The protagonist's perception of the boundary of human determination affects that of subsequent lead characters who appear in his Turkish Tales like *The Bride of Abydos*, *Lara*, *The Corsair*, and *The Giaour*, where the title figures tend to bury their passion for their psychological and ethical sensitivity, after being threatened by fate which they must confront. Nisus's abhorrent prediction of the probable occasion of fatal power foreshadows that of Byron's later literary characters who discern the immanent force in numerous poetic and dramatic works of the mid 1810s and 1820s including his last piece *Don Juan*:

The love of fame with this can ill accord,
Be it mine, to seek for glory with my sword.

See'st thou yon camp, with torches twinkling dim,
 Where drunken slumbers wrap each lazy limb?
 Where confidence and ease the watch disdain,
 And drowsy Silence holds her sable reign?
 Then hear my thought: in deep and sullen grief,
 Our troops and leaders mourn their absent chief,
 Now could the gifts, and promis'd prize be thine,
 The deed, the danger, and the fame be mine.

(NE 23-32)

The themes of “love of fame” and “glory” are treated when Nisus enters the conflict, but new terms such as “drowsy silence” and “deep and sullen grief” emerge in Byron’s version of *Nisus and Euryalus*. Despite his bravery as a warrior, Nisus simultaneously reveals fear about the forthcoming possibility of defeat by his enemies. Byron investigates the thoughts of Nisus who is preoccupied with his anxiety about certain unanticipated fate which, he believes, cannot be overcome when it arrives. The motif of “drowsy silence” indicates the tedious postponement of the final occasion, which drives the protagonist to repress his passion for bringing victory to the Trojan nation. Byron’s portrayal of “sullen grief” suppressed within characters reappears in his later works of the 1810s and early 1820s, in which the lead figures confront fated suffering implicated via their repressed words and actions.

The Giaour (1812) explores the protagonist’s nameless sorrow in facing his suffering when revenging Hassan as a punishment for the murder of his lover Leila, and recovering her loss of dignity. Byron’s other tales of the early 1810s, like *The Corsair*, *Lara*, and *The Bride of Abydos*, commonly show his development of the combined sensitivity of passion and grief, which the poet also elaborates on in his later works. *The Prisoner of Chillon* (1816) embodies how the eldest brother conceives a big “hope” for being freed from the jail, but simultaneously exhibits how he has

“pangs” (*The Prisoner of Chillon* 17:754) to maintain the “strength” of will in facing the serial deaths of his two younger brothers (8:199, 223).

Byron embodies a “sustained examination” of his reserved manner of undertaking “sorrow” imposed by the grief-stricken ordeal during his banishment (Shilstone 100). Furthermore, in *The Two Foscari*, the senior and junior Foscari reveal their mutual “silence” (I, i, 170) and fear at the bottom of their hearts in responding to the unreasonable ruling of the Council of Ten for the punishment of the junior Foscari. The author, however, explores the “evaluation of liberty” (Beatty 2) introverted into the depth of their distress amidst the gloomy circumstance of the imprisonment of the son Foscari. Where Byron further departs from Virgil is that Nisus endorses key notions like “chance” (NE l. 60) and “destiny” (NE l. 69) whose purpose, he believes, is to overwhelm man’s vigorous endeavors. Byron’s Nisus confides in the immanent power of accident which man can never evade. This occurrence becomes a reiterative notion in Byron’s later works, even his last piece *Don Juan* of 1823, where he situates the protagonist to be exposed to a number of “the world’s strange vicissitudes” (Ferriss 141) like the shipwreck in Canto III and the unanticipated arrival in Russia in Cantos V and VI of *Don Juan*:

Calm thy bosom’s fond alarms,
Thy heart beats fiercely to the din of alarms,
More dear thy worth, and valour than my own,
I swear by him, who fills Olympus’ throne!
So may I triumph, as I the truth,
And clasp again the comrade of my youth:
But, should I fall, and he who dares advance,
Through hostile legions, must abide by chance;
If some Rutulian arm with adverse blow,
Should lay the friend, who ever lov’d thee, low.

(NE 53-62)

Nisus's perception of the involvement of "chance" is caused by the "adverse blow" brought about by "some Rutulian arm" laid on his colleagues. "The budding years" (NE 64) ironically become shortened when interrupted by human determination while undertaking the battle and securing the establishment of the nation. Nisus's concern with the tragic fall of "the comrade of my youth" once more upsets his pursuit of glory, which lays a significant foundation for Byron's coherent portrayal of the ironic consequence of human willpower to pursue the protagonist's eagerness for a family renown in his dramas such as *Marino Faliero*, *Sardanapalus*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Werner*.

Nisus possesses both the spirit of valor and perception of the paramount power of fate upon human affairs no matter what form it takes. Euryalus, however, reveals similarities with and contrasts from Nisus in taking attitude toward glory, fate, and willpower. The friendship between Nisus and Euryalus is consistently depicted by Virgil, but his delineation concentrates more on the intimate relationship itself through gentle words and gestures. This gives a general impression to commentators as being an "erotic" (Herz 10) male partnership. In Byron's work, in spite of physically entwined relationship, two characters rather take dynamic thoughts and beliefs in confronting unanticipated misfortune. Euryalus is not bothered by what Nisus is concerned about, for he demonstrates tremendous "heroism" (Oliver 30) in overcoming the unexpected ambience. Byron stresses Euryalus's idea of discretion in reacting to Nisus's anxiety about the probability of the domination of fate upon man's endeavors to prostrate adverse fortune. Euryalus takes a negative stance to the invisible power of destiny which, he believes, distracts man's schemes to carry out his current tasks like warfare:

It scorns control;
Hence, let us haste, — their brother guards arose,

Roused by their call, nor court again repose;
The pair buoy'd up on Hope's exulting wing,
Their stations leave, and speed to seek the king.
Now o'er the earth, a solemn stillness ran,
And lull'd alike the cares of brute and man;
Save where the Dardan leaders nightly hold,
Alternate converse, and their plans unfold;
On one great point the council are agreed,
An instant message to the prince decreed.

(NE 80-90)

Euryalus shows a resolute attitude toward the predestined “plans” ahead of human affairs, which Nisus was concerned about in confronting the battle controlled by the “fortuitous circumstances” – one of Byron’s persistent concern (Yu 63). Euryalus scorns the hidden obstructions to initiating and exercising human inclination. His unwavering comportment prefigures Byron’s later protagonists such as Selim in *The Bride of Abydos*, Hugo in *Parisina*, and Christian Fletcher in *The Island*, who commonly reveal their inexorable disposition to the forthcoming “fate” of their lives (Kelsall 170) plotted by their enemies. The three characters are willing to take ordeals and even their life on the condition that they retain their own honor and credence. The “solemn stillness,” which runs in Euryalus’s heart, indicates his implacable mind to the catastrophic irruption of his adversaries.

Byron enunciates the daunting and “revolutionary” voice of Euryalus (Reiman 104) in undertaking the decree of the prince. In Byron’s version of the comradeship between Nisus and Euryalus, the latter has no hesitation in carrying out his military task in contrast with the considerate and slow undertaking of Nisus regarding the speed and timing of war strategy. This is an imaginative adaptation from Book 9 of *The Aeneid*, where Euryalus is depicted as a conducive figure to follow the “ends of

fate” (*The Aeneid* 9:205), admitting that such an attitude emerges from his authentic “spirit” (*The Aeneid* 9:206):

Nisus, do you shun my joining in this great deed,
 Then? Shall I send you into such danger alone?
 That’s not how my father Opheltes, seasoned in war,
 Educated me, raising me among Greek terrors
 And Troy’s ordeals, nor have I conducted myself so
 With you, following noble Aeneas and the ends of fate.
 This is my spirit, one scornful of the day, that thinks
 The honor you aim at well bought with life itself.

(*The Aeneid* 9:200-207)

Whereas Virgil concentrates on, as Blaine Greteman argues, Euryalus as “unbearded youth” who strays into the woods and is abducted in his bloom” (420), Byron gives priority to his thoughts about the power of the domineering repression, whereby his relentlessness intensifies. Virgil is concerned with how the character Euryalus takes other attitudes toward human affairs, for example his great concern about his mother’s “tears” and “comfort” (l. 290) after his likely death (*The Aeneid* 9:200-207). Byron’s treatment of Euryalus has deployed such a cordial stance, but he intensifies his unremitting vigor to pursue glory and a persistent intimate relationship with Nisus:

I pledge my word, irrevocably past;
 Nay more, twelve slaves and twice six captive dames
 To sooth thy softer hours, with amorous flames,
 And all the realms, which now the Latins sway,
 The labours of to-night, shall well replay.
 But thou, my generous youth, whose tender years,
 Are near my own, whose worth, my heart reveres,
 Henceforth, affection sweetly thus begun,
 Shall join our bosoms, and our souls in one;

Without thy aid, no glory shall be mine.

(NE 158-67)

Euryalus's pursuit of glory is reminiscent of Nisus, which leads them to take a courageous posture toward dying. Both characters seek glorification of their friendship in Virgil's version, but Byron's treatment of the same matter is associated with their perception of death which becomes, as Jane Stabler remarks, his persistent deployment of "finality dispersed by multiplicity" (Stabler 278) in *The Lament of Tasso*, *Marino Faliero*, and *Sardanapalus*. Their notions of glory and death are entwined with a heroic virtue required by their status as warriors. Euryalus shows a fearless stance to death, which resounds in the indomitable confrontation of Myrrah with her upcoming demolition in *Sardanapalus*: "no day shall shame / The rising glories, which from this I claim. / Fortune may favour, or the skies may favour, or the skies may frown, / But valour, spite of fate, obtains" (NE 171-4). Nisus, after the perishment of Euryalus, takes a different approach to the death of human beings in acknowledging the inevitability of termination over man's endeavors: "his omens more than augur's skill evince: / But he who thus foretold the fate of all, / Could not avert his own untimely fall" (NE 242-4).

Virgil's account depicts the procedure of the battle itself in terms of its outer spectacle in which his primary objective is to depict "Euryalus's slaughter" (*The Aeneid*, 9:341). In addition, the death of Nisus is articulated in prosaic manner with the insertion of the author's panoramic view of the tragic crash of both figures. Virgil chiefly inputs his deplorable tone into the perish of the warriors in lines 314 to 366 of Book 9, while Byron elaborates on the internal resolution of the two characters despite their divergent views of the paralleled connection between destiny and freedom of inspiration in diverse human affairs. Byron's fascination with this complex inner response to man's occasions develops into a dominant

motif in the minds of the protagonists in his subsequent works, particularly in times of troubles and the tragic culmination of their efforts regarding revolution, defiance, and revenge on their opponents. His poems of the 1810s and early 1820s, together with *Don Juan*, commonly elaborate on the significance and boundary of one's internal working procedures of tribulation and reaction. Indeed, Byron establishes his coherent thematic concerns throughout *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus*, foreshadowing the protagonists' adoration of glory and ironical awakening into the inexorable bounds of such effort and vibrant vigor.

III

This paper has examined how Byron's *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* depicts the problem of the characters' volition to pursue the glorification of their nation and experience the limited boundary of such enterprises, which they realize during severe battles against their enemies. Byron's coherent interest in this matter, germinating from his early works on the gloomy ruination of Newstead Abbey and elegiac poems collected in *The Hours of Idleness*, is substantiated in the story of Nisus and Euryalus, which brings in his further narratives like *Oscar of Alva* and *The Death of Calmar and Orla*. Byron's *The Episode of Nisus and Euryalus* prefigures the conflicting relationships among lead figures' notions of honor, unexpected occasions, and the tragic downfall. His use of Vigil's *The Aeneid*, especially Book 9 on the alliance of Nisus and Euryalus takes the prominent theme of friendship, but he creatively reconstructs the work in light of his persistent concern with their recognitions of fame and awakening into its adverse fortune. Byron's vigorous reworking of the story of the ancient literary figures regenerate the plot structure to manifest the characters' reaction to the great cause of their activities and its baffling consequence.

Among his early works, anthologized in *Hours of Idleness*, Byron, for

the first time, contemplates in great detail the fundamental issue of man's free choice in encountering the tribulation of human affairs. Nisus and Euryalus become, in Byron's subsequent literary career, the prominent motif in embodying the intertwined connection between man's vigorous enterprises and repugnant opponents. Nisus's realistic stance to fated ambience formulates various subsequent characters' perceptions of the underlying overweening force upon one's resolute decision. The Giaour, The Corsair, Lara, Selim, and Zuleika reflect the distressing voice of Nisus in confronting their foes, while taking initiative over the negative forces. Byron's diverse portrayal of another character Euryalus, however, lays a foundation for embodying the figure of ultimate freedom of will. The protagonist in Byron's poem "Prometheus" mirrors the established motif of Euryalusean features, whereby the titan defies his undeserved tribulation without submission. Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, particularly Canto III, turns the discordant relationship into the internal domain of the protagonist, concentrating on his psycho-machia between the fated alienation and act of volition to defy it. However, numerous protagonists in Byron's subsequent works of the 1810s and 20s re-endorse the external characterization of Nisus and Euryalus with regard to their dynamic confrontation with the problem of dominant power upon their freedom of choice. Indeed, Byron's reworking of Nisus and Euryalus in his early poem substantiates the complexity and subtlety of human volition imposed by the irresistible collision with manifold unpropitious occasions.

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