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## From Little Savages to *hen kai pan*: Zhou Zuoren's (1885–1968) Romanticist Impulses around 1920

“Don’t you understand,” I said, “that we begin  
by telling children fables, and the fable is, taken  
as a whole, false, but there is truth in it also?”

Plato, *The Republic*

To be one with all that lives, to return to the  
universe of nature in a blessed self-oblivion,  
this is the supreme thought and joy...

Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion*

**I**n the history of modern Chinese literature and ideas, Zhou Zuoren 周作人 stands unsurpassed in the versatility of his interests and the convolutions in his long intellectual career. When we look at even a short period around 1920, a crucial time for the man who would establish himself as a major figure in the New Culture Movement, Zhou Zuoren’s literary and philosophical views showed subtle changes and revisions that we cannot afford to ignore. These changes and revisions are remarkable especially because they were achieved with visible signs of struggles and anguish;<sup>1</sup> they are important because they hold the key

THE INITIAL research for this study began preparatory to the writing of my Ph.D. dissertation at Yale University and benefited from consultations with Professors Jonathan Spence and Charles Laughlin, who read the draft passages related to Zhou Zuoren. The present article evolved from that preparatory research, most of which did not find a place in the dissertation. A draft was presented in Spring, 2003, at a venue of Vassar College’s Asian Studies Program, during which I particularly profited from comments made by Martha Kaplan, Professor of Anthropology, regarding the history of Western anthropology. Professors Wei Shang and Wenwei Du read more recent drafts and offered useful comments. To all these teachers, colleagues, and friends I would like to express my gratitude. I specifically acknowledge a profound debt to Professor Cyrus Hamlin and Professor Emeritus Geoffrey Hartman, both of Yale, for deepening my knowledge in German and English Romanticism, as well as to Professor Qianshen Bai, who constantly encouraged and supported me since our first meeting at Peking University more than a decade ago. Thanks are also due to Miss Shoshana Litt, J.D., who read the final version of the article before its submission and caught stylistic problems that had escaped my notice. Finally, the two anonymous readers and the co-editors of *Asia Major* provided invaluable suggestions for revision.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the first letter in *Shan zhong za xin* 山中雜信 dated June 5, 1921; Zhou, *Zhou Zuoren shuxin* 周作人書信 (1933/2002; hereafter, *Shuxin*), p. 5: “My thinking has recently undergone extreme oscillations and chaos.” See the appendix, below, for an explana-

for the understanding of his future development. Scattered, inchoate and unsystematic as they may appear, between the end of 1918 and the end of 1921 these changes of views and ideas demonstrated an unmistakable tendency towards what I characterize as the Romantic. The recognition of this Romantic tendency is instrumental to our understanding of Zhou Zuoren's intellectual world then and thereafter, and it also has great implications in our understanding of modern Chinese literary and intellectual history.

My use of the word Romantic follows a well-established critical tradition since the mid-twentieth century that regards the internal search for redemption within a largely secular setting as "the high Romantic argument."<sup>2</sup> In the three years beginning late in 1918, Zhou Zuoren's literary and philosophical views agreed with some of the most essential aspects of Romanticism. The rapidly growing scholarship in the study of Zhou Zuoren, however, has yet to place Zhou's views in the historical and theoretical framework of Romanticism. But without this historical and theoretical contextualization it would be difficult, if not entirely impossible, to tackle many of the issues belonging to his later life, and it would also prevent us from achieving a more sophisticated comprehension of the May Fourth era. In the following, I undertake to demonstrate and elucidate Zhou's Romantic tendencies through an examination of his *baihua* poems and his important critical writings

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tion of the citational system of double-dates, which indicates a work's having been collected and printed in Zhi An 止庵, ed., *Zhou Zuoren zibian wenji* 周作人自編文集 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu, 2002). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Chinese and German texts are my own.

<sup>2</sup> See M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), chap. 1, "This Is Our High Argument," pp. 17-70. Besides *Natural Supernaturalism*, the most influential works in North America since the mid-20th c. on Romanticism include, but are not limited to: Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1947), M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1953), Harold Bloom's *Shelley's Mythmaking* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959) and *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1961), Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1964), and Paul de Man's numerous essays on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, William Wordsworth, and Friedrich Hölderlin. I am fully aware of the more recent developments in Romantic studies in North America such as those works written under the aegis of the New Historicism. But since even these recent schools of Romanticist criticism openly or tacitly acknowledge the premises and the fundamental arguments in Frye, Abrams, Bloom, Hartman, and de Man, my approach in this paper will not be undermined by avoiding the issues raised in their works. It should be emphatically noted that the concept of Romanticism according to this critical tradition, which I adopt in my study, differs from the concept of "the Romantic" employed as the unstated theoretical premise in Leo O-fan Lee's *The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1973). Though some of the issues he touched on in his pioneer study may occasionally be relevant to the themes in this article, for example, Guo Moruo's pantheism and mythmaking, what he called "the Romantic" is essentially sentimentalism.

around 1920, focusing particularly on issues of children's literature, supernaturalism in literature, transcendentalism, and social utopia. I attempt to fuse history and theory by identifying the sources and tracing the formative processes of several of his literary and philosophical conceits, and then by elucidating their significance against a transnational historical, intellectual, and literary background. My goal is to present a clear theoretical and historical pattern, which will be recognized as in full agreement with the Romantics.

#### IN THE BEGINNING WAS A FABLE: "A RIVULET"

The common reader of poetry in China today must be surprised to know that the longest *baihua* poem by Zhou Zuoren,<sup>3</sup> entitled "A Rivulet" ("Xiaohe" 小河, a full text and translation of which are given in the appendix to this article), once created a small sensation and it was hailed as "the first masterpiece" of *baihua* poetry. Fei Ming 廢名 (1901-1967), a critic and poet in his own right as well as Zhou's erstwhile disciple, made this flattering remark in his lectures on *baihua* poetry at Peking University in the mid 1930s. He also explained in the same lecture that the poem was important in the history of *baihua* poetry because it brought about a feeling of "freshness" around 1919 – a time when the New Poetry 新詩 movement had just been launched<sup>4</sup> – and that the freshness was based on the fact that "what is expressed in the poem lies completely beyond the spectrum of traditional poetry." Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 (1898-1948), another contemporary critic, concurred with this assessment in his introduction to the poetry volume of the canon-setting anthology of *baihua* literature, *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi* 中國新文學大系 (*Compendium of China's New Literature*).<sup>5</sup> Both critics imply that besides the obvious contrast it casts against traditional poetry, the poem appears innovative even in comparison with other pioneering *baihua* poems published around that time. In particular, Fei Ming suggests that rather than Hu Shi's 胡適 (1891-1962) early *baihua* poems, which have always been credited as the first shot fired in the revolutionary campaign against traditional poetry, it was Zhou Zuoren's "A Rivulet"

<sup>3</sup> Not including the three prose "poems" at the end of *Guoqu de shengming* 過去的生命 (1929/2001; hereafter, *Guoqu de shengming*), Zhou Zuoren's collection of *baihua* poems.

<sup>4</sup> Fei Ming, *Tan xinshi* 談新詩 (Beijing: 1944), rpt. in Chen Zishan 陳子善, ed., *Lun xinshi ji qita* 論新詩及其他 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1998), p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> Though not referring specifically to the poem, Zhu Ziqing observes that Zhou Zuoren's *baihua* poems, along with his brother Lu Xun's, radically break with traditional poetry and for this reason stand out among early fellow *baihua* poets. See Zhu's Introduction to volume 8, the poetry volume, of *Zhongguo xin wenxue daxi* (Shanghai: 1935; hereafter cited as *Daxi*), pp. 1-3.

that broke ground for an entirely new poetics and thereby marked a fundamental rupture in tradition. This is why the poem, in Fei Ming's words, "was regarded as the first masterpiece of New Poetry."<sup>6</sup>

Zhou himself also attached great importance to "A Rivulet." His autobiography, *Zhitang huixianglu* 知堂回想錄 (*Zhitang's Reminiscences*), written in the last years of life, devotes two short chapters (131 and 132) to the circumstances surrounding the composition of the poem. Thus, the attention given to it is unique, unparalleled by any of his other *baihua* poems. In the second of the two chapters, Zhou cites at length an earlier note he wrote in 1944, in which "A Rivulet" was mentioned.<sup>7</sup> The note contains a comment on the form of the poem, which asserts that its genre may be classified as *piyu* 譬喻. Today, *piyu* is generally translated as "simile," or "metaphor." But what Zhou Zuoren meant by the word must be something like *yuyan* 寓言, which in modern Chinese is often used as the equivalent to the English word "fable." *Piyu* is to be understood as fable especially because Zhou Zuoren had elsewhere proposed that figurative representation, or symbolism (*xiangzheng* 象徵) – which he identified with *xing* 興, one of the three most basic concepts in traditional Chinese poetics – should be the main mode of representation in modern Chinese poetry.<sup>8</sup> According to him, of the three basic concepts in traditional poetics, *xing* is more fundamental than *fu* 賦, exposition, and *bi* 比, comparison. According to this reinterpretation of the key concepts in classical Chinese poetics, Zhou's own poem has to be viewed within the category of *xing* – figurative representation.

"A Rivulet" tells a story about a rivulet's flow becoming dammed up by a farmer's dyke. The poem features talking rice shoots and an animated mulberry tree as well as small animals who verbally express sympathy for the frustrated rivulet as well as anxiety over their own well-being. It is obvious that the poem contains more than a simple comparison or simile (*bi*). It also has little to do with the genre of expo-

<sup>6</sup> Chen, *Lun xinshi ji qita*, p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> Zhou, *Zhitang huixianglu* (1970/2002), vol. 2, pp. 442–48. For the 1944 note, see idem, *Laohu qiao za shi* 老虎橋雜詩, a collection of poems written in traditional style between 1946–1949, first published in a complete edition by Zhi An, ed., *Zhou Zuoren zibian wenji* (see n. 1, above), pp. 92–94.

<sup>8</sup> See his preface to Liu Bannong's 劉半農 (1891–1934) poetical collection, *Yangbian ji* 揚鞭集, written in 1926; collected in Zhou, *Tan long ji* 談龍集 (1927/2002; hereafter cited as *Tan long ji*), p. 41. It should be noted that Zhou's interpretation of the term *xing* was innovative and did not agree with the canonical interpretation of the term often rendered in English as "stimulus." For one of the most important traditional exegeses on *xing*, see Zhan Yingyi 詹鏞義, ed. and annot., Liu Xie 劉勰 (ca. 465 – ca. 522), *Wenxin diao long yizheng* 文心雕龍義證 (Shanghai: Guji, 1989) j. 8, pp. 1329–72. For a recent discussion of the canonical interpretation of *xing*, see Haun Saussy, *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1993), pp. 129 ff.

sition (*fu*) – a term often synonymous with extravagant or even turgid style in its classical models – since stylistically it is so modest. As a tale written in an unmistakably nonrealistic mode (talking rice and animals), “A Rivulet” relates a story whose meaning is conveyed “symbolically,” namely, “figuratively.” For this reason the poem has to belong to the category of *xing* according to Zhou’s definition of the term. *Piyu* as a form of *xing* can be translated as fable because a fable is “a fictitious story relating to supernatural or extraordinary persons or incidents” and often containing some useful lesson.<sup>9</sup> Since “A Rivulet” relates a fictitious story involving animated objects to convey, according to its author, some moral or political message, “A Rivulet” qualifies as fable in almost every sense of the word.<sup>10</sup>

If we combine the two critics’ assessments of the poem and the author’s own remark on its form, the reason why the poem was regarded as a breakthrough begins to emerge. For in comparison to other *baihua* poems of the time, the elaborately related story in “A Rivulet” is unique. It is markedly different from the early *baihua* poems by Hu Shi, for instance, who, despite being the pioneer in the experiment in *baihua* poetry, still conceives lyric poetry as primarily made of scenic moments or dictated by the mood or the fleeting emotional state of the poet.<sup>11</sup> In style and diction, it also distinguishes itself from the *baihua* poems of Shen Yinmo 沈尹默 (1883–1971), a contemporary of Zhou Zuoren and another pioneer in *baihua* poetry in that Shen’s poems contain vestiges of traditional poetry and read very much like *yuefu* 樂府 (the style-genre

<sup>9</sup> See the entry “fable” in *OED*.

<sup>10</sup> In his typical self-effacing manner, Zhou Zuoren’s 1944 note (see above, n. 7) maintains that there is nothing new as regards the form of “A Rivulet” and its use of *piyu* has precedents in foreign, and especially in Chinese, literature. Here, however, he seems to be contradicting himself. For in a note attached to the poem when it was first published in *Xin qingnian* 新青年 (*New Youth*) in 1919, Zhou Zuoren associated his prosaic poem with Baudelaire’s prose poems in *Le spleen de Paris*; see *Xin qingnian* 2 (1919), p. 91; collected in Chen Zishan 陳子善 and Zhang Tierong 張鐵榮, eds., *Zhou Zuoren ji wai ji* 周作人集外集 (Hainan: Hainan guoji xinwen, 1993; hereafter referred to as *Ji wai ji*) 1, p. 306. Back then he gave no hint that the poem owed its inspiration to some Chinese precedents. Twenty years later, he specifically invoked “Zhongshan lang zhuan” 中山狼傳 (“The Tale of the Zhongshan Wolf”), a 16th-c. fable featuring a talking wolf and an animated tree as its characters. (See Ma Zhongxi 馬中錫 [1446–1512], *Dongtian wenji* 東田文集 [CSJC chubian 叢書集成初編 2150–2151; Shanghai: Shangwu, 1936]), as a precedent for the use of *piyu* in Chinese literature and was unspecific regarding the “foreign ballads” which also often employed fable and to which he compared his poem. In 1944, he in effect was retracting his earlier statement on the link between “A Rivulet” and European literature and was instead suggesting that his poem was more traditional than Western. But, as to be demonstrated later, this cannot be true.

<sup>11</sup> Most pieces from the first cluster of his *baihua* poems published in *Xin qingnian* 2.6 (1917) are little different from traditional landscape or descriptive quatrains, among them, especially “Pengyou” 朋友 (Friends), three poems of “Yue” 月 (The Moon), and “Jiang shang” 江上 (“On the River”), pp. 1–2.

that harks back to the song lyrics of the Western Han court's Bureau of Music) or *ci* 詞 poems.<sup>12</sup> Unlike most of the *baihua* poems written at the time, "A Rivulet" is not a descriptive sketch of scenery;<sup>13</sup> instead, it contains a tale in integrity, which is emphatically fictitious as well as allegorical or, according to Zhou Zuoren, "symbolic." Also, unlike many of the contemporary *baihua* poems, the language of "A Rivulet" is plain and unpretentious. For Fei Ming especially, the integrity or completeness 完全 of poetic conceits and the integrity of syntax are two definitive features of modern poetry,<sup>14</sup> and thus, it is this integrity of the tale narrated in plain and fluent language that qualifies the poem in Fei Ming's eye as the first "masterpiece" of *baihua* poetry.

A still more theoretical explanation may further reveal the revolutionary significance of Zhou's narrative poem. Traditional Chinese poetics, in its formative aspect, oscillates between expressionism and didacticism.<sup>15</sup> Its expressive tendency, the more fundamental of the two, is best formulated in the now proverbial saying from Mao Chang's 毛萇 (fl. 140 BC) Great Preface to the *Classic of Poetry*: poetry speaks intent 詩言志. When the intent is regulated with moral principles, the expressive view of poetry easily turns didactic. The expressive theory contrasts with the fundamental notion of poetry in the West, which views poetry as mimesis.<sup>16</sup> Mimesis of human actions via verbal media entails narrative or story telling, sometimes with dramatization; whereas an expressive theory of poetry is much less conducive to story making and

<sup>12</sup> For his *ci* style *baihua* poems, see "Luo ye" 落葉 ("Falling Leaves"), *Xin qingnian* 4.2 (1918), p. 104; for his *yuefu* style *baihua* poems, see "Chuxi" 除夕 ("New Year's Eve"), *Xin qingnian* 4.3 (1918), p. 229.

<sup>13</sup> The proliferation of small poems became a problem serious enough for Zhou Zuoren to address in an essay, "Lun xiao shi" 論小詩 (June, 1922), in idem, *Ziji de yuandi* 自己的園地 (1923/2002; hereafter, *Ziji*), pp. 43-49. Zhu Ziqing later also commented on the phenomenon of the proliferation of short and poor descriptive verses in the 1920s and 1930s; idem, "Duan shi yu chang shi" 短詩與長詩, *Zhu ziqing quanji* 朱自清全集 (Tainan, 1967), pp. 107-9.

<sup>14</sup> Chen, *Lun xinshi ji qita*, pp. 25-28. For a study of his notion of "completeness" as a requisite for modern poetry, see Haoming Liu, "Fei Ming's Poetics of Representation: Dream, Fantasy, Illusion and Ālayavijñāna," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 13.2 (2001), pp. 37-39.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. James J. Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1962). James Liu divides traditional Chinese poetics into four categories, the first two of which are named "the didactic view" and "the individualistic view" and come prior in history to the latter two categories. What he calls "the individualistic view" corresponds to what I call "the expressive view," and, theoretically, this view should be more fundamental than the didactic view.

<sup>16</sup> This fundamental difference between Chinese and European poetics is articulated with admirable clarity and precision in Pauline Yu, *The Reading of Imagery in the Chinese Poetic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1987), chap. 1, pp. 3-43. One may consult Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, pp. 8-14, for a concise historical and theoretical exposition of the mimetic theory. The mimetic theory of poetry dominated much of the history of Western poetics and literary criticism since the 5th-c. BC. In comparison to the mimetic theory of poetry

story telling.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it rather favors the kind of overflow of direct subjective interjection often witnessed in early *baihua* poems. In contrast, the role of the poet – his personal faculties, feelings, or desires – in Western poetics was not given great importance until the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> As a consequence of the expressive view on the nature of poetry, in traditional Chinese poetics, the fictive tale was not given a prominent place, whereas Western poetics from the very beginning established a close link between the tale and poetry. In *The Republic*, for instance, Plato uses the word *mythos* – variably translated as fable, story,<sup>19</sup> or tale – for the fictitious tales told by poets such as Homer.<sup>20</sup> Later in the opening passage of his *Poetics*, Aristotle lists the structure of the *mythos* among the several essential qualities requisite to a good poem.<sup>21</sup>

No evidence indicates that Zhou Zuoren, the first, or one of the first, Chinese to study classical Greek and the first Chinese person who had a systematic knowledge of Western literature, wrote his poem after having studied Plato and Aristotle. Yet, “A Rivulet” departs radically from the fundamental principle of Chinese poetry, which is expressive in nature, and adopts the most basic tenet of European poetics as was first expressed in Plato and Aristotle: *poesis* is *mythopoesis*.<sup>22</sup> But if

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in the West and to the long tradition of expressive theory of poetry in Chinese tradition, the expressive theory of poetry was a rather recent phenomenon in the West, accompanying the rise of Romantic aesthetics. For a summary of various kinds of expressive theories in Western tradition, see *ibid.*, pp. 21–26. Haun Saussy’s argument for “the impossibility of a Chinese allegory” in traditional Chinese poetics may further highlight the revolutionary significance of Zhou’s allegorical “A Rivulet.” See Saussy, *Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic*, pp. 13–46.

<sup>17</sup> For Bureau of Music ballads as qualified narrative poetry, see Yu, *Reading of Imagery*, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Commenting on Aristotle’s distribution of functions among various elements in poetry in *Poetics*, Abrams observes: “The poet is the indispensable efficient cause, the agent who, by his skill, extracts the form from natural things and imposes it upon an artificial medium; but his personal faculties, feelings, or desires are not called on to explain the subject matter or form of a poem”; Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Jowett’s translation, first published in 1871 and by far the most popular one in Zhou’s time, uses the word “story” for *mythos*.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. John Burnet, ed. *Platonis Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902) 4, p. 377a–d.

<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *De arte poetica liber*, ed. Rudolf V. Kassel (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1965) 1447a. Also see S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), p. 6. Butcher translates *mythos* as the plot. Hans H. Frankel observes that “stories of double identity and metamorphosis are as common in Chinese folklore as in the myths and the tales of other civilizations. But in Chinese literature, they are found more often in prose fiction and drama than in poetry. There was no Ovid in China to make metamorphosis a focal point in poetry”; *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady: Interpretation of Chinese Poetry* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1976), pp. 5–6. This is an important remark in relation to the discussion, below.

<sup>22</sup> Zhou later openly defended the presence of mythology in literature in two 1924 essays, “Shenhua de bianhu” 神話的辯護 and “Xu shenhua de bianhu” 續神話的辯護, both printed in *Yu tian de shu* 雨天的書 (1925/2002), pp. 160–62 and 163–65, respectively, as well as in a

neither Plato nor Aristotle were the direct source, then how did Zhou Zuoren arrive at this fundamental principle of Western poetics in “A Rivulet”?

...AND THE FABLE WAS CHILDLIKE

“A Rivulet” is a fable that employs animism. Its characters are talking plants and animated things. As far as animism is concerned, it is in essence no different from *Xi you ji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*), whose protagonist is a talking ape, or several other less famous traditional Chinese novels or tales including the fifteenth- or sixteenth-century fable “The Tale of the Zhongshan Wolf” (“Zhongshan lang zhuan” 中山狼傳) to which Zhou compared his poem. This similarity, however, could invite problems especially during the heyday of the New Culture Movement in the late-1910s and the early-1920s. Isn’t it the case that animism, found in these traditional novels, clashes with the scientific and humanist outlook of life advocated by the May Fourth authors? Doesn’t an animistic fable, like “A Rivulet,” propagate superstition in the same way as allegedly the traditional novels that Zhou himself not long before had denounced for precisely the same crime?<sup>23</sup> And should not such supernatural fable have been purged from the New Culture that Zhou and his fellow May Fourth authors envisioned, not unlike the proposed expurgation of Homer from Plato’s Republic on account of his *mythoi*, which were alleged to have calumniated and scandalized the gods and were therefore deemed untrue? After all, how could Zhou Zuoren reconcile “A Rivulet” (January, 1919) with his celebrated “Ren de wenxue” 人的文學 (“The Literature of Man”) published one month earlier (December, 1918), in which he categorically denounced *Journey to the West*, *Feng shen yanyi* 封神演義 (*The Investiture of the Gods*), *Lü ye xian zong* 綠野仙蹤 (*Traces of the Transcendents in the Verdured Wildness*), and *Liao zhai zhi yi* 聊齋志異 (*Liaozhai’s Record of Wonders*) for being “superstitious 迷信” and advocating “transcendents 神仙” and “evil spirits and monsters 妖怪”?<sup>24</sup>

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public lecture, “Shenhua de quwei” 神話的趣味, in *Ji wai ji* 1, pp. 631–36. In the first of the two essays, he used the Greek word *mythopoiios*, indicating that he was aware of the etymological link between myth and poetry.

<sup>23</sup> See his famous “Ren de wenxue” 人的文學, in which *The Journey to the West* is listed among other traditional fictions under the category “Superstitious Tales of Ghosts and Spirits” and is to be purged along with them from the modern curriculum; *Yishu yu shenghuo* 藝術與生活 (1931/2002; hereafter, *Yishu yu shenghuo*), p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13. In the essay, after the denouncement of those old Chinese fictions of wonders, Zhou admits that they might be valuable to the study of “national psychology,” and may even be tolerated in literary criticism, but as a doctrine must be expelled.



In the development of European literature after the Enlightenment, supernaturalism ceded the central position it had held for ages and retreated to just a couple of genres especially reserved for supernatural fantasies. Among them literature for children is perhaps the most important and most innocuous. This is testified in the Western tradition of children's literature from the Grimm brothers, Hans Christian Andersen, Lewis Carroll, through the recent Harry Potter series. If we consider "A Rivulet" as a fable in the tradition of Andersen and those others and intended for children – often called *Märchen* in English,<sup>25</sup> a loan word from German – or at least for the modern adult reader who still retains a child's heart, the animism in the poem should appear more justifiable to potential rationalist critics. Indeed, this is precisely how Zhou Zuoren reconciled the poem with his denunciation of traditional novels about supernatural beings.

In a review of a Chinese translation of Hans Christian Andersen's (1805–1875) *Märchen* (or properly, in Danish, *Eventyr*) entitled "Andersen de shi zhi jiu" 安得森的十之九 ("Andersen's Nine of Ten") in June 1918,<sup>26</sup> half a year before the composition of "A Rivulet," Zhou Zuoren maintains that translating Andersen's tales into literary Chinese is doubly mistaken because the Dane's literary work has two qualities that run directly against what literary Chinese entails and implies – "childlike style and savage-like thinking." On the one hand, the style of his *Eventyr* is childlike, or to use the words of Edmund W. Gosse (1849–1928), a British literary scholar who personally knew Andersen and who was often cited by Zhou Zuoren as an authority, "it is the lax, irregular, direct language of children."<sup>27</sup> Colloquialism, says Zhou, is the first characteristic of Andersen's *Eventyr*. On the other hand, the way of thinking and imagination evinced in his *Eventyr* is very close to children's thinking, which Zhou Zuoren, citing Gosse, says resembles that of the savages 野蠻.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Etymologically, *Märchen* is a diminutive form of *Mär*, i.e. *kleine Mär*. What above all distinguishes *Märchen* from ordinary narratives (*Erzählung, Geschichte*) is that *Märchen* is contrasted with "true stories" ("wahre Geschichte"). In other words, a *Mär* or *Märchen* is a fiction. It is in this most original sense of the word that *Märchen* is glossed in Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* as "fabula," a Latin word from which the English word "fable" derives. For a thorough account of the etymology, meaning and usage of the word, see Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1885) 6, pp. 1618–20. Zhou himself insisted on using the German word instead of the usual English term "fairy tale" when referring to *tonghua* 童話; "Tonghua de taolun" 童話的討論; *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 375.

<sup>26</sup> The date of composition is according to Zhou's signature after the piece collected in *Tan long ji*, pp. 148–53. It was first published in *Xin qingnian* 5.3 (September 15, 1918) under the title "Occasional Thoughts, No. 24" 隨感錄 (二十四).

<sup>27</sup> Gosse, *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe* (London: 1883), p. 180. Zhou Zuoren cited the book more than once.

<sup>28</sup> Zhou Zuoren quotes at length two paragraphs from an article on Andersen by Gosse

The savage mind, Zhou Zuoren is told by anthropologists such as Andrew Lang (1844–1912) and Jane Harrison (1850–1928),<sup>29</sup> often is characterized with the belief in animism.<sup>30</sup> The belief, or at least the animistic tendency, is also found in children who enjoy imagining and reading stories, such as those by Andersen, in which playthings and articles of furniture and animals come to life and act according to the conventional principles of society. Evidently, the two characteristics which Zhou Zuoren attributed to Andersen's *Eventyr* can also be applied to "A Rivulet": its style is purely colloquial and lax, almost like the kind of language spoken to children; its imagination "savage" because it employs animated plants, talking animals, and other enlivened things to act out a fable. But as Zhou's "The Literature of Man" indicates, these two characteristics may not have been in agreement with the main tenets of the New Culture Movement. The colloquial style of Andersen's *Eventyr* and Zhou's poem suited the main goal of the New Poetry Movement perfectly, namely the use of *baihua* as against literary Chinese and old poetic diction; but the animistic imagination that characterizes their fables would not, since it apparently ran against the principles of the heralded enlightenment and may, just like *The Journey to the West* and

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in which the phrase "little savages" appears (*Tan long ji*, p. 151). I have not been able to locate the original passage. But I have found another instance in which Gosse uses the word savage to describe children. See "Original Poems," in his *Leaves and Fruit* (London: William Heinemann, 1927), p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> The school of anthropology to which Lang, Harrison, and Sir James Frazer belong is often called evolutionary anthropology. As a doctrine, it has been out of mode in the field of anthropology for a long time. Neither Lang nor Harrison is regarded as an important figure in the history of modern anthropology, as is Frazer. The influence of the former two was limited mainly to literary criticism. Concerning Zhou's debt to Lang and the school to which he belongs, I take no position from the perspective of contemporary anthropology about the rightness of Lang's and Harrison's theory. What concerns us is how Zhou received their theory and used it for his own ends.

<sup>30</sup> Lang's chapter "The Mental Condition of Savages," in *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (one of Zhou Zuoren's Bibles), maintains that "the savage...draws no hard and fast line between himself and the things in the world... he assigns human speech and human feelings to sun and moon and stars and wind, no less than to beasts, birds and fishes." pp. 48–49. The passage was so important to Zhou that more than ten years after his review of the Chinese translation of Andersen, he translated it at length and included it in a 1933 essay, "Xisu yu shenhua" 習俗與神話, in *Ye du chao* 夜讀抄 (1934/2001), pp. 16–17. In his autobiographical essay, "Wo de zaxue" 我的雜學, written another ten years later, Zhou Zuoren returned to the same passage by summarizing it and then added, "From this it is not difficult for us to see the meaning of myth, saga and Märchen"; Zhou, *Ku kou gan kou* 苦口甘口 (1944/2002), p. 69. As regards Jane Harrison, in 1926 Zhou Zuoren published his translation of the introduction to her *Mythology* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1924), in which the role of animism in the formation of myth is discussed; *Mythology*, pp. xviii–xix; see "Xila shenhua yinyan" 希臘神話引言, printed in *Tan long ji*, pp. 60–61. Besides the works of Lang and Harrison, Zhou Zuoren also possessed a book on the subject by Edward Clodd (1840–1930), *Animism, the Seed of Religion* (London: 1905). See his diary entry on June 20, 1913, *Zhou Zuoren riji* 周作人日記, a facsimile edition in 3 vols. (Zhengzhou, Henan: Daxiang, 1996; hereafter, *Riji*) 1, p. 454.

other old Chinese novels of wonders, have been suspected of pandering superstition. In the furor against ancient superstitions among the May Fourth authors, some of whom were openly against all religion,<sup>31</sup> animism in “A Rivulet” could have posed a serious problem. It might be seen as a residue from the superstitious, unenlightened past and potentially could undermine the more rigid dogma of scientism embraced by the May Fourth Movement as a whole. This contradiction in Zhou Zuoren’s writings between 1918 and 1919 portrays his own struggle with choosing between the European Enlightenment principle of rationalism and the artistic principle of imagination. It also underscores the seriousness of the theoretical difficulty that more impartial thinkers like Zhou were facing during the May Fourth era.

Zhou’s quandary, however, was soon overcome. Unlike other May Fourth writers, Zhou, armed with a fairly comprehensive knowledge of Western literature and recent developments in the field of anthropology, eventually was able to recognize and vindicate animism and other types of supernaturalism as a requisite of imagination. Soon after 1920 he came to the conclusion that the presence of supernaturalism in literature was not only justifiable but indeed necessary and fundamentally human. In “Wenyi shang de yiwu” 文藝上的異物 (“The Supernatural in Art and Literature”), an important essay published in April, 1922, almost three-and-a-half years after the appearance of “The Literature of Man” and “A Rivulet,” Zhou for the first time unequivocally stated that scientific principles “cannot become [the only] criteria in literary criticism,” and that animism, though harmful to the development of a national culture, is nevertheless meaningful when employed in art.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, he especially defended the use of the supernatural in the works of the European Romantics, an important point to be taken up, below.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, he was not only tolerant of the presence of animism in literature, but even signed and published a manifesto in the same year that advocated for the freedom of religion.<sup>34</sup> Thus if “The Literature of Man” represents the initial stage in the evolution of Zhou’s

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889–1927) and Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1867–1940), two of the most prominent May Fourth figures, supported the Association Against Religion 非宗教大同盟, founded in 1922.

<sup>32</sup> *Ziji*, pp. 27, 30.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27. It should be noted that Zhou translated the word Romantic as 傳奇, not the now generally accepted phonetic transliteration 浪漫.

<sup>34</sup> The manifesto “Zhuzhang xin jiao ziyou zhe de xuanyan” 主張信教自由者的宣言 targeted Li Dazhao’s and Cai Yuanpei’s newly founded Association Against Religion (see n. 31, above) and was published in *Chen bao* 晨報 (*Morning Post*) on March 31, 1922; collected in *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 395. See also Susan Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren and an Alternative Chinese Response to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Asia Center, 2000), pp. 200–2.

thinking on the relationship between the rational principle and artistic imagination, “The Supernatural in Art and Literature” informs its final outcome. As “A Rivulet” and other writings from around 1920 indicate, Zhou Zuoren displayed an increasingly sophisticated attitude towards supernaturalism that makes the transition from the position given in “The Literature of Man” to that in “The Supernatural in Art and Literature” discernible and sensible. Although he did not come to the conclusion as presented in “The Supernatural in Art and Literature” without some inner struggle, Zhou was still the singly qualified person for reaching it, thereby recognizing and defending the role of the supernatural in artistic imagination in the 1920s. In some way, the famous debate over science and *Weltanschauung* 科學與人生觀 in the mid-1920s, in which those who believed in science’s power to solve everything in life and therefore discredited all ideas that failed to adhere strictly to scientific principles overwhelmed their opponents, only serves to illustrate how much Zhou dissented from the May Fourth and post-May Fourth dominant discourse on modernity that centered on science and rational enlightenment.<sup>35</sup> Unlike many of his May Fourth peers and those who came after them, Zhou’s notion of humanity and vision for modern Chinese literature was so much broadened around 1920 that it transcended a strictly “scientifically correct” poetic license. As a result, he refused to condemn supernaturalism categorically. To him, supernaturalism was indispensable to human development as a species and as an individual. Its presence in the literature of humanity was, accordingly, likewise indispensable and indeed beneficial.

Zhou Zuoren’s understanding of supernaturalism in terms of human genetics is the theoretical underpinning of his views on animism and other forms of supernaturalism in literature, and he owed it primarily to evolutionary anthropology, which was dominant during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the West. Indeed, it was all Zhou knew about anthropology.<sup>36</sup> Evolutionary anthropology, as such, came to his attention through his research on Greek mythology. As early as 1903, when Zhou Zuoren first arrived in Tokyo, he became deeply interested in mythology, mainly Greek, and particularly its modern studies.<sup>37</sup> The initial motive behind the interest sim-

<sup>35</sup> See the contemporary anthology of the articles in the debate, Zhang Junmai 張君勱 and Ding Wenjiang 丁文江, eds., *Kexue yu renshengguan* 科學與人生觀 (Shanghai: Yadong, 1925). On Zhou’s possible participation in the debate, see Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren*, p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> See n. 29, above.

<sup>37</sup> Zhou, “Wo de zaxue,” in idem, *Ku kou gan kou*, pp. 66–68; for an earlier account, see “Fa xu zhua xu” 髮鬚爪序 (1926), *Tan long ji*, pp. 36–37. See also the recent study of C. H. Wang, “Chou Tso-jeu’s Hellenism,” in Tak-Wei Wong, ed., *East West Comparative Literature: Cross-Cultural Discourse* (Hong Kong: HKUC Press, 1993) pp. 335–36.

ply was the need for a rudimentary knowledge of Western literature. But he soon recognized the greater significance of studying myths, and not just Greek ones, through the discipline of anthropology.<sup>38</sup> This is particularly because Greek studies at the time were dominated by anthropological approaches represented by Jane Harrison, Andrew Lang, and Sir James Frazer. These anthropologists' works led him to more general issues about man and culture. In the autobiographical essay "Wo de za xue" 我的雜學 ("My Miscellaneous Learning") written in 1944, Zhou Zuoren reveals that the motive behind his further pursuit in anthropology was to know man's position in nature, and that man's position in nature above all entails the question of the origin and the development of culture. Intellectual curiosity for the origin of culture in turn led him to the study of "savages," which, he argued, could be divided into three groups: the primitives, little savages, and civilized savages.<sup>39</sup> An amateur in the field of anthropology, and lacking a background in a colonial culture that would provide data and support, Zhou Zuoren understandably had little access to the study of the first group, the primitives. Any work he did in the field of anthropology was limited to the second and third groups, "little savages" and "civilized savages." By "civilized savages" Zhou Zuoren means those "civilized" people who still showed certain primitive customs. It is not hard to understand that Zhou Zuoren found such evidence plentiful in Chinese society. It is also to this category of savagery that the old Chinese novels and stories of wonders belong, according to "The Literature of Man." By "little savages" Zhou Zuoren, following Gosse and others, means children. Children are savages because they are primitives in their individual development just as primitive peoples are children in the development of the human species.<sup>40</sup>

Zhou Zuoren's interest in what he calls *ertongxue* 兒童學 (the study of child development) – a neologism based on the German word *Pädologie* – was as old as his interest in myth and anthropology, and indeed was part of it. His interest began while he was in Tokyo. As an important part of his study of child development, Zhou was drawn to nursery literature or literature for children. His diary of the period

<sup>38</sup> Susan Daruvala has provided a detailed account of Zhou Zuoren's absorption of Western, mostly English, studies of myth and mythologies while in Japan; Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren*, pp. 84-90.

<sup>39</sup> "Wo de za xue," pp. 72-73.

<sup>40</sup> Though he uses the term "die kleine Wilden" with varying connotations, Dieter Richter's discussion of the 18th-c. interest in wild children is relevant to my discussion. His citation from Jean Paul, "daß ein Kind halb Tier, halb Wilder sei" (a child is half animal and half savage), may be used to gloss Zhou's "little savages"; Richter, *Das fremde Kind: Zur Entstehung der Kindheitsbilder des bürgerlichen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1987), pp. 139-65.

between 1912, one year after his return from Tokyo to his hometown Shaoxing 紹興 and his settlement in Beijing in 1917, indicates that most of his research focused on nursery literature: he tried to obtain books on the subject in English and Japanese whenever he could;<sup>41</sup> he distributed copies of an announcement for collecting nursery rhymes in his hometown;<sup>42</sup> he wrote and locally published several treatises on *Märchen* and nursery rhymes.<sup>43</sup> Together with seven more essays on the subject written later in Beijing, four of these treatises were collected in a 1932 collection, *Ertong wenxue xiao lun* 兒童文學小論 (*Minor Treatises on Children's Literature*). These four essays are among his first serious writings on literature. Still more articles and translations on children's literature and related subjects written before 1917 went uncollected by the author. Most significantly, in the heyday of the New Cultural Movement, Zhou Zuoren presented children's literature as an essential part of his vision for a modern literature in China, an important fact ignored by almost all literary historians. His essay on children's literature, "Ertong de wenxue" 兒童的文學 ("The Literature of Children," first delivered in a lecture in October, 1920 and first published two months later), closely followed his three celebrated writings about his vision of a new literature in China: "Ren de wenxue" ("The Literature of Man," 1918), "Pingmin de wenxue" 平民的文學 ("The Literature of the Common People," December, 1918) and "Wenxue de yaoqiu" 新文學的要求 ("Requisites for the New Literature," January, 1920). Together, these four essays later made up the first four pieces in his book *Yishu yu shenghuo* 藝術與生活 (*Art and Life*, 1931), an important collection of essays deemed by its author as his definitive views on literature and life up to the mid-1920s.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, the essay on children's literature was placed by the author on a par with the previous three more celebrated essays, and one could not possibly comprehend his overall vision for

<sup>41</sup> The books on this subject he acquired during the period include collections of Grimms' *Märchen* and Andersen's *Eventyr*; Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*; Lina Eckenstein, *Comparative Studies in Nursery Rhymes* (London: 1906); Porter Lander MacClintock, *Literature in Elementary School* (Chicago, 1907); and Takagi Toshio 高木敏雄 (1876-1922), *Dōwa no kenkyū* 童話の研究 (publication date unavailable). See the entries in *Riji* 1 for October 1, November 4, December 5 and 24, 1912; January 13, 1913; March 30, 1914; and the July catalogue of book acquisitions in 1917.

<sup>42</sup> Zhou, "Zhengqiu Shaoxing erge tonghua qi" 征求紹興兒歌童話啓; *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 151.

<sup>43</sup> The treatises include a biographical essay on Andersen, "Danmai shiren Anduierren zhuan" 丹麥詩人安兌爾然傳; *Ji wai ji*, pp. 147-50.

<sup>44</sup> Another essay written in 1921, "Gexing de wenxue" 個性的文學 (in *Tan long ji*, pp. 146-47), which according to its title seems to be part of the "...de wenxue" series, was not included in *Yishu yu shenghuo*. This fact should corroborate my argument that the inclusion of "Ertong de wenxue" in the collection was carefully thought over and it indicates the weight Zhou Zuoren gave to the topic.

a modern Chinese literature without acknowledging the significance of the fourth essay.<sup>45</sup>

From the beginning, Zhou Zuoren understood the genre of children's literature, or *Märchen* – the German word he insisted on using instead of the English words “fairy tale” and “wonder tale”<sup>46</sup> – essentially to be the same as *mythos* and *saga*.<sup>47</sup> In an important early treatise written and published in Japan in 1908 and titled “Lun wenzhang zhi yiyi ji qi shiming yin ji Zhongguo jinshi wenlun zhi shi” 論文章之意義暨其使命因及中國近時文論之失 (“On the Significance of Literature and Its Mission: The Fault of Recent Chinese Literary Criticism”), which, like Lu Xun's famous Mara essay published in the same year and in the same journal,<sup>48</sup> was written in literary Chinese, Zhou cites Johann Gottfried von Herder's (1744–1803) view of literature as representing the voice of a nation. According to Herder, *Stimme des Volks*, or *vox populi*, is heard most powerfully in a nation's early history or among its people in their primitive stage of civilization, and is preserved in the songs that contain ancient mythologies and heroic legends.<sup>49</sup> Following Herder's *Stimme des Volks*, Zhou Zuoren maintains in “Literature and Its Mission” that the *Märchen*, too, is a manifestation of *vox caeli* 天籟.<sup>50</sup> He inferred from Herder that the *Märchen* preserves the same purity of heart and closeness to nature as the songs of the primitives or ancients because the *Märchen* is associated with the early stage of life just as the ancient songs were products of the early stage of human history. Like

<sup>45</sup> No critics have given much attention to the fourth essay on children's literature. The editor of the theory volume of *Zhongguo xinwenxue daxi* decided to include all the first three essays but not the fourth. D. E. Pollard's omission of the fourth essay in his discussion of the first three essays is also telltale. He recognizes the first three essays as “seminal” to Zhou's thinking on literature, but fails to recognize the importance of the fourth in Zhou's overall vision for modern Chinese literature. See D. E. Pollard, “Chou Tso-jen and Cultivating One's Garden,” *AMNS* 11.1 (1965), pp. 186 ff.

<sup>46</sup> For the detailed explanation of why the German word *Märchen* is preferred to the English term fairy tale, see his letter in reply to Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, “Tonghua de taolun”; *Ji wai ji*, p. 375.

<sup>47</sup> See Zhou, “Tonghua luelun” 童話略論, in *Ertong wenxue xiao lun* 兒童文學小論 (1932/2002; hereafter, *Ertong*), pp. 4–5; “Tonghua yanjiu” 童話研究, *ibid.*, pp. 1–13; and “Tonghua de taolun”; *Ji wai ji*, pp. 375–36.

<sup>48</sup> I. e. “Moluo shi li shuo” 摩羅詩力說, first published in installment in the February and March issues of *Henan* 河南 and collected in *Lu Xun quanji* 魯迅全集 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 63–115. Zhou Zuoren's essay appeared in the May and June issues of the same journal.

<sup>49</sup> This was a view passionately held and defended by Herder, best formulated in his *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, in *Johann Gottfried Herder Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker, 1985) 2, pp. 447–73.

<sup>50</sup> *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 58. Incidentally, Herder is considered one of the pioneers in modern anthropology. See Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Finn Sivert Nielsen, *A History of Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 13.

those ancient songs, therefore, the *Märchen* could also be regarded as a vehicle for *vox caeli*.

Later, in the 1910s and 1920s, Zhou Zuoren turned to Andrew Lang and paraphrased his anthropological interpretation of *Märchen* by saying that the *Märchen* is essentially the same as “*mythos*” and “*saga*,” two Western words Zhou invoked in their original.<sup>51</sup> In Lang’s *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Zhou’s bible of anthropology, the *Märchen* is treated as a subgenre of myth, and its study constitutes part of anthropology.<sup>52</sup> Relying on Lang, Zhou sought to justify the presence of the apparently irrational elements in *Märchen* and in other literary genres by demonstrating similarities between *Märchen* of different nations and cultures. This universalist view, which sees common patterns and structures in *Märchen* of vastly different nations, served his literary and philosophical agenda very well. It underlay and unified his diverse ideas and intellectual interests that otherwise appear desultory or even contradictory. Thus the ratiocination behind Zhou’s thinking on *Märchen* and its relationship to the broader concern with the condition of man may be summarized as follows. Since, according to Lang and other evolutionary anthropologists, the similarities found in mythologies as well as *Märchen* in geographically and culturally remote nations suggest a common pattern of human development, it would be intellectually naïve simply to dismiss or expel ancient myths and children’s *Märchen* on account of their supernatural elements; and since childhood in many aspects resembles the early evolutionary process of mankind, children’s need for animistic tales or *Märchen* is, like our ancestors’ need for myths, perfectly understandable and justifiable. Indeed, the tales are indispensable to their psychological and mental well-being. What is even more important, the patterns and structures found in ancient myths and modern *Märchen*, as Zhou learned from Lang and other anthropologists, are not something of the past or something that only belongs to primitives; they permeate our civilization and the literatures of all eras.<sup>53</sup>

Zhou’s thoughts on the *Märchen* based upon evolutionary anthropology provided him with a more comprehensive understanding of

<sup>51</sup> “Tonghua lüelun”; *Ertong*, p. 4; “Tonghua yanjiu,” *ibid.*, p. 12; “Andesen de shi zhi jiu,” in *Tan long ji*, p. 149.

<sup>52</sup> Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion* 2, pp. 301–37.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* Some thirty to forty years after Zhou’s immersion in Lang’s idea of myth in contemporary culture, Northrop Frye formulated the distinction between the undisplaced myth, mostly identified with myth based on a traditional system of mythology, and the displaced myth, a common practice in modern authors who suggest through their work archetypal patterns that are identifiable with ancient mythological tradition. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1957), pp. 136–40.



literature in general, not just children's literature. This comprehensiveness and the sense of historicity in the conception of literature as a human activity distinguish him from many of his contemporaries who held a very narrow and utilitarian view of literature and art. This broader concept of literature helped him eventually to overcome his earlier moralistic condemnations of traditional Chinese culture and literature on the grounds of its being "superstitious." As we see, in the discussion later on, it would prepare him to embrace even transcendentalism in literature.

Zhou Zuoren's notion of the *Märchen* and the supernatural, as just seen, derived from anthropologists like Lang. Zhou seldom mentioned Herder again in his discussion of children's literature after he embraced Lang's evolutionary anthropology. Yet against the broader spectrum of Western literary and intellectual history, Lang's anthropology and Zhou's derivative ideas, especially the notion of *Märchen*, must not be seen as an isolated doctrine. In fact it may yet be traced back to the age of Herder. The progress in anthropology made in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was an outcome of, aside from the European colonization of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, several literary and intellectual trends in Europe since the late-eighteenth century, and not just Darwin's theory of evolution.<sup>54</sup> This broader intellectual background can also be felt in Zhou Zuoren's essays that either bank on or disseminate the ideas of the British evolutionary anthropologists. In the all-important essay "The Literature of Children" Zhou resorts to evolutionary anthropology for the fundamentals upon which to build arguments: "From the perspective of evolution, the process of individual human genesis is the same as that of generic genesis of man: an embryo undergoes the evolutionary process; and childhood undergoes the process of civilization."<sup>55</sup> But underneath this evolutionary surface, on a deeper level, such a view of human development also harkens back to European Romanticism.<sup>56</sup> In comparison to evolutionism, which has long since been recognized as one of the main Western theories underpinning the discourse of literary and national modernity in China, the Romantic elements in Zhou Zuoren's theoretical justification of children's literature have received inadequate critical attention. Yet they nevertheless have also had profound consequences on and implications in the literary and intellectual history of modern China. In

<sup>54</sup> For my argument here, cf. especially the section on Romanticism in Eriksen and Nielsen, *History of Anthropology*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>55</sup> *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> See Eriksen and Nielsen, *History of Anthropology*, pp. 12-15.

conjunction with our discussion of Zhou's ideas about children's literature, it is necessary to introduce relevant Romantic concepts, as well as their related history.

#### THE ROMANTIC ORIGIN OF THE LITERARY INTEREST IN CHILDHOOD

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), in his famous defense against a rationalist's attack on poetry, once said that "the savage is to ages what the child is to years."<sup>57</sup> It is not accidental that he anticipated Zhou's favorite phrase for children "the little savages," which the latter borrowed from Gosse, the late-nineteenth-century British literary critic. In fact, Shelley was neither alone nor the first to entertain such an idea. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) contradistinction between the natural state and the civilized state of man was the true origin of the modern cult of childhood,<sup>58</sup> and the German notion of *Universalgeschichte* (the universal history) underlies the notion of human history conceived as the individual lifespan.<sup>59</sup> For Rousseau and many of the European Romantics under his influence, the civilized state is the fallen state, and it deviates from our inborn state of natural grace and puts man in shackles. Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), correcting Rousseau, realized that the real natural state was most likely far from pleasant and comfortable, and acknowledged the necessity of replacing the natural state with reason; yet he nevertheless recognized the natural state as the *ideal* in the human imagination.

In the third letter of his *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (*Letters on Aesthetic Education*), Schiller uses the metaphor of childhood and adulthood to describe the natural state and the civilized state, respectively, and in so doing, reveals the reason that the natural state (the savage state in human history as well as childhood) appeals nostalgically (by definition) to civilized man:

<sup>57</sup> P. B. Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry* (1821); Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers, eds., *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), p. 481. Shelley's opponent was Thomas Love Peacock, who maintained in "The Four Ages of Poetry" (1820) that poetry is a useless anachronism in the era of reason, science, metaphysics, and political economy. See H. F. B. Brett-Smith and C. E. Jones, eds., *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock* (London: 1934) 8, pp. 24–25.

<sup>58</sup> See Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood, Individual and Society: A Study of the Theme in English Literature* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1967), pp. 40–41. Giambattista Vico makes observations similar to Rousseau's in *The New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1968), sections 36–37, 50. However, since Vico's work did not become widely known until the twentieth century, the real origin for the intellectual interest in children's power of imagination still must be attributed to Rousseau and his followers.

<sup>59</sup> See Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, pp. 201–17.

Thus he, in an artistic manner, retraces his childhood in his adulthood, and constructs a natural state ideally, which he never experienced, but is necessarily set through his rational inference. It gives itself an end in this idealistic state, which was unknown to him in his real natural state; and it gives itself a choice, of which he was then incapable. He now acts as if he were to start all over and to exchange the state of independence with the state of contract out of clear insight and free determination.<sup>60</sup>

For Schiller, the idealized natural state is necessitated by the faculty of imagination, without which man would become barbarian (Barbar) in the same way as man would become savage (Wilder) without reason.<sup>61</sup> In his other celebrated critical treatise, *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (*On Naive and Sentimental Poetry*), he proclaims in still more unequivocal words that: "Our childhood is the only unmaimed nature, which we still come across in cultivated humanity. Therefore it is no wonder if every footprint of nature outside us leads us back to childhood."<sup>62</sup> To man of morality and sentimentality, who, according to Schiller as well as to Rousseau, is considered to have lost the state of natural grace or naïveté, "the child becomes a holy object, namely an object which annihilates any greatness of experience through the greatness of an idea; and which," as Schiller further expounds on the holiness of the child by borrowing two most basic concepts from Kant, "wins back abundantly in the judgment of reason what it may lose in the judgment of understanding."<sup>63</sup>

The image of the holy child has, of course, its origin in Christianity. But the Romantics give a whole new meaning to it. With a Christological image as the backdrop, the Romantics brought forth what is known as the "Romantic Child." As a literary theme, it permeated the period of approximately fifty years beginning in around 1789. It was a central theme in the major Romantic poetry of England and Germany, including the poetry of such illustrious poets as Blake, Wordsworth, Goethe, and Novalis. It also reached beyond literature and molded the modern image of childhood in society.

Such is a concise theoretical exposition – based upon Schiller's aesthetic theory – of the Romantic elevation of childhood. Zhou Zuoren, however, as demonstrated earlier, did not come to the subject of childhood mainly via literature or aesthetics proper. As stated in "My

<sup>60</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Gesammelte Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1955) 8, p. 403.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 563.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 550. See also Richter, *Das fremde Kind*, pp. 249–50.

Miscellaneous Learning,” the subject first attracted his attention as part of evolutionary anthropology. When he was piously reading Andrew Lang, he was attentive to Lang’s view that the *Märchen* was a subgenre of myth. This anthropological approach defined his initial interest in and conception of childhood. What this means in practical terms is that instead of engrossing himself in Rousseau, Schiller, Wordsworth, or Novalis, Zhou Zuoren’s initial literary interest in childhood lies with literature *for* childhood, not literature *about* childhood. Not surprisingly, his initial work related to the literature of children is more scholarly than creative. Throughout the 1910s and the early 1920s, Zhou Zuoren endeavored to collect, translate, and research nursery rhymes, *Märchen* of all kinds, and other genres of literature for children. In this practice, incidentally, he had much in common with the Grimm brothers, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859), who collected and then published their classic household and children’s *Märchen* in 1807 and are considered to have been “children of the age of Romanticism,”<sup>64</sup> despite not being regarded as creative writers.<sup>65</sup>

Zhou’s anthropological approach through Lang was further amalgamated with his reading of American works on early education and children’s literature by people such as H.E. Scudder (1838–1902), who, incidentally, corresponded with H. C. Andersen, and J. A. MacCulloch (1868–1950), author of *The Childhood of Fiction* and *A Study of Folk Tales and Primitive Thought* (1905). The basic principles underlying Zhou Zuoren’s “The Literature of Children” and several other articles related to the subject written and published in the early-1920s were derived from these sources. The Western works informed him of a methodology for anthropological and historical research on the literature of children, and, for a while, Zhou seems to have devoted himself to it. He dug out obscure old Chinese collections of nursery rhymes and critiqued them with modern ideas and concepts;<sup>66</sup> he reviewed newly published collections of nursery rhymes, praising their achievement while pointing out their shortcomings;<sup>67</sup> he commented on translations of Western classic literary works for children, such as Lewis Carroll’s

<sup>64</sup> Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, preface to *Kinder- und Hausmärchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1984) 1, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> For Zhou’s categorization of *Märchen* including those by the Grimm brothers, see “Tonghua” 童話, *Shufang yi jiao* 書房一角 (1944/2002), p. 7. Zhou of course did not have, as the Grimm brothers had had, a grand racial and linguistic model of which the *Märchen* collection would be a part.

<sup>66</sup> Zhou, “Lü Kun de yan xiaoer yu” 呂坤的演小兒語 (1923); in *Tan long ji*, pp. 165–68.

<sup>67</sup> Zhou, “Du Tongyao da guan” 讀童謠大觀 (1923); *Tan long ji*, pp. 169–74; “Du Ge sheng tongyao ji” 讀各省童謠集 (1923); *Tan long ji*, pp. 175–80.

*Alice in Wonderland* and H.C. Andersen's *Eventyr*;<sup>68</sup> and sometimes, he translated them himself.<sup>69</sup> Through his efforts, Zhou Zuoren raised the scholarly and popular awareness of the necessity for the psychological, mental and spiritual well-being of children. His effort was rewarded by a lively public discussion of the subject as reflected in the anthologies of articles on *Märchen* edited by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 (1928).<sup>70</sup>

However, the fact that he at first descended, so to speak, on the children's playground directly from contemporary evolutionary anthropology rather than from the high altar of the Romantics should not obscure the Romantic nature of his enterprise, nor does it make him less indebted to the Romantic legacy. And since he did not, after all, become an activist or scholar in early education, nor an anthropologist, but instead became a literary critic and historian, a poet, and an essayist, it is all the more crucial to the understanding of his literary ideas that we should uncover the Romantic legacy he received through anthropology and from elsewhere. Zhou Zuoren may not have studied Rousseau and Schiller as much as he did Lang, but the modern interest in myth, to which the main genre of literature for children, the *Märchen*, belongs and out of which modern evolutionary anthropology was born, has a distinct Romantic origin. Indeed, the study of what Schiller calls "childlike peoples" (kindliche Völker),<sup>71</sup> and especially their myth, has the same theoretical underpinning and purport as the literary interest in childhood. In more than one place, Zhou Zuoren makes it known that he was familiar with this particular history through Herder, a major early Romantic figure.

In Europe, the study of "childlike peoples" began with the study of European peoples in their childhood, and the study of the ancient people in Europe at first concentrated on their mythologies and legends. In late-eighteenth-century Europe, like the interest in childhood, the heightened interest in ancient mythology as both literary and philosophical modes was a reaction to the dominant rationalism represented

<sup>68</sup> Zhou, "Alisi manyou qijing ji" 阿麗思漫游奇境記 (1922), in *Ziji*, pp. 54-57; "Wang'erde tonghua" 王爾德童話 (1922), in *Ziji*, pp. 63-66; "Andesen de shi zhi jiu" (1918), in *Tan long ji*, pp. 148-53. A much later article, "Antusheng de si pian tonghua" 安徒生的四篇童話 (1936), recalls how he became acquainted with Andersen's work; see *Feng yu tan* 風雨談 (1936/2002), pp. 167-74.

<sup>69</sup> Zhou's translation of H. C. Andersen's classic "Lille pige med svovlsikkerne" ("The Little Match Girl") was published as "Mai huochai de nüer" 賣火柴的女兒 in *Xin qingnian* 6.1 (1919).

<sup>70</sup> Zhao Jingshen, *Tonghua pinglun* 童話評論 (Shanghai: Xin wenhua shushe, 1928). Zhao corresponded with Zhou Zuoren on *Märchen* in 1922; Zhou published his replies in *Chenbao fukan* 晨報副刊 on January 25, February 12, March 29, and April 9; see *Ji wai ji* 1, pp. 375-80.

<sup>71</sup> Schiller, *Gesammelte Werke* 8, p. 549.

by Newton and Locke in England and the *philosophes* in France. Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) and Herder, two generally acknowledged founders of the modern study of myth, were both motivated, at least in part, by the need to correct the Enlightenment’s optimism and materialist rationalism. Since for the entire eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth, Vico’s influence was next to nonexistent, it was Herder who was instrumental in the reconsideration of classical mythology and the fostering of literary and intellectual interest in Northern European legends and mythology. Living in an age when ancient myths were debunked as error and superstition, Herder did not condone the proposal of simply banishing the use of mythology from modern literature altogether; but he was also against the widely prevailing ornamental use and pedantic imitation of classical mythology in modern literature. He urged instead that German literature should be inspired by the same poetic genius that invented and employed the ancient mythology in ancient poetry.<sup>72</sup> For Herder, the unimpeded expression of the vital force by the ancients as preserved in their mythology should help modern poets find a new mythology. It is this creative use of mythology that would raise modern poets from being mere imitators of the ancients.<sup>73</sup> This idea of the creative use of mythology compelled Herder to look for alternate sources of mythology in Northern Europe in addition to the usual source of ancient mythology in Graeco-Roman literature. Indeed together with the primitivist zeal Rousseau aroused in the European intellectual world, his search for an alternate mythology and his idea of the universal history helped create an intellectual atmosphere that eventually led to the birth of modern anthropology.<sup>74</sup> Through Lang and from elsewhere, Zhou Zuoren knew the debt modern evolutionary anthropology owed to German Romantic writers, including Herder the pioneer.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Herder, “Vom neuern Gebrauch der Mythologie,” in idem, *Fragmente über die neue deutsche Literatur, dritte Sammlung* (1767), in *Werke* 1, pp. 432–55, but esp. p. 435 and pp. 447–55. For the interest in Northern European myths and legends, see Herder, *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, in *Werke* 2, pp. 45–54.

<sup>73</sup> *Werke* 1, pp. 449–50.

<sup>74</sup> Herder was above all a philosopher of history. His ambitious *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (*Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*; *Werke* 6) provides a grand architecture for his version of universal history.

<sup>75</sup> In *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Lang paid tribute to early-19th-c. German scholarship in the study of mythology, pp. 23 ff. The pioneer work done by the German scholars was in turn a product of the Romantic Zeitgeist. Lang did not mention Herder by name in *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, but it is highly likely that Zhou might have encountered Herder elsewhere in anthropological works. In any case, he surely also acquired the knowledge of the German pioneer in the study of myth from books in the context of European literary history. In fact, we see a paragraph devoted to Herder in Zhou’s own lectures on the history of European literature, *Ouzhou wenxue shi* 歐洲文學史 (1918/2002; hereafter, *Ouzhou*), p. 171. Otherwise, for

As part of his contribution to the study of myths, Herder was also greatly responsible for the rise of primitivism in literature, which, as shown, above, in our exposition of Schiller's aesthetics, had a direct bearing on the cult of childhood. For Herder as a primitivist, who influenced and anticipated Schiller, the savage mind was intrinsically more poetic than the civilized mind. "The wilder, that is, the more lively, the more spontaneous a nation is," rhapsodizes Herder in his famous *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (*Excerpts from Correspondence on Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Nations*),

the wilder, namely the more lively, freer, more sensual, more lyrical its songs – if it has songs – must be! The farther from artistic, scientific way of thinking, language and education a nation is, the less its songs are made for paper and the less they are written verses: on the lyrical, on the lively and as if dance-like rhythm of the song, on lively presence of the pictures, on the compactness and, as it were, the urge of its content, its feelings, on the symmetry of its words, syllables, for many even the letters, on the movement of the melody, and on a hundred other things that belong to the living world, to the didactic and national song and disappear with it – on these, on these alone relies the essence, the purpose, the entire wonder-working force, which these songs possess in order to be the enrapture, the driving force, the eternal hereditary and joy song of the people!<sup>76</sup>

Zhou recognized the importance of this passage well enough to cite it in his *Ouzhou wenxue shi* 歐洲文學史 (*A History of European Literature*, lectures originally delivered at Peking University in 1917 and published the next year).<sup>77</sup> Herder's lauding primitive people as being more poetic is just one step away from Schiller's extolling childhood as the most artistic and ideal phase in the life of the civilized man. In their shared distrust of civilization, the uncivilized, that is, the natural state found in children and ancient peoples, is held to be most conducive to *mythopoesis* and imagination. Therefore, even if Zhou did not know Schiller's aesthetics in detail, his knowledge of Herder regarding myth, savage thinking, and their close relationship to poetry sufficed to make him a conscious successor to the Romantic enterprise.

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an assessment of Herder's contribution to the development of anthropology, especially his concepts of the *Volk* (nation or people), language, and myth, see Eriksen and Nielsen, *History of Anthropology*, pp. 13, 27–28.

<sup>76</sup> Herder, *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, *Werke* 2, p. 452.

<sup>77</sup> *Ouzhou*, p. 171.

It should be emphasized that for Herder, the urgency of creatively using ancient mythology is particularly acute thanks to Germany's "be-latedness" in creating a national literature that could rival the English and counter the French.<sup>78</sup> From the very beginning, Herder's prescription for the modern use of Graeco-Roman mythology in German literature and his Nordic enthusiasm were part of a greater national cause. For him, Nordic myths and legends were "national" as opposed to classical mythology originating in the Mediterranean world. To create a new mythology based on the Nordic tradition would act as a counter to the hegemony of the Mediterranean classical tradition. For this and other reasons, he tirelessly promoted Nordic literature. He was enthused with Northern saga, ballads, and other kinds of Northern poetic folklore, and staked his name in the case for the authenticity of Ossian, later revealed to be a forgery by Macpherson.<sup>79</sup> Herder's predisposition was to have a profound impact on literary history. That Goethe, among others, responded to his call and that the call catalyzed the *Sturm und Drang* Movement is a well-known episode in the history of German literature and is duly mentioned in Zhou's *History of European Literature*.<sup>80</sup> The Grimm brothers' effort at collecting old German *Märchen* should be viewed against this background. In European literature at large, the feverish interest in myths from both the South and the North and the zeal to bring about "the Northern sun,"<sup>81</sup> together with the Romantic image of childhood, helped give birth to German and English Romanticism as the consummate movement of the counter-Enlightenment.

In his absorption of myth, ballads, folk poetry, nursery rhymes, old Chinese barbaric practices, and "little savages," Zhou Zuoren appears almost as a Herder incarnate.<sup>82</sup> Hardly any subject put forward

<sup>78</sup> Herder, who once traveled to the British Isles, was an ardent Anglophile. As a more advanced power both economically and culturally, Great Britain, to Herder, was a cultural model that Germany should emulate. For evidence of his Anglophile enthusiasm, see a passage in which Herder recalls his trip to England and Scotland in *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, in *Werke* 2, p. 455-56.

<sup>79</sup> It is worth noting that Herder's interest in ballads and folk songs had an anthropological dimension and was founded in his "Enthusiasmus für die Wilden" ("enthusiasm for savages"). See *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker*, in *Werke* 2, p. 456; also see Richter, *Das fremde Kind*, pp. 158-59. Zhou Zuoren was quite familiar with the 18th-c. history of German literature including the episode involving the German enthusiasm for Ossian and Percy's famous collection of English ballads; *Ouzhou*, p. 170.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>81</sup> P. H. Mallet wrote in the conclusion to the *History of Denmark and Monuments of the Celts*, "Who knows whether the Sun will not one day rise in the North?" cited in Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Wordsworth and Goethe in Literary History," *The Unremarkable Wordsworth* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 1987), pp. 5-60.

<sup>82</sup> Zhou Zuoren (*Ouzhou wenxue shi*, p. 171) knew that Herder collected European ballads and published them in an anthology later entitled by others as *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (*Voices of Nations in Their Songs*; see *Volkslieder*, in *Werke* 3, pp. 9-521).



by German, and other European, Romantics escaped Zhou's attention: his enthusiasm for nursery literature and folklore, his interest in primitivism, his advocacy for sexual liberation, his distrust of civilization, his elevation of vital energy best exhibited in children and primitive people as against moribund moralism and civilization, his composition of fable,<sup>83</sup> and finally his philhellenism (however unorthodox and lacking in depth, in competent guidance, and in erudition).<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the parallel between Herder and Zhou goes beyond their common focus of interests. The motives behind their intellectual interests and the historical situations facing them, too, have much in common. In the case of Herder, on the one hand, classical mythology and its debacle in the age of reason prompted him to search for an alternative in his own Northern tradition; on the other hand, British scholarship in folklore – including the forged Ossian – and British literature that incorporated the folklore served for him as a model to be emulated by German literature. (Indeed, Great Britain was perceived in Germany at the time to be more advanced in just about everything.) In the case of Zhou, the bankruptcy of the orthodox version of traditional Chinese literature and culture and the influx of the more developed European literature and culture proper to the modern age led him to seek in previously repressed culture an alternative to China's orthodox tradition. In the enterprise of looking for an alternative, European – British and German in particular – literary history provided Zhou with examples. Hence, like Herder, there lay a national agenda behind Zhou's intellectual pursuits, namely to overcome China's belatedness and to bring about a worthy modern Chinese literature. This national agenda injected urgency into his enterprises. Therefore, almost in every aspect, not just the cult of childhood, regardless of the extent to which he was aware of it, Zhou Zuoren faithfully followed the footprint of a German (as well as English especially when Shelley is considered) Romantic vanguard and exhibited an unmistakable Romantic inclination and impulse in his critical writings of around 1920.

<sup>83</sup> Herder in 1773 left a manuscript entitled “52 Alten Fabeln mit neuer Anwendung” (“52 Ancient Fables with Modern Application”), being part of his literary and anthropological interest in “the modern use of mythology.” A selection of these fables is found in *Werke* 3, pp. 753–60. Zhou's composition of “A Rivulet” evinces the same artistic and intellectual interest in the genre of fable as Herder's “Alten Fabeln.”

<sup>84</sup> The course of Zhou Zuoren's study of classical Greek was unorthodox. He at first was more interested in the koine than classical Greek, and his proficiency in classical Greek was never adequate to read at ease and to appreciate the best of classical authors. Partly because of this, with the exception of Sappho and Theokritos, before 1949 he gave little heed to first-class classical authors. See Zhou, *Zitang huixiang lu* 1, pp. 257–59, and Wang, “Chou Tsojen's Hellenism,” pp. 368–70.

## THE VOICES OF CHILDREN: WILLIAM BLAKE

As mentioned above, Zhou Zuoren's interest in nursery literature began around the mid-1900s when he was in Tokyo. But this interest did not bring him to an appreciation of classic European literature about childhood until shortly before the May Fourth Movement. To examine how he came to discover canonical works about childhood in European literature, we must return to his relationship with *baihua* poetry.

Zhou Zuoren has been credited for "founding the altar of [modern Chinese] poetry." Yet he often declined the title "poet."<sup>85</sup> Judging from his lifework, one can hardly disagree. His poetical production is meager in comparison to his prose works. He primarily was an essayist, indeed, one with few equals. His disclaimer can also be borne out by the list of books he read or perused, as registered in his diaries, lectures, and essays, in which poetry does not feature prominently. Yet his name will forever be associated with modern Chinese poetry thanks to his early experiments. And although he kept writing poetry throughout his life, his reputation and credentials as a poet are mainly based upon the handful of *baihua* poems he wrote and published around 1920.<sup>86</sup> The doggerel-like verses he produced from 1931 onward (which he calls *dayoushi* 打油詩), though far exceeding his *baihua* poems in number, do not even come close to his *baihua* poems in literary and historical significance. Given this fact, his brief, but serious, early venture into the realm of poetry appears all the more important, and the fact that this venture was inspired chiefly by one English Romantic poet and that this history of influence is intrinsically linked to the subject of childhood and other Romantic agendas makes his *baihua* poetic production especially worth examining.

We have demonstrated the similarities between "A Rivulet" and features Zhou found in Andersen's *Eventyr*. But other than the general principles with which Zhou characterizes Andersen's tales, such as animism and lax and direct language, principles that indeed are characteristic of most *Märchen*, not just Andersen's, there is little textual evidence to establish that Zhou's poem was directly influenced by the Dane. As a poetical work, "A Rivulet" has another muse.

Zhou Zuoren was, as mentioned above, preoccupied with the study and collection of nursery literature for most of the 1910s. But towards

<sup>85</sup> For instance, in the 1929 preface to the collection of his *baihua* poems, Zhou says: "I do not know what a new poetry in China should look like, but I know I am by no means a poet"; *Guoqu de shengming*, p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> In China recently there seems to be an increased interest in his later poetry partly thanks to the fact that they are more easily available now. But in terms of literary history, Zhou's reputation and importance in poetry still is founded on his early *baihua* poems.

the end of the decade and at the beginning of the ensuing one, perhaps as part of the collective effort to invigorate the ongoing *baihua* poetry movement, Zhou Zuoren published several essays to introduce Western poets to Chinese readers. These poets include Sappho, Theokritos, Shelley, and Baudelaire.<sup>87</sup> Despite his love of things Greek, however, neither Sappho nor Theokritos had any significant relevance to his own creative work. Shelley and Baudelaire had a more direct bearing on his view of literature, but his temperament was too different from the two idiosyncratic personalities and his milieu too distant from their poetic worlds to allow him to derive inspiration directly from their poetry. Although Zhou Zuoren admits in the note attached to “A Rivulet” when first published in the *New Youth*, that the lack of prosodic features in his poem might be compared to Baudelaire’s prose poems, some of which he translated,<sup>88</sup> there is otherwise little in common between the rural “A Rivulet” and Baudelaire’s urban *Le spleen de Paris*. Besides eschewing Shelley and Baudelaire in his poetical writing, Zhou Zuoren was also shrewd enough as a reader and critic not to attach any importance to the poetical works of Andrew Lang or Havelock Ellis despite his admiration for their prose works.

Yet Zhou Zuoren did model his *baihua* poetry after some European poet. Certain textual evidence and biographical research indicate that more than anyone else, William Blake (1757–1827), the mystic poet whose genius just began to be better understood by critics in the West at the time,<sup>89</sup> was the main source of his poetic inspiration around 1920.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> On Sappho, Zhou published translations of several poems in two essays carrying the same title: “Xila de xiao shi” 希臘的小詩 in *Chenbao wenxue xunkan* 晨報文學旬刊 5 (July, 1923), later collected in *Tan long ji*, pp. 97–113; and another essay on Sappho, “Xila nüshiren” 希臘女詩人, written before 1923 is found in *Ziji*, pp. 190–93. Zhou published a translation of some of Theokritos’s idylls in *Chenbao fujian* 晨報副鐫 on December 4 and 27, 1921; he published a translation of Shelley’s poetical fragment “To the People of England” (*The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, London: Oxford U.P., 1932, p. 569) in *Chenbao fujian* May 30, 1922, and commemorated the 10-yr. anniversary of Shelley’s death with the essay “Shiren Xilie de bai nian ji” 詩人席烈的百年忌, *Chenbao fujian*, July 12, 1922, later collected in *Tan long ji*, pp. 18–23. Zhou’s translation of some prose poems from Baudelaire’s *Le spleen de Paris* appeared in *Min’guo ribao* 民國日報 on January 9 and 27, 1922; then he published an essay “San ge wenxuejia de jinian” 三個文學家的紀念, introducing Baudelaire as well as Flaubert and Dostoyevski in *Chenbao fujian* on January 25, 1922, later collected in *Tan long ji*, pp. 14–17.

<sup>88</sup> He translated five prose poems by Baudelaire; “Sanwen xiao shi” 散文小詩, in *Chenbao fujian*, November 20, 1921.

<sup>89</sup> N. G. D. Malmqvist makes no mention of Zhou Zuoren’s reception and translation of Blake in his “Blake in China,” in *Blake, an Illustrated Quarterly* 8.1 (Summer, 1979), pp. 24–28. Admittedly, his essay mainly focuses on the period after the founding of the P.R.C. in 1949, nevertheless he seems unaware of the pioneer work Zhou Zuoren did in introducing Blake to China. In a chapter on Hu Shi and Zhou Zuoren in *The Genesis of Modern Chinese Literary Criticism: 1917–1930* (London: Curzon Press, 1980), pp. 20–21, Marián Gálik duly registers Zhou’s attention to Blake in his critical writings but does not elaborate its significance.

<sup>90</sup> Yu Yaoming 于耀明, *Shū Sakujin to Nihon kindai bungaku* 周作人と日本近代文學 (To-

Available biographical evidence shows that Zhou acquired a copy of Blake's work in 1917, perhaps for the first time.<sup>91</sup> He might well have learned something about the English poet during his years in Japan, but if so, he gives us scant indication.<sup>92</sup> He acquired at least two editions of Blake's poems around 1917, most likely an indication of the intensity of his interest.<sup>93</sup> It is, however, not clear how many of the long poems in the collections he read because, without a good annotation, they are rather esoteric. But we know he did read the most popular and most accessible of all Blake's poetical works, namely the *Songs of Innocence* and the *Songs of Experience*. The thematic concentration on the subject of childhood in these two works must be the first thing that caught Zhou's attention and may explain the sudden rise in interest. In *A History of European Literature*, Zhou devotes a section to Blake in the chapter on eighteenth-century English literature.<sup>94</sup> *Songs of Innocence* in particular is mentioned as "poetry of genuineness and expressions of childlike heart."<sup>95</sup> In addition to the primary texts, Zhou also got his

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kyo: Kanrin Shobō, 2001), argues that Zhou's *baihua* poetry was influenced by Senke Moto-maro 千家元麿 (1887-1948), a contemporary Japanese poet. While the unpretentious, plain, and colloquial style of Zhou's *baihua* poetry may to a certain extent have been influenced by Senke's poetry, which possesses similar stylistic qualities, as shown below, the primary source for the poetical conceits and imagination in some of Zhou's most important and influential poems should still be found in Blake's popular poetical works. See Yu, *Shū Sakujiin*, chap. 6, pp. 125-51.

<sup>91</sup> On the December list of his book acquisitions of that year, a copy of selected poems of Blake is registered, but neither the original title nor its editorial or publication information is given; *Riji* 1, p. 722.

<sup>92</sup> In a lecture on contemporary Japanese fiction delivered on April 19, 1918, at Peking University, Zhou Zuoren declared Blake, along with Tolstoy, as one of the main sources of influence on the Japanese Shirakaba 白樺 literary group ("Ribei jin sanshi nian xiaoshuo zhi fada" 日本近三十年小説之發達; in *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 145). In many aspects not just literary, Zhou's debt to the Shirakaba group is deep. For instance, Zhou's optimistic and individualist humanism owes much to the same philosophical beliefs among the Shirakaba authors, see Stephen W. Kohl, Yoko Matsuoka McClain, and Ryoko Toyama McClellan, *The White Birch School (Shirakabaha) of Japanese Literature: Some Sketches and Commentary* (Eugene, Oregon: U. Oregon, 1975), pp. 16-23. Quite possibly Zhou might have learned about Blake through his contact with the Shirakaba writers. For instance, a 1914 issue of *Shirakaba* magazine (vol. 5.4) carried a translated article on Blake, with illustrations made from Blake's plates. It may also be worth mentioning that Zhou Zuoren probably did not learn about Blake from Lang, whose Victorian taste forced Blake out of his *History of English Literature: from "Beowulf" to Swinburne* (first published in 1912). In the catalogue of foreign book acquisitions in his diary of December, 1918, there is an entry for *William Blake*, by Basil de Selincourt (*Riji* 1, p. 812). Basil de Selincourt's book (first published in 1909) was an important study on Blake after Arthur Symons's groundbreaking book, *William Blake* (London, 1907). Arthur Symons was a prominent author and English scholar of his day. Zhou Zuoren possessed and was very familiar with several of his books. It is therefore entirely possible that Zhou might have seen Symons's book on Blake as well.

<sup>93</sup> The second copy of Blake was registered in the January catalogue of foreign book acquisitions in the diary of 1918, *Riji* 1, p. 796. Again no publication detail was given.

<sup>94</sup> *Ouzhou*, pp. 167-68.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

hands on Blake criticism. From a booklet by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Mysticism in English Literature* (1913), which he acquired in February 1918,<sup>96</sup> and cited in his article on Blake,<sup>97</sup> Zhou Zuoren learned more about the complexity of the mystic poet's mythological system and its significance and came to realize that Blake was much more than a poet who penned verses on children. In the next two years he wrote and twice published an essay on Blake's poetry and ideas, each time under a different title.<sup>98</sup> Zhou Zuoren had never before dwelled so much on a modern European poet, and he did so in a relatively short period of time.

Even more compelling evidence for Blake's influence than the circumstantial one lies in his *baihua* poems written and published around 1920. Indeed, in "A Rivulet" such influence on the poetic conceit and imagery is already palpable. The following poem is the second in Blake's *Songs of Experience*, and it most likely provided some inspiration for the composition of "A Rivulet:"

"Earth's Answer"

Earth rais'd up her head,  
 From the darkness dread & drear.  
 Her light fled:  
 Stony dread!  
 And her locks cover'd with grey despair.  
 Prison'd on watry shore  
 Starry Jealousy does keep my den  
 Cold and hoar  
 Weeping o'er  
 I hear the Father of the ancient men  
 Selfish father of men  
 Cruel jealous selfish fear  
 Can delight  
 Chain'd in night  
 The virgins of youth and morning bear.  
 Does spring hide its joy  
 When buds and blossoms grow?  
 Does the sower?

<sup>96</sup> See the February list of foreign book acquisitions of that year in his diary, *Riji* 1, p. 799.

<sup>97</sup> Zhou, "Bolaiké de shī" 勃來克的詩 (1918); *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>98</sup> The first essay was "Bolaiké de shī" (1918); *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 100-7; the other was "Yingguo shiren Bolaiké de sixiang" 英國詩人勃來克的思想, in *Shaonian Zhongguo* 少年中國 1.10.8 (1919), pp. 43-48.

Sow by night?  
 Or the plowman in darkness plow?  
 Break this heavy chain,  
 That does freeze my bones around  
 Selfish! vain!  
 Eternal bane!  
 That free Love with bondage bound.<sup>99</sup>

There are similarities in conceits, tropes, and images between this poem and “A Rivulet.” Thematically, both poems deal with the subject of vital forces being frustrated and the longing for release. In addition, the two poems also have in common the images of clay and water: in Blake’s poem Earth is “Prison’d on watery shore,” whereas in “A Rivulet” water dammed by earth becomes the central conceit. Zhou Zuoren later maintains that “A Rivulet” expresses a Confucian anxiety over affairs of the state.<sup>100</sup> But there is nothing in the text that confines interpretation within such a Confucian framework. If examined in the light of the overall intellectual interest of its author, Blake’s “free love with bondage bound,” which, like Orc, who is also subject to the Chain of Jealousy,<sup>101</sup> may include imagination as well as sexual freedom, could be a subject just as probable as, if not more than, Confucian anxiety. After all, Zhou Zuoren was an advocate of Havelock Ellis’s highly liberal sexual ethics. The line “To maintain its life, water must needs flow, so it swirls before the dyke” in “A Rivulet” suggests that dammed water in the poem should indeed be understood as an allegory for frustrated vital forces. Such a reading would be consistent with Zhou Zuoren’s opposition to any oppression of vital forces through morality, superstition, and hypocrisy.

Among all of his *baihua* poems, “A Rivulet,” which contains a complete fable, may be nearest to the mythopoetical aspect of Blake’s poetry, although its lax style has little in common with the intensity of Blake’s “Earth’s Answer,” and the fable it tells cannot, in terms of complexity, be compared to the grand mythological system of which “Earth’s Answer” is just a small part. But as an attempt at *mythopoesis*, “A Rivulet” may still be regarded as to have followed the example of mythopoetic Blake.

“A Rivulet,” however, is not the only poem inspired by Blake. Indeed, it is not the most typical of Zhou’s imitations or emulations of the

<sup>99</sup> David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), pp. 18–19.

<sup>100</sup> Zhou, *Zhitang huixiang lu* 2, pp. 442–44.

<sup>101</sup> Blake, *The Book of Urizen*, VII, 4, in Erdman, *Complete Poetry and Prose*, p. 80.

*Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, since its theme is not directly related to children or childhood. A good number of his other *baihua* poems bear unmistakable traces of influence from the *Songs* as regards the theme of childhood as well as conceits, imagery, and even language.<sup>102</sup> The following poem, written on April 20, 1921, is one example:

“A Child” 小孩

一個小孩在我的窗外面跑過	A child ran past my window,
我也望不見他的頭頂	But I could not see his head.
他的腳步聲雖然響	His footsteps, though loud,
但於我還很寂靜	To me were still very quiet.
東邊一株大樹上	On the great trees eastward,
住著許多烏鴉,又有許多看不見的麻雀	Lived many a raven and many hidden sparrows,
他們每天成群的叫	Who every day sang in unison,
仿佛是朝陽中的一部音樂	Like music in the morning sun.
我在這些時候	Then my mind would
心裏便安靜了	Become peaceful,
反覺得以前的憎惡	And I rather felt that all my past dis- gusts
都是我的罪過了	Were my sin.

Corresponding to the poem are two “Nurse’s Songs” in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, respectively. In Zhou’s “A Child,” the child’s noise brings the poet, paradoxically, peace of mind. The peace thus achieved then makes the poet aware of its previous loss and thereby purges the very cause of his mental disquiet. In the first “Nurse’s Song” from the *Songs of Innocence*, especially in its first stanza, children’s voices are capable of the same effect:

When the voices of children are heard on the green  
And laughing is heard on the hill,  
My heart is at rest within my breast  
And every thing else is still  
Then come home my children, the sun is gone down  
And the dews of night arise  
Come come leave off play, and let us away  
Till the morning appears in the skies

<sup>102</sup> In addition to the poems already discussed and to be discussed or mentioned below, it is worth mentioning that “Cang ying” 蒼蠅 (“The Fly”) from *Guoqu de shengming* models closely after a poem in Blake’s *Songs of Experience* with the same title, “The Fly.”

No no let us play, for it is yet day  
And we cannot go to sleep  
Besides in the sky, the little birds fly  
And the hills are all coverd with sheep  
Well well go & play till the light fades away  
And then go home to bed  
The little ones leaped & shouted & laugh'd  
And all the hills ecchoed

Belonging to the world of experience, the “Nurses Song” in the *Songs of Experience* is ironic in tone. But in that the children’s voices prompt the nurse’s self-reflection, Zhou’s “Child” also follows its model. Blake’s second “Nurses Song” is as follows:

When the voices of children, are heard on the green  
And whisprings are in the dale:  
The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,  
My face turns green and pale.  
Then come home my children, the sun is gone down  
And the dews of night arise  
Your spring & your day, are wasted in play  
And your winter and night in disguise.

More than “Earth’s Answer,” the two “Nurse’s Songs” are representative of the *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*.<sup>103</sup> This is because “Earth’s Answer” is only indirectly related to the theme of childhood, which is the central theme of the two *Songs*; whereas the two “Nurse’s Songs” are centered on the theme and therefore can even better relate to Zhou’s literary agenda.

That Zhou Zuoren found in Blake the poetic representation of his favorite subject, the “little savages,” and was captured by the poetic charms of Blake’s *Songs* might be a little fortuitous. But it is not at all accidental that Blake should choose childhood as the theme of his *Songs*. Living in an age when rationalism represented by Locke and Newton began to be undermined by the appeal of Nature both outside and inside man, Blake, as Peter Coveney rightly points out, “was the first casualty of our modern sensibility.” For Blake, childhood was equated with imagination, and children, or any imaginative people, stood opposed to “Idiot Reasoners” such as Bacon, Newton and Locke. In the

<sup>103</sup> For an interesting discussion of the poem, see E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Innocence and Experience: An Introduction to Blake* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1964), pp. 31 ff.



famous letter to Dr. Trusler on August 23, 1799, Blake made clear that he elevated children on account of their capacity for imagination:

I feel that a Man may be happy in This World. And I know that This World Is a World of Imagination & Vision I see Every thing I paint In This World, but Every body does not see alike. [...] To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination & I feel Flattered when I am told So. [...]

But I am happy to find a Great Majority of Fellow Mortals who can Elucidate My Visions & Particularly they have been Elucidated by Children who have taken a greater delight in contemplating my Pictures than I even hoped. Neither Youth nor Childhood is Folly or Incapacity Some Children are Fools & so are some Old Men. But There is a vast Majority on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation.<sup>104</sup>

Spiritual Sensation above all consists in the visionary faculty. To say a vast majority of children are “on the side of Imagination or Spiritual Sensation” is essentially the same as to say that “the savage mind is intrinsically more poetic than the civilized mind.” Clearly, Blake’s prioritizing childhood for its intrinsically stronger faculty of imagination is essentially in agreement with the Romantic image of childhood as the state closer to nature and more capable of *mythopoesis*. Though for Blake, the innocence of the child is only an unorganized innocence, which he calls Beulah, and it only foreshadows, but is not, the organized innocence or Eden, yet “Neither Youth nor Childhood is Folly” that need be looked down upon, reprimanded or corrected.<sup>105</sup>

In “Child,” likewise, Zhou Zuoren makes the child an angel of peace and prompter of self-reflection. He is no object of pedagogy and no ward of the adult, as he appears in Zhou’s lectures and essays on the subject of early education. Instead, here the child becomes an unwitting teacher and spiritual warden of the adult. From the ward to the spiritual warden of the adults Zhou Zuoren in fact portrays a significant shift in his thinking. This shift not only accentuates the humanistic motives always evident in his advocacy for children’s literature, but also takes on a spiritual dimension not that obvious in his critical writings. It gives an immanent dimension to the representation of childhood. Indeed, this dimension almost verges on religion.

<sup>104</sup> *Complete Poetry and Prose*, pp. 702–3; Coveney’s discussion is in *The Image of Childhood*, p. 55.

<sup>105</sup> We should note that Schiller, as outlined above, makes the similar distinction between the real natural state, which is undesirable, and the idealized natural state as the *telos* of aesthetic education.

## ENTHOUSIASMOS AND EKSTASIS, OR HEN KAI PAN (ἔν κἀὶ πᾶν)

There are overt Christological elements in Blake's first "Nurse's Song" and many other poems, especially in *Songs of Innocence*. No one would expect such elements in Zhou Zuoren, the professed agnostic.<sup>106</sup> But with lines in "A Child" like "I rather felt that all my past disgusts/Were my sin," he comes very close to religious sentiments. Yet "A Child" is not even the most religious poem among all of his *baihua* poems. "A Prayer Said To Children," written four months after "A Child," is, as its title suggests, even more religious in tone:

## "A Prayer Said to Children" 對於小孩的祈禱

小孩呵, 小孩呵	Children, O children,
我對你們祈禱了	I say my prayer to you.
你們是我的贖罪者	You are my redeemer.
請贖我的罪罷	Please redeem my sins,
還有我未能贖的先人的罪	And sins of my ancestors which I was unable to redeem,
用了你們的笑	With your smile,
你們的喜悅與幸福	With your gladness and joy,
用了得能成爲真正的人的矜誇	With the pride for being able to become true humans.
在你們的前面, 有一個美的花園	Before you there is a beauti- ful garden.
從我的頭上跳過了	Jump over my head,
平安的那邊去罷	Proceed thence in peace.
而且請贖我的罪罷	And do redeem my sins,
我不能夠到那邊去了	For I cannot be there,
並且連那微茫的影子也容易望不見了的罪	Including the sin of not seeing even its shadow easily. <sup>107</sup>

No single model for this poem can be found in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. Yet *Songs of Innocence* frequently suggests that children are closer to God. "The Little Black Boy," "The Chimney Sweeper," and "The Little Boy Found" all indicate that these boys will ascend to heaven. "Nurse's Song" and other poems (for example, "A

<sup>106</sup> For a statement of Zhou's personal faith and religion, see "Zhuzhang xinjiao ziyou zhe de xuanyan"; *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 395.

<sup>107</sup> *Guoqu de shengming*, pp. 32-33. An author's note to the poem explains that it originally was written and published in Japanese. The Chinese text is his own translation.

Cradle Song," "The Lamb," "Infant Joy") explicitly associate the infant with the Holy Child. The children in "A Prayer Said to Children" take over the Christological image from *Songs of Innocence* and thereby become the poet's "redeemer."<sup>108</sup>

Considering the fact that Zhou Zuoren made no secret of his disbelief in conventional transcendentalism, including Christianity, the Christological elements found in his *baihua* poems are truly remarkable. These elements are not gratuitous, as in the hands of some younger poets after him who studded their verses with kitsch Christian imagery only for the sake of exoticism and aesthetic snobbery.<sup>109</sup> They reflect a subtle change in Zhou's view on religion and on the relationship between religion and literature. Simultaneously with the composition and publication of "A Prayer Said to Children," Zhou, while still uncommitted, in an open letter expressed a more positive assessment of Christianity with regard to Chinese society.<sup>110</sup> In a letter dated September 3, 1921, he maintains that Christianity would be the apt choice with which "to change the mentality of the Chinese." The poem with its Christian undertones shows that the change of his attitude towards Christianity in fact went beyond sociological and nationalistic concerns expressed in the letter. Indeed, the poem points to an important aspect in his view on literature which has never been given due attention.<sup>111</sup> Zhou Zuoren did not merely borrow from Blake the motif of childhood, he accepted and brought to contemporary literature and discourse on literature in China a transcendental dimension.

In her *Mysticism in English Literature*, a book Zhou Zuoren cited in his writings on Blake, Spurgeon links the nursery rhyme-like style of some of Blake's best known verses with his mystic vision and his transcendental experience:

Blake is peculiarly daring and original in his use of the mystical method of crystallizing a great truth in an apparently trivial fact.

<sup>108</sup> Zhou's several other *baihua* poems in *Guoqu de shengming* also exhibit Christological overtones, for example "Jingji" 荆棘 ("Thorns"), "Qilu" 歧路 ("Crossroad"), and "Xiaohai" 小孩 ("The Little Child," beginning with "Wo kanjian xiaohai...").

<sup>109</sup> See for example Liang Zongdai 梁宗岱 (1904-1983), *Wandao* 晚禱 (*The Evening Prayer*) (Shanghai: Shangyu, 1925).

<sup>110</sup> See the sixth letter from the "Miscellaneous Letters from the Mountains," dated September 3, 1921, in *Shuxin*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>111</sup> Daruvala briefly mentions Zhou's notion of the close relationship between literature and religion, which he articulated in a 1921 article (to be discussed later), but does not pursue its Western origin, nor does she discuss its rich contents and significance for Zhou's intellectual development. Nonetheless, she deserves the credit for being among the first to call our attention to the issue; Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren*, pp. 17-78.

We have seen some of these truths in the Proverbs and the Auguries of Innocence is nothing else but a series of such facts, a storehouse of deepest wisdom. Some of these have the simplicity of nursery rhymes, they combine the direct freshness of the language of the child with the profound truth of the inspired seer.<sup>112</sup>

One of the poems mentioned here, “Auguries of Innocence,” is also one of Zhou Zuoren’s favorites. In the aforementioned Blake essay,<sup>113</sup> he translates the famous opening quatrain and ensuing couplets of the poem:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
 And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
 Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
 And Eternity in an hour  
 A Robin Red breast in a Cage  
 Puts all Heaven in a Rage  
 A Dove house filld with Doves & Pigeons  
 Shudders Hell thro all its regions.

What is more, Zhou Zuoren was not satisfied with just citing and translating this aphorismic poem; he also attempted to imitate in verse the sentiment and conceit of Blake’s poem. While convalescing from a serious illness in the northwest suburbs of Beijing in the summer of 1921, Zhou composed a series of poems on his retreat, the fifth of which is most Blakean:

“Miscellaneous Poems from a Residence  
 in the Mountains, V” 山居雜詩, 五

一片槐樹碧綠的葉	An emerald leaf of the locust-tree
現出一切的世界的神秘	Reveals all the mystery of the world,
空中飛過的一個白翅膀的白蛉子	The white winged dragonfly fly- ing overhead
又牽動了我的驚異	Causes a wonder in me.
我仿佛會悟了這神秘的奧義	Seemingly I have comprehended the deep meaning of the mystery,
卻又實在未曾了知	But indeed I have not understood.
但我已經很是滿足	Yet I am already very satisfied
因為我得見了這個神秘了	Because I was able to see this mys- tery.

<sup>112</sup> Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Mysticism in English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1913), pp. 146-47.

<sup>113</sup> “Bolaike de shi,” in *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 210-13.

That this poem models closely after the opening quatrain of Blake's "Auguries of Innocence" is patent.<sup>114</sup> More remarkable than those childhood poems of his à la Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* is the much more explicit intimation of the transcendental conveyed in this poem. It renders a natural world that is at the same time a manifestation of the supernatural realm beyond and above it. The word, *shenmi* 神秘, translated here as mystery, is especially crucial in this regard. It appears twice in the short poem and is quite extraordinary in Zhou's poetical lexicon. The Chinese word contains the character 神, god or divinity, and is thereby even more suggestive of the religious than the English word mystery, whose Greek root means keeping silence. Following Blake, Zhou Zuoren openly admits in this small poem that mystery exists that reason cannot comprehend (hence 秘, or esoterica). Compared with the use of animism in "A Rivulet," this admission marks a greater step towards supernaturalism.<sup>115</sup> It is an even more powerful piece of evidence for the author's religious sentiments than the Christological hints found in his childhood poems. What is only latent in his other childhood poems is here made explicit: the fifth "Residence in the Mountains" poem shows that following "Auguries of Innocence," Zhou Zuoren, too, believes in the power of the innocence to "suck Divinity from the flowers of nature," to borrow Sir Thomas Browne's words;<sup>116</sup> it indicates that even though he could not bring himself to subscribe to the Christian religion or any other religion with a mythological system, and even though he would have concurred with Wordsworth who proclaimed:

All strength – all terror, single or in bands,  
That ever was put forth in personal form –  
Jehovah – with his thunder, and the choir  
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones –  
I pass them unalarmed,<sup>117</sup>

<sup>114</sup> In the fourth letter from the "Miscellaneous Letters from the Mountains," dated July 14, 1921, which Zhou wrote and published during the same period of convalescence (collected in *Shuxin*, pp. 11–12), Zhou cites the opening quatrain of Blake's poem. This citation further corroborates the connection between the fifth poem of Zhou's "Miscellaneous Poems from a Residence in the Mountains," written during the same time, and Blake's "Auguries of Innocence."

<sup>115</sup> Zhou's essay "Wenyi shang de yiwu" (April, 1922; *Ziji*, pp. 27–30) shows how far Zhou's view on the supernatural including animism in literature evolved since the publication of "A Rivulet."

<sup>116</sup> Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, pt. 1, sect. 16, in L. C. Martin, ed., *Religio Medici and Other Works* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1964), p. 15.

<sup>117</sup> William Wordsworth (ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revised Ernest de Selincourt), *The Complete Poetical Work* (Oxford: Oxford U.P. 1969), p. 590.

he could still allow a natural supernaturalism that a purified mind – that is, innocence both original and regained – could discern. What the existence of such mystery implies in his view on literature is that for him, literature in its highest state is divinely inspired and that, by inference, it is the proper conduit for the divinity thus defined. While this may seem to contradict the usual characterization of his literary view as a form of secular humanism, it nevertheless derives from the same intellectual source as his general view on man based upon evolutionary anthropology. In any case, this poem is by no means an isolated, gratuitous instance, nor can it be regarded as purely poetical diction without genuine reflections and feelings substantiating it.

At first glance, however, when read alongside some of Zhou's best known utterances on literature, the transcendental tendency of "Miscellaneous Poems from a Residence in the Mountains, V" might appear problematic. There are apparent contradictions between the supernaturalist suggestions here and in some other poems, on the one hand, and the dismissal of such ideas in his most famous critical writings, on the other. In the celebrated "Requisites of the New Literature," written one-and-a-half years before the poem (January, 1920), Zhou Zuoren expels both divinity 神性 and beastliness 獸性 from what he envisions as the proper domain of a new Chinese literature. "Literature for life's sake," which he asserts to be what is needed for a new literature in China as opposed to art for art's sake or an aestheticist literature, "must be," he proclaims, "human; it should be neither beastly nor godly."<sup>118</sup> The rationale behind this thought, according to Zhou, is that neither "the beautiful nor the good, if it lies beyond human feelings and human power, which would properly belong to God, is what we need."<sup>119</sup>

This earlier dismissal of supernaturalism in his critical writings notwithstanding, Zhou was not adamant in opposing all transcendentalism. Later in that year, he appears to have grown more tolerant of the kind of literature representing what "lies beyond human feelings and human power." First on October 26, as mentioned above, he gave the lecture "The Literature of Children," in which he vindicated literature that contains "residues of primitive and savage ideas and institutions."<sup>120</sup> A little more than a month later, on November 30, he gave another lecture "Sheng shu yu Zhongguo wenxue" 聖書與中國文學 ("Holy Scriptures and Chinese Literature") at Yenching University.<sup>121</sup> "Holy Scriptures and Chinese Literature" is the single most important

<sup>118</sup> *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 19.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>121</sup> Like the lecture on children's literature, this one is collected in *ibid.*, pp. 33-44.

document for understanding Zhou's views on the relationship between religion, or any transcendentalism, and literature. In crucial places it revises and corrects the pure secularism that underlies the first four essays on literature in *Art and Life*, and it concedes a greater role to the transcendental in literature. Again banking on the evolutionary anthropological explanation of the origin of poetry, Zhou Zuoren in the lecture describes how religious rituals evolve into art in primitive societies. Originally, according to him, singing, dancing, statue making and painting were all simply spontaneous expression of feelings, with no emphasis on performance before an audience. When the ritualistic and sacramental functions of these activities subsided, they became artistic. "On a superficial level, once they become art they look completely different from rituals, but both [that is, rituals and art] have something fundamental in common which has never changed, namely, the experience of the unity between divinity and men, between external things and the inner self. *Enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis* [only romanized Greek words are in the original] in primitive rituals refer exactly to this state."<sup>122</sup> Zhou Zuoren tries to define this state by adducing a very important biblical citation, a citation often favored by the Romantics that smacks of Neo-Platonism,<sup>123</sup> in which Jesus says a prayer on behalf of his disciples: "That they all may be one [*hina pantēs hen ōsin*]; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."<sup>124</sup>

*Enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis* are what Shelley calls "a going out of our own nature."<sup>125</sup> It is a going out of our own nature and being united with God or the infinite, or in Shelley's own words: "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one."<sup>126</sup> This idea of one with all, *hen kai pan*, is a quintessentially Romantic idea. Besides Shelley, whose *A Defence of Poetry* and view on poetry in general are squarely based on the idea, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) too, the German Romantic poet par excellence, holds the idea as the most basic tenet of his poetics. In his epistolary novel *Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechen-*

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 33–34.

<sup>123</sup> Unlike the three synoptic gospels, the Gospel According to John shows traces of influences from both Oriental mysticism such as Gnosticism and Hellenistic mysticism including Platonism. It acquired the latter probably through Philo's hellenized Judaism. See P. Feine and J. Behm, *Introduction to the New Testament* (revised Werner Georg Kümmel, Eng. trans. Howard Clark Kee; Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1973), pp. 200–34.

<sup>124</sup> *John* 17:21.

<sup>125</sup> Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, as published in Reiman and Powers, eds., *Shelley's Poetry*, p. 487. Shelley evinces a strong Platonism in his formulation of this "going out of our own nature." He calls this state Love and describes it as "an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own."

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 483.

land (*Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece*) he lets the eponymous protagonist repeatedly recite the phrase, “Eines zu sein mit Allem, das ist Leben der Gottheit, das ist der Himmel des Menschen...” (“To be one with all, this is Life of divinity, this is the heaven of Man”), as if he were chanting a refrain.<sup>127</sup>

Zhou Zuoren did not miss the Neo-Platonic flavor and apocalyptic dimension of this Romantic idea of *hen kai pan*. In “Holy Scriptures and Chinese Literature,” Zhou points out that the unity of God and man through *enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis* is what Neo-Platonism has advocated as the way of approximating the divinity. This mention of Neo-Platonism indicates that he was fully aware of the Neo-Platonic connotations of the doctrine on the origin of art which he was disseminating.<sup>128</sup> In a lecture on religion at the Society of Young China 少年中國學會 delivered shortly after the publication of “Holy Scriptures and Chinese Literature” (May, 1921), Zhou informed his audience of the proleptic tendency of religion, which, he believed, was shared by literature.<sup>129</sup> The apocalyptic, transcendental implications of the notion of artistic creation as *enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis* undercut the usual characterization of his aesthetics, namely, a secular humanism. Such a characterization would to a great extent have been justified if one had chosen to examine Zhou’s first three celebrated essays on literature in *Art and Life* only – “The Literature of Man,” “The Literature of the Common People,” and “Requisites of the New Literature” – and to ignore the rest. But we would miss an important development in the history of modern Chinese literary criticism as well as an important source for its subsequent development if we failed to take notice of the change in Zhou’s ideas on literature during 1920. As the latest development in Zhou’s outlook on a future Chinese literature along the humanist line, “Holy Scriptures and Chinese Literature” spells out the ultimate vision he had for modern Chinese literature: it must have a transcendental dimension. Although his own poetical work never went beyond a moderate natural supernaturalism, as in the fifth “Residence in the Mountains” poem, with the use of the terms *enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis*, theoretically he grew still more open to the religious, transcendental experience in literature and indeed issued an authoritative license to any future developments in this direction in other writers.

<sup>127</sup> Friedrich Beißner, ed., *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: W.Kohlhammer Verlag, 1951) 3, pp. 8–9.

<sup>128</sup> *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 34.

<sup>129</sup> Zhou, “Zongjiao wenti” 宗教問題, *Shaonian Zhongguo* 2.11 (1921); collected in *Ji wai ji* 1, p. 341.



For example, even long after he had passed this openly transcendental phase in the development of his literary thought, he still commended Fei Ming's novel *Qiao 橋* (*The Bridge*) for creating characters "haloed in divine light."<sup>130</sup>

That Zhou Zuoren's aesthetics should transcend secular humanism and reach such a height in 1920 is not accidental. It reflects the overall intellectual, mental, and spiritual state he was in at the time. One must keep in mind that it was also in 1920 when he advocated most intently the utopian cooperative project known as the New Village Movement 新村運動, and that he later grouped in one book the five essays on literature (discussed above) with three essays on the New Village Movement written in 1919 and 1920, namely *Art and Life*. As Zhou Zuoren informs us in the preface to *Art and Life*, these two groups of essays define his outlook on art and life, respectively, and his manifestos on literature and his advocacy for the New Village Movement correlate to each other ("相當的"). Thus, Zhou Zuoren's editorial decision of juxtaposing his aesthetic essays with essays on social utopia in *Art and Life* is a deliberate one and it indicates the inseparable connection between a transcendental aesthetic and social idealism.

The close connection between the yearning for an ideal society and transcendentalism in literature may also be seen in another important essay. In 1922, to commemorate the centennial of Shelley's death, Zhou Zuoren commended Shelley's enthusiasm for the rational society that also agrees with imagination, in contradistinction to the demonic destructiveness of Byron's poetic personality.<sup>131</sup> He goes on to explain the subtle but vital unity between Shelley's social idealism based on William Godwin's (1756-1836) social theory, on the one hand, and his Romantic poetry, on the other, by citing a passage from Shelley's preface to *Prometheus Unbound*:

My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Zhou, "Taoyuan ba" 桃園跋, *Yong ri ji* 永日集 (1929/2002), p. 73.

<sup>131</sup> Zhou, "Shiren Xilie de bainian ji"; *Tan long ji*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>132</sup> Shelley, *Complete Poetical Works*, p. 203. Also, *Tan long ji*, p. 22.

In the preface, Shelley makes clear that his poetry, though not didactic, is inextricably bound with the vision for an ideal society. Zhou, in discussing Shelley, faithfully elucidated Shelley's intention about this inextricable link between the vision for an ideal society and poetry. Given the closeness in time between his involvement in the New Village Movement and the publication of his Shelley essay, such particular attention to the relationship between Shelley's social ideals and poetic work can hardly be seen as a mere recounting of a familiar literary history or routine commemoration of an English poet on Zhou's part. In fact, Zhou is a master in using quotations and detailed commentaries on others to convey and gloss his own views. Through Shelley, Zhou has subtly expressed his own view on the intertwining relationship between social idealism and poetry, and the close relationship between Shelley's social ideal and poetry that Zhou elucidated in the centennial essay mirrors the unity between Zhou's own social ideal and literary views at the time. Thus both the editorial decision of *Art and Life* that juxtaposes his literary essays with essays on social utopia and the essay on Shelley leave us without doubt that for Zhou Zuoren, the utopian vision and the apocalyptic vision are complementary.

The New Village Movement, which was to Zhou what Godwin's just society was to Shelley, was a utopian socialist movement inspired by the Atarashiki Mura 新しき村 Movement based in Japan.<sup>133</sup> When Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路實篤 (1888–1948) established the first Atarashiki Mura in Hinga, Zhou Zuoren was so engrossed in its ideals that he took two trips to Japan to inspect the movement *in situ*. Fundamentally, the appeal of the Atarashiki Mura Movement to Zhou Zuoren derives from its humanism.<sup>134</sup> This humanism agrees well with the kind of humanism evinced in Zhou's writings on literature. Zhou Zuoren embraced the utopian movement because he believed that in its ideal state, the cooperative society of the Atarashiki Mura Movement should guarantee individualism while satisfying the most basic requisites for common good. In an uncollected article, "Xin cun de jingshen" 新村的

<sup>133</sup> The most thorough English-language study of Zhou's involvement in the movement is William C. L. Chow, "Chou Tso-jen and The New Village Movement," *Chinese Studies* 漢學研究 10.1 (1992), 105–35; it should be consulted for historical details surrounding Zhou's involvement in the New Village Movement. There is a detailed study in Japanese: Yu, *Shū Sakujin*, chap. 8, pp. 185–205; also see Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren*, pp. 5–51. For Mushanokōji Saneatsu's involvement in the Atarashiki Mura Movement, see Ōtsuyama Kunio 大津山國夫, *Mushanokōji Saneatsu kenkyū: Saneatsu to Atarashiki Mura* 武者小路實篤研究, 實篤と新しき村 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1997) and Kohl, McClain, and McClellan, *White Birch School*, pp. 22 ff, 47–50.

<sup>134</sup> For individualist humanism as the doctrinal basis for the Atarashiki Mura movement, see *ibid.*

精神 (“The Spirit of the New Village Movement”), Zhou Zuoren asserts that “the spirit of the movement lies first of all in the recognition that mankind is a collective body and each individual a unit thereof.”<sup>135</sup> One is reminded of the humanist principle that Zhou felt was basic to the foreign short stories he translated and collected in *Diandi* 點滴 (*Drops*). In the preface to *Drops*, written in 1920, Zhou Zuoren argues that all of the stories share a humanist spirit:

The individual is a unit, and the sum is humankind: the general solution to humankind’s problems contains those pertaining the individual, and the solution to the individual’s problems is the first step towards that greater solution. This humanist idea that presupposes similarities on the large scale and differences on the small scale is the special characteristic of modern literature. Because a unity to be achieved through some fixed stereotype is impossible and undesirable, this multi-faceted and diverse humanist literature is truly the ideal literature.<sup>136</sup>

Not surprisingly, Zhou Zuoren proposes here that the manifestation of universal humanity in an individual should be the only proper subject of modern Chinese literature.<sup>137</sup> That this humanism should lead Zhou to a vision of social utopia, on the one hand, and to embrace literary representation of the transcendental experience, on the other, results from the humanist faith in the inherent goodness of man. As an article of faith, the belief in the inherent goodness of man comes close to what Spurgeon said of Blake’s belief in “the inherent divinity of man.”<sup>138</sup> As a matter of fact, in “The Literature of Man,” Zhou actually cited Blake to argue for the unity of body and soul as definitive of humanity.<sup>139</sup> Yet around 1920 and more than any other time in his literary career, in this equilibrium of body and soul he tilted towards spirituality and idealism. His repeated use of the term *lixiang de* 理想的, “ideal” – ideal literature,<sup>140</sup> ideal realism,<sup>141</sup> ideal human life<sup>142</sup> – in his writings around the time, and his equating humanist literature with idealist literature inform this

<sup>135</sup> Zhou, “Xin cun de jingshen” (1919); *Ji wai ji* 1, pp. 312–13.

<sup>136</sup> Zhou, *Kuyu zhai xu ba wen* 苦雨齋序跋文 (1934/2002), pp. 15–16.

<sup>137</sup> Zhou, “Xin wenxue de yaoqiu,” *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 19.

<sup>138</sup> Spurgeon, *Mysticism*, p. 132.

<sup>139</sup> *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 10–11. The passages he cites from Blake come from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: “Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discern’d by the five Senses”; *Complete Poetry and Prose*, p. 34.

<sup>140</sup> See the 1920 preface to *Diandi* (*Drops*) cited above, *Kuyu zhai xu ba wen*, p. 16.

<sup>141</sup> “Xin wenxue de yaoqiu,” p. 19.

<sup>142</sup> Zhou, “Xin cun de lixiang yu shiji” 新村的理想與實際, *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 216.

transcendental inclination.<sup>143</sup> He calls those European classics – which he holds as the models for future Chinese literature – ideal literature because they embody the kind of humanism he expounds, just as he calls the goal and the principle of the utopian New Village Movement “ideal.” Both the ideal literature and the ideal society would embody and optimally realize man’s life as a species and as an individual.<sup>144</sup> His idea of man, which is the center of this humanism, is in turn both idealistic and teleological, inasmuch as it transcends any empirical reality and serves as a goal. This idealistic notion of man is in essence an abstraction of the real condition of man, free of any features contingent on culture, nationality, race, or other empirical conditions.<sup>145</sup> It is a teleological paragon of what the human species has destined and is empowered to be and to become. Literature as manifestation of the idealistic vision of man is therefore ideal. Art and literature as *enthousiasmos* and *ekstasis* mean that the artist must be enthused with such an ideal of man and be gone out of his empirical, mundane self. Invoking Tolstoy, Zhou maintains that the supreme art must be at the same time religious, and that, for a work of art, being religious is to express that God and man are one 神人合一, that is, *hen kai pan*.<sup>146</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Since the mid-twentieth century, a consensus has been reached regarding the definition of Romanticism as a historical phase in the development of European literature, and it is pithily summarized in the title of M. H. Abrams’s great book *Natural Supernaturalism*. Natural supernaturalism, as exemplified in the English and German Romantics of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, centers around the apocalyptic experience couched in a natural surrounding. The apocalypse, in the sense used by Abrams following the sense commonly used in Biblical commentaries, “signifies a vision in which the old world is replaced by a new and better world.”<sup>147</sup> Unlike traditional accounts of apocalyptic experiences, the Romantic reenactment of the transcendental tradition tends to restrict itself to within the natural world and refrains from old mythological systems. As a broad literary and intellectual movement, European Romanticism encompasses many different

<sup>143</sup> See the ending paragraph of “Xin wenxue de yaoqiu,” *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 23–24.

<sup>144</sup> See “Xin cun de lixiang yu shiji,” *Yishu yu shenghuo*, pp. 213–20.

<sup>145</sup> See “Xin wenxue de yaoqiu,” *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 19.

<sup>146</sup> Zhou, “Shengshu yu Zhongguo wenxue,” *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 35.

<sup>147</sup> Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 41.

facets, among which the cult of childhood, the literary and philosophical interest in savages, various forms of naturalism, and social and political radicalism are the most prominent. In his search for a modern Chinese literature and a future Chinese society, Zhou Zuoren, though drawing from diverse and unsystematic sources of influence, showed all these Romantic facets. From the promotion of the well-being of children to the advocacy of a utopian society, Zhou possessed all the important Romantic credentials. Indeed he once openly appealed to the nascent New Poetry Movement that it should approximate the Romantic poetics instead of what he called classicism.<sup>148</sup>

We have seen that during a brief period, Zhou was inspired by a vision of the future for China and Chinese literature which he himself acknowledged to be idealistic. Like the European Romantics who were reactionaries to the Enlightenment, Zhou, while coopting the May Fourth enlightenment agenda, which was based on rationalism and scientism, complemented and corrected them with his own Romantic enterprises. If rationalism, secularism, and scientism may be said to have been the dominant mode of discourse during the May Fourth Movement, Zhou Zuoren's Romantic pursuits, even before his later turn to the cultivation of taste and extolment of otiose dilettantism, already presented an "alternative" vision of literary and national modernity.<sup>149</sup> But this "alternative" vision was hardly "Chinese." Unlike later when he increasingly relied on previously suppressed or esoteric old Chinese sources, this Romantic phase in Zhou Zuoren's development was distinctly Western. The vision of modernity essentially belonged to what Daruvala has called "second-order modernity," namely modernity whose classic model is the West in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.<sup>150</sup> However, precisely the conformity to his Western model makes Zhou's Romantic enthusiasm problematic. Most of all this is because Zhou's Romantic vision for modern Chinese literature and his utopian inspiration based upon humanism came more than one century too late in comparison to his European predecessors. In the midst of the twentieth-century global development of capitalism and rapid integration of China – however passively and reluctantly – into it,

<sup>148</sup> In his preface to Liu Bannong's poetical collection *Yang bian ji*, Zhou criticizes the dominant trend in *baihua* poetry for being "too transparent" and maintains that "the right road [for poetry] I am afraid should still be via Romanticism – nearly all poetry belongs to Romanticism, and symbolism is its essence"; *Tan long ji*, p. 41.

<sup>149</sup> Daruvala, *Zhou Zuoren*, endeavors to show that Zhou represents "an alternative Chinese response to modernity." To make the argument, she focuses mainly on the period of late 1920s and 1930s in Zhou's literary career.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15, 28.

the historical momentum for Zhou's humanism and Romanticism had already been long lost. Although he might not have been adequately aware of the belatedness from a global perspective, Zhou's realization of the incongruity between the immanent tendency of his humanist and Romantic vision and the material reality that constantly thwarted it must be the main reason why he was in such great anguish in the early 1920s.

In the end, Zhou Zuoren had to concede that his utopian and Romantic vision "had little efficacy in wakening the world."<sup>151</sup> Thereupon he ended his Romantic phase before it had a chance to play out fully: the publication of *Ziji de yuandi* 自己的園地 (*Our Own Garden*) in 1923 effectively marks the premature end of his Romantic period.<sup>152</sup> Notwithstanding the belatedness and the "inefficacy," however, the impact of his Romantic ventures in those few years was profound. That Mao Zedong (1893–1976), as well as several others who were to become founders of the Chinese Communist Party, were inspired by Zhou's advocacy of the New Village Movement was no fortuitous accident of history.<sup>153</sup> The utopian and apocalyptic vision Zhou embraced during those years reflected a profound national yearning and, in retrospect, presaged what was still to come – indeed with all the modifications and distortions.<sup>154</sup> However brief, his Romantic impulses around 1920 set him apart from other major literary and intellectual figures at the time, whose motives in participating in the New Culture Movement had much less or little to do with any apocalyptic vision or transcendental aspiration. The usual epithet applied to him and his generation – "iconoclast" – must therefore be seen as a negative description that does not cover the whole truth. For it only describes what he wanted to do away with, not what he wanted to build. With its apocalyptic tendency, his humanism, which has frequently been discussed in purely secular terms, was not bland. Unlike in the case of Hu Shi, who in ef-

<sup>151</sup> In the preface to *Yishu yu shenghuo*, Zhou looks back at his idealist enthusiasm for social utopia and humanism as a thing of the past. He "feels that that kind of life [i.e. the ideal of the New Village Movement] has little efficacy in wakening the world beyond satisfying one's personal interest"; p. 2.

<sup>152</sup> Talking about the obvious difference between the three articles written after 1924 and the rest which were written before in *Yishu yu shenghuo*, Zhou himself seems to suggest the year 1924 to be the turning point in his intellectual development, see his original preface to *Yishu yu shenghuo*, p. 2. But although some of his articles written soon after 1923 still exhibit the same tendencies as those written around 1920, as a manifesto, *Ziji* conveniently serves as the watershed in Zhou's intellectual development.

<sup>153</sup> For this history, see Chow, "Chou Tso-jen," pp. 120–24.

<sup>154</sup> Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetic and Politics in Twentieth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1997), discusses important aspects of transcendental aspirations, which he calls "the sublime figure," in 20th-c. Chinese culture and politics.

fect was more of an iconoclast than a builder and is utterly secular in temperament, Zhou's proleptic vision and his articulation of this vision constitutes the most important contribution he made to the New Culture Movement.

Although he backed away soon enough from the "idealism" of those three years, much of the Romantic literary agenda he embraced endured. In fact, the agenda defined his future intellectual interests and development to a great extent. This is seen mostly in his subsequent literary career. For example, he continued writing verses about children and childhood and made it one of his lifelong pursuits: he resumed poetical compositions on children and childhood in the 1940s, yet retreating from the use of free verse and resurrecting a kind of traditional meter; and he chose the subject more out of scholarly interest in folklore than any discernible Romantic agenda.<sup>155</sup> Another residual interest from his Romantic phase was the interest in supernatural tales of old. His numerous essays on the topic written in the 1930s and 1940s are excellent specimens of his mastery of the art of essay writing, though they no longer have the overt Romantic concerns as expressed in his writings around 1920.

As regards literary history, Zhou's Romantic legacy contended with the dominant legacy of the May Fourth Movement, which is often described as realism, scientism, and rationalism.<sup>156</sup> Though never canonized as the latter, Zhou's legacy was nevertheless rich and profound. Among those who followed Zhou Zuoren are some of the most interesting literary figures in modern Chinese literature, figures often associated with the so-called Beijing School 京派. In particular, in the elevation of childhood experience as most imaginative and closer to the transcendent, in rendering the supernatural within a natural setting, and in pursuing an apocalyptic vision through nature and childhood, Fei Ming stands out as the indisputable successor to his mentor and friend Zhou Zuoren. If Zhou Zuoren did not allow his own Romantic

<sup>155</sup> This group of poems was given the title *Ertong za shi shi* 兒童雜事詩 (*Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects about Children*) by the poet in 1947. Originally it consisted of two volumes of forty-eight poems. Zhou Zuoren added another volume of twenty-four poems the next year and made it total of seventy-two poems. It was intended for publication as a collection. However, it was not published integrally until 1973, six years after the author's death. For the text, see Zhi, ed., *Laohu qiao za shi* (discussed in n. 7, above), pp. 52-75. Also see the facsimile edition of a clear, handwritten copy of the author's manuscripts, illustrated by Feng Zikai 豐子愷, *Zhong Shuhe* 鍾叔河, ed., *Ertong zashi shi tu jianshi* 兒童雜事詩圖箋釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1999).

<sup>156</sup> For realism as the dominant mode of literary representation during the May Fourth era, see Marston Anderson, *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1990).

impulses to carry him far in artistic creation, he may be said to have them fully realized in his most talented and most loyal disciple.<sup>157</sup>

*LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

(All of the following are works by Zhou Zuoren)

<i>Ertong</i>	<i>Ertong wenxue xiao lun</i> 兒童文學小論
<i>Guoqu de shengming</i>	<i>Guoqu de shengming</i> 過去的生命
<i>Ji wai ji</i>	Chen Zishan 陳子善 and Zhang Tierong 張鐵榮, eds., <i>Zhou Zuoren ji wai ji</i> 周作人集外集
<i>Ouzhou</i>	<i>Ouzhou wenxue shi</i> 歐洲文學史
<i>Riji</i>	<i>Zhou Zuoren riji</i> 周作人日記
<i>Shuxin</i>	<i>Zhou Zuoren shuxin</i> 周作人書信
<i>Tan long ji</i>	<i>Tan long ji</i> 談龍集
<i>Yishu yu shenghuo</i>	<i>Yishu yu shenghuo</i> 藝術與生活
<i>Ziji</i>	<i>Ziji de yuandi</i> 自己的園地

<sup>157</sup> In addition to Fei, the notables were Yu Pingbo 俞平伯 (1900–1990), Shen Congwen 沈從文 (1902–1988), Li Guangtian 李廣田 (1906–1968), and He Qifang 何其芳 (1912–1977). For the aesthetic and philosophical characteristics of the Beijing School, see Xu Daoming 許道明, *Jingpai wenxue de shijie* 京派文學的世界 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue, 1994). Also see Xie Zhixi 解志熙, *Mei de pianzhi: Zhongguo xiandai weimei-tuifeizhuyi wenxue sichao yanjiu* 美的偏至, 中國現代唯美頹廢主義文學思潮研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi, 1997), esp. chap. 2.



*Appendix: A Note on Editions, and the Full Text and Translation of "A Rivulet"*

The best edition of Zhou Zuoren's collected works to date is that of Zhi An 止庵, ed., *Zhou Zuoren zibian wenji* 周作人自編文集 (Shijiazhuang, Hebei: Hebei jiaoyu, 2002). It contains all the original works (and a handful of short translations) published or intended to be published by Zhou after 1918 either as coherent books or as collections of essays, poems, and articles. Most of these books and collections were published during Zhou's life, except a few late ones. In this paper, all citations from Zhou's books and collections of essays, poems, and articles are from this edition. If a cited book or collection was published in his lifetime, at its first citation the date of the original publication of the book or collection is given in the parenthesis following the title. Within the parenthesis, the year 2002, the publication date of Zhi An's edition, also appears after the original publication date with a slash to separate them. When necessary, the original publication date of a particular piece in a journal is given separately in addition to the publication date of the original collection that includes the piece. Almost all known uncollected writings by Zhou before 1949 are included in Chen Zishan 陳子善 and Zhang Tierong 張鐵榮, eds., *Zhou Zuoren ji wai ji* 周作人集外集 (Hainan: Hainan guoji xinwen, 1993), in 2 vols. For the dating of most of Zhou's writings, Zhang Juxiang 張菊香 and Zhang Tierong, *Zhou Zuoren nianpu* 周作人年譜 (Tianjin: Renmin, 2000) has been consulted.

"A Rivulet" was first published in *Xin qingnian* 6.2 (1919), pp. 91-95, later included in the thin collection of his *baihua* poems titled *Guoqu de shengming* 過去的生命 (1929/2002), pp. 5-7. The text provided here follows the original version in *Xin qingnian*.

"A Rivulet" 小河

一條小河，穩穩的向前流動。	A rivulet steadily flows forward.
經過的地方，兩面全是烏黑的土，	In the places where it passes, black earth on both sides,
生滿了紅的花，碧綠的葉，黃的實。	Grow red flowers, emerald leaves, and golden fruits.
一個農夫背了鋤來，在小河中間築起一道堰，	A farmer carrying a hoe on his back arrives, and builds a dike in the midst of the rivulet.
下流乾了；上流的水，被堰攔著，下來不得：	The down river dries up, water in the upper river, held up by the dyke, cannot flow down,
不得前進，又不能退回，水只在堰前亂轉。	And cannot move forward, but nor can it flow back, so it swirls before the dyke.

水要保他的生命，總須流動，便只在堰前亂轉。 To maintain its life, water  
must needs flow, so it swirls before the dyke.  
堰下的土，逐漸淘去，成了深潭。 The earth under the dyke is grad-  
ually hollowed, there forms a deep pool.  
水也不怨這堰，—便只是想流動， Water has no complaints against  
the earth, — it only wants to flow,  
想同從前一般，穩穩的向前流動， Like in the past, to flow steadily  
forward.

一日農夫又來，土堰外築起一道石堰。 One day comes the farmer again,  
at the outer side of the mud dyke he builds a  
stone dyke.  
土堰坍了，水沖著堅固的石堰，還只是亂轉。 The mud dyke caves in, water  
washes the stone dyke, and it only swirls.  
堰外田裏的稻，聽著水聲，皺眉說道，— Hearing the sound of the water,  
a rice shoot outside the dyke knits its brows and  
says —

“我是一株稻，是一株可憐的小草， “I am a rice shoot, I am a piteous  
grass,  
我喜歡水來潤澤我， I like being watered,  
卻怕他在我身上流過。 But I am afraid of its flowing over my  
body.  
小河的水是我的好朋友， The water in the rivulet is my good  
friend,  
他曾經穩穩的流過我面前著， He in the past steadily flew before  
me,  
我對他點頭，他向我微笑， I nodded at him and he smiled at  
me.  
我願他能夠放出了石堰， I wish he could be let go of the  
stone dyke,  
仍然穩穩的流著， And steadily flow like before,  
向我們微笑； And smile at us;  
曲曲折折的盡量向前流著， Winding and bending flow forward  
as much as it can,  
經過的兩面地方，都變成一片錦繡。 The both sides it passes all turn  
into brocade.  
他本是我的好朋友，— He was once my good friend,

只怕他如今不認識我了； I am afraid he now would not recognize me,  
 他在地底裏呻吟， He groans under the earth,  
 聽去雖然細微，卻又如何可怕！ Though it sounds feeble, yet how horrific it is!  
 這不像我朋友平日的聲音， This does not sound like the usual voice of my friend,  
 — 被輕風攙著走上沙灘來時， — when, held by breeze, it walks up to the sand beach,  
 快活的聲音。 That joyful sound.  
 我只怕他這回出來的時候， I am afraid that this time when he comes out,  
 不認識從前的朋友了， He would not recognize his old friend,  
 便在我身上大踏步過去： That he would walk over me in great strides.  
 我所以正在這裏憂慮。” Therefore I am worrying right here.”

田邊的桑樹，也搖頭說， — The mulberry tree by the paddy shaking his head too says:

“我生的高，能望見那小河， — “I am tall, I can see that rivulet,  
 他是我的好朋友， He is my good friend,  
 他送清水給我喝， He sends me fresh water to drink,  
 使我能生肥綠的葉，紫紅的桑葢。 Enabling me to grow green leaves and purple mulberries.  
 他從前清澈的顏色， His clear color of the past  
 現在變了青黑； Now turns into blue and black;  
 又是終年掙扎，臉上添出許多痙攣的皺紋。 And the yearlong struggle adds on his face many spasmodic wrinkles.  
 他只向下鑽，早沒有功夫對了我點頭微笑。 All he does is to tunnel under, since long he no longer has time to nod and smile at me.  
 堰下的潭，深過了我的根了。 The pool underneath the dyke is now deeper than my roots.  
 我生在小河旁邊， I live by the rivulet,  
 夏天曬不枯我的枝條， Summers cannot dry my branches,  
 冬天凍不壞我的根。 Winters cannot freeze my roots.  
 如今只怕我的好朋友， Now I dread that my friend

