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Intertextuality of Christianity and Chinese May Fourth Literature: Guo Moruo as an Example

Yao Xiao

School of Foreign Languages, North China Electric Power University, Beijing 102206, China
Email: 1877853158@qq.com

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Abstract

As one of the three leading religions in the world, Christianity has gone through several rounds of transmission in China from Tang dynasty, which exerted significant influence on its language, literature, social life and ideology. Since China's May Fourth period, politicians advocated democracy and science while opposing autocracy and superstition, turning to be a great obstacle for Christianity's further dissemination in the society. However, taking May Fourth literati Guo Moruo's (郭沫若) works as example, this article aims to explore how the cultural items, literary elements, thoughts and beliefs of Christianity served for enlightenment of Chinese people and social reform at that time. Based on the concept of intertextuality, it finds that interaction of Guo Moruo's literature with Christianity includes image of God, cultural items such as purgatory or cross, emotional theme or spiritual core of resurrection as well as narrative structure of tribulation-death-rebirth, meanwhile manifests adjustments catering to comprehensive reform of language, literature and ideology together with social revolution during Chinese May Fourth period, which provides valuable guidance for flexible and adaptative strategies in religious transmission and related intercultural communication of modern age.

Keywords: Christianity; Chinese May Fourth Period; Literary Revolution; Social Reform; Guo Moruo; Intertextuality.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Christianity in China

It has been over 1,300 years since Christianity entered China. It is generally believed that Christianity first arrived in China in the ninth year of the Zhenguan (贞观) era of

the Tang Dynasty (635 AD). Nestorian Christian missionary Aroben from Syria came from Persia to Chang'an (now Xi'an) to translate scriptures and preach, and the religion was known as "Jingjiao" (景教) at that time. Supported by Emperor Taizong (太宗) and

Gaozong (高宗) of the Tang Dynasty, the religion flourished for a time, and was known as "dharma spreads across ten regions" (法流十道) and "temples fill a hundred cities" (寺满百城) (Wang and Xu 2019).

Christianity was introduced to China for the second time during the Yuan Dynasty. The Nestorian Church, which was originally popular in Mongolia and Central Asia, resumed its activities in mainland China. The Holy See also sent missionaries such as John of Montecorvino to the East, who established bishoprics in Beijing, Quanzhou and other places. At that time, Nestorianism and Catholicism were collectively referred to as "Yarlikwenism" (也里可温教). The government established the Chongfu Si (崇福司) to manage affairs related to Yarlikwenism and other religious sects. Later, with the fall of the Yuan Dynasty, the spread of Christianity in the Central Plains of China was once again interrupted (Mei 2005).

Christianity was introduced to China for the third time during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Matteo Ricci used Confucian ethical concepts to expound on Catholic doctrine and conducted missionary activities among the Chinese intellectual class. Scholars such as Xu Guangqi (徐光启) and Li Zhizao (李之藻) embraced both Western science and Catholic faith. Ricci's missionary approach laid solid foundation for the widespread dissemination of Catholicism in China. By the Qing dynasty, Catholicism continued to develop. Missionaries mostly followed Ricci's missionary approach to further introduce Christian culture to China while contributing to artillery manufacturing, cartography and diplomatic translation in China. Hence, missionary practices during Ming and Qing dynasties became indispensable impetus for Eastward Spread of Western Learning (西学东渐) which shows long-lasting impact for Chinese society.

At the beginning of 18th century, divergence concerning missionary objectives and strategies among various missionary monasteries in China became increasingly acute, leading to the century-long "Controversy of Rites in China" (中国礼仪之争) and ultimately resulting in conflict between Emperor Kangxi (康熙) and the Roman Catholic Church. Thereafter, Catholicism lost its legal status for missionary work in China.

Christianity was introduced to China for the fourth time around the Opium War, which is generally regarded as the starting point for introduction of Protestantism into China. In the 12th year of the Jiaqing era (嘉庆) (1807), the first Protestant missionary to China, Robert Morrison, was dispatched by the London Missionary Society to Guangzhou. Together with his assistant, he compiled the first Chinese translation of the Bible, titled *Shen Tian Sheng Shu* (《神天圣书》), and also wrote the *Chinese-English Dictionary* (《华英字典》) along with other works. In 1818, he founded the Anglo-Chinese School (英华书院) in Malacca. Following Morrison, Protestant missionary societies from various Western countries successively sent missionaries to China, who practiced medicine and founded schools in Guangzhou, and established the *Chinese Repository* (《中国丛报》) to cooperate with missionary work. After the Opium War, the Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties with Western powers, in which Christian missionary activities were included as a privilege. Thereafter, the Qing government was compelled to lift the ban on Christianity, since which Christianity has experienced significant development in China.

After the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命) in 1911, the Chinese people's patriotism and consciousness of nationalism further strengthened. The Catholic Church proposed to change its colonial system in China and launched the "Sinicization" movement; the Protestant Church advocated the independence

of Chinese Christianity and launched the “indigenous church” movement. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the development of various Christian denominations in China entered a new historical period. Foreign missionaries were all withdrawn from Chinese mainland, and the Chinese Catholic Church launched an anti-imperialist patriotic movement. The Chinese Protestant Church also carried out the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (三自爱国运动) (Luo 2004). In 1957, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association was founded. According to the agreement between the Chinese and Soviet governments, the Chinese Orthodox Church gained an independent and autonomous status, and in 1956, the Beijing Orthodox Church was renamed the Chinese Orthodox Church.

It is obvious that spread of Christianity in China is greatly determined by the society’s own political, economic and cultural backgrounds. On the contrary, from individual contributions by missionaries to government support, from translation of religious works and release of publications or dictionaries to introduction of scientific knowledge, the missionary activities proceeded step by step and developed progressively, showing widespread influence on other fields of Chinese society. Nevertheless, there is a special historical period in China’s modernization which advocated abandoning autocracy and superstition while enlightening the people by learning advanced democratic, scientific and literary knowledge from the West, which seems to be a major obstruction for the religion’s further dissemination. Next, this paper shall discuss May Fourth literature precisely to investigate mutual effect of Christianity and literary creation at that time.

1.2 May Fourth Literature

In February 1917, Chen Duxiu (1987) published “On the Literary Revolution”(《文学革命论》), officially proposing the slogan of “Literary Revolution”. He advocated for three

major principles: overthrowing the ornate and flattering aristocratic literature, and building accessible and lyrical national literature; overthrowing the outdated and extravagant classical literature, and building fresh and sincere realistic literature; overthrowing the obscure wilderness literature about natural scenery, and building clear and popular social literature”. He believed that to reform politics and transform society, literature must be innovated. Chen Duxiu’s three major principles broke the tradition that literature was exclusive to literati and officials, and had profound value for the transformation of audience groups, narrative perspectives and themes of literary works while truly promoting literature to serve the general public and social reality.

Shortly after the Literary Revolution, the May Fourth Movement accelerated the pace of replacing the old society with the new one, ushering in a new chapter of the proletarian new democratic revolution, and further promoting major changes in the fields of literary creation and translation, giving rise to the “May Fourth Literature”.

During the May Fourth Movement, writers learned from western romantic and realistic literature, emphasized the revolution of society and populace through literature. They proposed reflecting social reality and suffering of the nation through literary works, thereby promoting the transformation of national character and encouraging the public to bravely contributed for revolution and national independence. Faced with the internal troubles of the country and external aggression, writers strove to awaken the citizens through literature and boldly expose or criticize the dark social reality. In addition, most writers of new literature expressed depression, loneliness, and bewilderment of young people in their works (Průšek and Lee 1980). More precisely, in the face of decaying and dark reality of Chinese society, unrealizable personal ambitions as well as frustrations in life, writers focused on portraying the depression, bitterness, and

struggle of young characters under the joint influence of Western advanced thoughts and traditional Chinese Confucianism. It is particularly noteworthy that many May Fourth writers, as overseas students proficient in foreign languages, had embraced Western advanced ideology and literary trends, but could not completely rid themselves of the unique melancholy and sentimental temperament of traditional Chinese scholar-officials. In their works, they depicted overseas students who had left hometowns and were in a marginalized state due to their nationality, expressing their homesickness, depression, and gloom. At the same time, writers also tended to convey strong personal emotions in their works. They focused on human personality and people's subjective emotions, revealing inner feelings even instinctive desires of characters (Goldman 1977). In summary, during the May Fourth period, literary works were no longer dedicated to narrating the rise and fall of dynasties, nor did they concentrate on telling mysterious and bizarre myths or legends like traditional Chinese literature. Instead, they truly showed interest to the general public struggling in a turbulent society, focusing on experiences and emotions of ordinary people as the theme and ultimate goal of literary creation.

In short, the May Fourth period not only means transition of revolution class and nature in China, but also represents the great changes in national language, literature, and ideology. All literary genres made bold innovations in the use of language, the way of expression, and the theme. More importantly, it is the collision period of Chinese and Western literature, culture and ideology. In view of this, literary creation during the May Fourth period definitely becomes vital reflection of Sino-western cultural communication. Based on this, the spirit of inheritance, innovation, and integration turns to be enduring value of May Fourth literature for our further research. Superficially, the scientific and democratic spirit of May Fourth Movement turn to be

contradiction with that of Christianity. But if under careful comparison, their commonalities such as humanitarianism, rebellion, dedication and self-sacrifice can be easily discovered. To analyze the commonalities in detail, it's necessary to concentrate on a representative May Fourth writer—Guo Moruo.

1.3 Guo Moruo and His Literature

On November 16, 1892, Guo Moruo was born in Shawan Town, Leshan County, Sichuan Province. Since 1897, Guo Moruo began to study in the family school (家塾), read traditional classics such as *The Book of Songs* (《诗经》) and *Three Hundred Tang Poems* (《唐诗三百首》), and at the same time, he came into contact with some new knowledge, which had a foundational impact on his artistic outlook, literary creation and cultural concept, while determining his democratic and progressive thoughts since childhood (Guo 2010).

In January 1914, Guo Moruo went to study abroad in Japan, during which he began to get in touch with works of foreign writers such as Tagore, Goethe, Shakespeare, Whitman, and soon started his own writing and translation career. In June 1921, together with Cheng Fangwu (成仿吾) and Yu Dafu (郁达夫), he founded the "Creation Society" (创造社) of the Shanghai Literature Society; in August, his first collection of new poems, *Goddess* (《女神》), was published by the Shanghai Taidong Book Bureau (上海泰东图书局). On March 15, 1922, he took charge of the establishment of *Creation Quarterly* (《创造季刊》). In 1923, his historical drama *Zhuo Wenjun* (《卓文君》) together with the collection of poetry, drama and prose *Starry Sky* (《星空》) were completed, which had a great influence on the domestic literary arena.

Besides, Guo Moruo has been engaged in the research related to archaeology, ancient Chinese history and characters throughout his life, which has played critical role in his creation of historical play or academic treatises. Moreover, his experience of studying abroad

has prepared sufficient conditions for his study and translation of Western literature. Therefore, Guo Moruo's artistic ideas and creative concepts must be affected by Sino-Western linguistic and cultural environments simultaneously. Concretely, Guo Moruo's literary creation shows the following important characteristics.

(1) Free and Passionate Sentimentalism

First of all, inspired by the romanticism, Guo Moruo's works are inclined to straightforward emotional expression, focus on description of patriotism and a sense of national responsibility while highlighting the sorrow for national plight and family difficulty, the suffering of destitute life, the respect for revolutionary heroes, and the intense desire to save the country and the people, making his works and expression full of passion (Yu 2020).

In prose and novels, Guo Moruo focuses on characters' emotional catharsis and fearless struggle in the face of colonial rule, oppression by domestic powers, and miserable individual destinies, catering to the rebellious traits of the May Fourth era. Moreover, he is dedicated to describing the complex psychological state of the characters in the turbulent age, and his depiction of mental activities and inner feelings is particularly delicate, which fully reflects his creative ideas of mirroring macro national environment with emotional and mental states of micro figures under the impact of Sino-Western intercultural exchange during May Fourth period.

Guo Moruo's drama and poetry are also not restricted by traditional stylistic structure and genre norms but stress free affective expression, clearly showing romantic style. As a result, emotional expression is no longer bound by feudal ethics and regulations on format, and literature is no longer a privileged product serving the upper class, but a practical tool for the emotional outpouring of common people in the face of social reality.

To sum up, Guo Moruo gets rid of traditional Chinese literary propositions to make literature truly respond to writer's interaction with social demands and individual emotional expression, which inspires this article to focus on innovative potential of Guo Moruo's creation replying to transformation from traditional cultural values to modern notions.

(2) Mirroring Reality through History

On the other hand, Guo Moruo is accustomed to using historical allusions to show his passionate contributions for social revolution through solid knowledge reserve of traditional Chinese culture since the childhood.

In addition, Guo Moruo is good at borrowing historical figures familiar to the Chinese public in his novels and historical plays, and using self-imagination to boldly change the characters' life experiences, emotional states, and personality traits, so as to interact with the needs of social revolution, national salvation as well as people's enlightenment. As for poetry, Guo Moruo is devoted to eulogizing the martyrs who paid their blood for national liberation or suffered all sorts of adversities but were always tenacious and unyielding.

Thus, Guo Moruo's significance lies in the fact that unlike traditional literati and officialdom, he is not burdened by feudal etiquette and rules, but gives full play to his personal creativity to excavate realistic connotations of historical figures, allusions and related texts. This draws the author's attention to analyze Guo Moruo's creative strategies when dealing with collision between traditional cultural concepts and its modern counterpart which does not mean absolute division between the old and the new. Considering the long history of Christianity's dissemination in China as well as status of social reform and cross-cultural communication during the May Fourth period, this paper would like to give particular emphasis to interaction of Guo Moruo's literature with western culture embedded in this religion to summarize effective strategies for literary

innovation and intercultural exchange based on the historical and social backgrounds in China, thus shedding light on solutions to Chinese culture's spread to the outside world in the contemporary age.

In other words, regarding the above-mentioned information on Christianity's transmission history in China and major propositions of May Fourth movement, this article targets at the most typical May Fourth writer Guo Moruo, intending to explore his unique creative method of intertextuality in the face of Sino-Western cultural and ideological communication along with urgent need of reform in China, especially how he takes advantage of the most influential religion in the west to realize goals of transformation, enlightenment and modernization in China. In the following section, this article will shift from background introduction about historical evolution together with current conditions of society at the macro level and particular writer on the micro dimension to theoretical foundation related to the concept of intertextuality.

2. INTERTEXTUALITY

As mentioned above, this paper is devoted to discussing the cross-text interaction in Guo Moruo's works. This naturally echoes the concept of intertextuality. Based on ideas about signifier and signified from linguistics especially Saussure, Bakhtin emphasized the dialogic and polyphonic nature of language, proposing the concept of double-voiced discourse, which suggests that if two voices collide in a dialogue, the dialogue relationship can penetrate into the discourse and even individual words (Allen 2000).

Built upon Bakhtin's opinion, intertextuality was finally put forward by Julia Kristeva, a French semiotician. She believes that a dynamic discourse system can be divided into a horizontal axis (writer-reader) and a vertical axis (text-background) (Allen 2000). The coincidence of the two axes reveals the fact that

"a word or a text is a reproduction of other words or texts, and we can read at least one other word or text from it" (Samoyault 2003). Julia (1991) holds that "a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text, in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another". Therefore, the text of any work is like the mosaic of many texts, and any text is the absorption and transformation of other texts (Wang 2005). Gérard Genette (1997) defines intertextuality as the recurrence between two or more texts. In other words, one text really exists in another. It comes in three forms: direct quotation in quotation marks, plagiarism without caption, and allusion.

According to the above analysis, intertextuality emphasizes the collage, reorganization, and reproduction between texts, thus forming dialogue and interaction. Therefore, guided by this concept, this paper is committed to analyzing intertextuality between Christian works and May Fourth literature under the background of cross-cultural communication and social revolution, in order to delve into how Chinese writers made full of foreign religion and related cultural items to fulfill needs of literary, cultural and ideological reform in the society. Finally, learning from intertextuality between western religious culture and Chinese literature, this article aims to summarize religion's role in cultural communication as well as effective strategies for intercultural exchange in the modern era.

3. CASE STUDIES

For detailed analysis, this article focuses on three typical works *Goddess* (《女神》), *The Drifting Trilogy* (《漂流三部曲》), *Three Leaves Collection* (《三叶集》) to comprehensively explore how Guo Moruo makes use of cultural items, image of God, narrative framework, ideological and spiritual connotations in Christian literature to attain his personal creative objectives including enlightenment of Chinese people, reform of Chinese literature

and ideology as well as emotional expression towards the social reality. Thus, by summarizing intertextual relation between Christianity and Chinese May Fourth literature, the study strives to testify distinctive way of Sino-Western cross-cultural communication.

3.1 Goddess

Goddess is a collection of Guo Moruo's poems written in Japan between 1919 and 1921 including 57 major poems along with a preface poem. In terms of poetic form, it breaks away from the constraints of traditional regulations, creating a vigorous and unrestrained free verse style that opens up new horizon for development of that genre after the May Fourth Movement and becomes a foundational work of Chinese new poetry. To be more concrete, *Goddess* employs mythological themes, adopts the paradigm of poetic drama, and uses symbolic technique to reflect reality. Guo Moruo gives full play to imagination to make the poems feature both lyrical and dramatic traits. The narrative technique, artistic design together with emotional expression of the work all stand out in May Fourth literature. As to gist of the poems, it mainly illustrates three aspects as follows. First, straightforward self-expression of emotion and individuality, while pursuing personal liberation through discovery of the "self" and the affirmation of self-value. Guo Moruo concentrates on describing people's soul, inner feelings, shows their aspiration and pursuit for personal worth, hence integrates the dual objectives of personal independence and national liberation. Second, spirit of resistance, rebellion, and creativity. Catering to the urgent need of revolution, Guo Moruo tends to fearlessly challenge authority of the old world and feudal tradition, on the contrary praises scientific and innovative spirit following the core advocacy of May Fourth literature that has been discussed previously. Third, romantic patriotism. Through the poems, Guo Moruo unreservedly conveys deep affection and boundless love for the motherland along with earnest commitment to national rejuvenation.

Within the poems, there are obvious Christian elements that not only demonstrate above creation goals but coordinate with ideas of literary revolution and the social environment.

Firstly, there are a large number of typical Christian cultural images such as Pantheism (泛神论), Holy Mother (圣母), Jesus (耶稣), Misanthrope (厌世者), hell (地狱) in the poems, which shows intertextuality with Christian literature by direct reference.

Secondly, in "Revival of the Goddess" (《女神之再生》), Guo Moruo describes the collapse of the old world, the goddess waiting for the birth of a new universe, and the grand apocalyptic and creationist imagination, naturally referring to the cosmic narrative of the apocalypse and the advent of a new world in the *Book of Revelation*. The poet materializes the Creator from an illusory god to a woman with flesh and blood. He even uses lines from *Faust* by Goethe such as "das Unbeschreibliche, hier ist's getan; das Ewigweibliche, zieht uns hinan." (The indescribable here is done; the Eternal Feminine draws us upward. 不可名状者, 在此已实有; 永恒之女性, 领导我们走。) to illustrate the actual creative power of woman. In the following "Goddess I" (《女神之一》), "Goddess II" (《女神之二》) and "Goddess III" (《女神之三》), Guo Moruo further emphasizes the woman's power to create new brightness and fresh sun which imply hope to the world with lines such as "Create some new light" (创造些新的光明), "Create a fresh sun" (创造个新鲜的太阳). In order to stimulate the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses more strongly, Guo Moruo applies Christian image of Creator but endows it more evident features as a human. His strategy of intertextuality clearly serves for the literary context and social environment in China.

Then, in "Phoenix Nirvana" (《凤凰涅槃》), the poems reveal a clear framework that the phoenixes throw themselves into the flames, burn away their decaying old shells, and depend on their inherent power to gain new life.

This obliquely corresponds with the structure of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection as well as the logic of relying on God's divine power to accomplish redemption in The New Testament. Here, the reference of narration structure also undergoes innovative adjustment by the poet out of the same motivation of literary revolution and enlightenment of the public.

Last but not least, the work like "Ode to the Bandits" (《匪徒颂》) and "Victorious Death" (《胜利的死》) conveys strong spirit of martyrdom imbued with Christian overtones. The poet frequently praises characters of enduring hardships and making active sacrifices for ideals, and this set of narration is deeply influenced by the allusion of Jesus' crucifixion. For instance, in "Ode to the Bandits", Guo Moruo mentions heroes of political revolution such as Cromwell and Washington, social revolution such as Marx and Engels, religious revolution such as Shakyamuni and Martin Luther, doctrine revolution such as Copernicus and Darwin, cultural revolution such as Whitman and Tolstoy, educational revolution such as Rousseau and Tagore. He uses bold and straightforward words to eulogize their biblical spirit of resistance and sacrifice. In "Victorious Death", he draws inspiration from the history of Irish independence, repeatedly criticizes the corrupt government while extolling the courage to sacrifice for freedom with lines such as "once again to Freedom's cause return" (请为自由之故而再生), "A tragic death! A glorious death! A triumphant death on equal terms! A victorious death!" (悲壮的死哟! 金光灿烂的死哟! 凯旋同等的死哟! 胜利的死哟!), "I appreciate you! I praise you! 'Freedom' will never die from now on!" (我感谢你呀! 赞美你呀! "自由"从此不死了!). This obviously proves that Guo Moruo draws on the spirit of Christian martyrdom to serve the needs of Chinese revolution. For the two poems, he does not employ direct intertextuality including borrowing cultural images or narrative logic of *the Bible*, but pays more attention to correlation of Christian ideological and spiritual core with Chinese

social reality, showing a higher level of textual and intercultural interaction.

3.2 The Drifting Trilogy

The *Drifting Trilogy* is a representative work of Guo Moruo's early autobiographical novel, consisting of three short stories: "The Crossroads" (《歧路》), "Purgatory" (《炼狱》) and "The Cross" (《十字架》). The protagonist of the three stories is the same Chinese young man named Ai Mou, who returns homeland after studying in Japan. The novels depict his experience of being forced to part with wife and children due to financial difficulties, showcasing the survival predicaments of May Fourth intellectuals through plots such as farewells, relocations, and job rejections. The work vividly and genuinely describes the complex emotional experiences of Chinese youth in the May Fourth period who lived a drifting life and faced various troubles amidst the crossroads of life. In terms of artistic style, it apparently reveals Guo Moruo's typical writing style of subjective lyricism.

In "The Crossroads", Ai Mou studied medicine in Japan, but later he felt that medicine could not fundamentally change the dark social status quo. After returning to China, he abandoned medicine and turned to literature, founding a literary magazine with friends in Shanghai. However, his meager income could not even support his wife and children, so he had to temporarily send them back to Japan. Although Ai Mou was reluctant to part with his wife, he had to digest the deep melancholy and desolate mood lonely. "Purgatory" narrates his dilemma within the lonely and poverty-stricken life after farewell with family members. Ai Mou endured the torment of yearning and lived a bitter life. When he was about to leave Shanghai, he received a letter one day from his friends in Wuxi, inviting him to visit the Taihu Lake. After arriving in Wuxi, on the way to the Taihu Lake, Ai Mou was overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight of everything, thinking of his wife and children who were also in a miserable situation

in Japan, and fell in extreme pain. The next day, he had no heart to go sightseeing in Suzhou with his friends and returned to Shanghai alone. At last, "The Cross" depicts the scene after Ai Mou received letter from his wife about their plight in Japan, mainly describes his refusal of employment from the Red Cross in his hometown C City, Sichuan province. The novel applies a scene-based narrative, and portrays the inner struggles and dilemma of the character, drawing from Guo Moruo's own life experiences to present the spiritual landscape of Chinese intellectuals during the transformative period and age in turmoil. Being created in the early stage of May Fourth new literature, this paradigm of autobiographical lyric novel bears pioneering and innovative significance for the goals of revolution and enlightenment during May Fourth period.

To be specific, in the first story "The Crossroads", the character gave up practicing medicine but turned to literature because he thought working as doctor could not achieve universal love and humanity. He struggled between unsatisfactory destiny and compunction for wife and children, even prayed for pure light from Jesus to bless his family members and endow hope for himself at last. The whole narration is filled with the tone of confession and spiritual redemption in Christianity.

As for the second story, the concept of "Purgatory" originates from Christianity without doubt, which means purification, washing, and refinement as the Latin word "purgare". According to Christian ideas, although the soul has been saved and is destined to enter heaven, it still contains impurities that must be purified before it can enter the holiest space of the world. In Guo Moruo's work, the protagonist separated from his wife and children, wandered in Shanghai, endured constant mental torment, found himself in endless anguish, whose current life condition is compared to "purgatory". There is no purification of the soul after death, no divine

judgment, and no hope of "enduring suffering in exchange for eternal life". However, "purgatory" represents the spiritual predicament from which intellectuals in the present world have nowhere to escape. Suffering no longer holds religious redemptive value; it merely involves pain and emptiness caused by the social reality, and inherent teleology of the Catholic concept of purgatory is erased. When it comes to plot of the whole story, the melancholy and miserable atmosphere, Ai Mou's frequent expression of repentance and his final indulgence in drunkenness demonstrate people's mental suffering and torture, which echoes the logic of atonement in Christianity.

Eventually, title of "The Cross" itself derives from the most important cultural image in Christianity. Regarding content of the story, Guo Moruo abandons original implication of the Cross as the God's predetermined mission of atoning for humanity; reconstructs it to represent the earthly suffering, ethical responsibility, and heavy burden of fate that modern people are forced to bear. Ai Mou's voluntary refusal to embrace easy life along with decent work and choice of enduring loneliness as well as sense of guilt are equivalent to actively shouldering his own "cross". At the end of the story, Guo Moruo utilizes the famous Christian allusion of crucifixion and rebirth of Jesus to suggest the character's moral choice under influence of western religion and ideology.

To sum up, in *The Drifting Trilogy*, Guo Moruo's creative technique of intertextuality manifests both quotation of cultural images together with allusion and more profound reference and rewriting of emotional themes or ethical ideas.

3.3 *Three Leaves Collection*

Three Leaves Collection is a series of letters co-authored by Zong Baihua(宗白华), Tian Han(田汉), and Guo Moruo. It was first published by Shanghai Yadong Library (上海亚

东图书馆) in 1920 and reprinted by Anhui Education Press (安徽教育出版社) in 2006. The title "Three Leaves" symbolizes friendship among the three writers. The book is made up of 20 letters exchanged between January and March 1920, among which 5 letters from Tian Han, 8 letters from Zong Baihua, and 7 letters from Guo Moruo, accompanied by a preface written by each of the three authors.

The letters center around Goethe, cover topics such as life philosophy, speculations on cosmology, marriage and love together with viewpoints towards literary creation especially insights into poetry and drama. Language of the letters is sincere and colloquial but expression style of them is free. As the first collection of poets' correspondence in the history of modern Chinese literature, the content combines literary creation and theoretical discussion, providing important reference for studying early thoughts of the three writers and spiritual journey of Chinese intellectuals under the background of the May Fourth Movement.

To discuss in detail, we may find that in the letters to Zong Baihua and Tian Han, Guo Moruo frequently mentions God (上帝), builds connection between work by the Chinese poet Li Bai (李白) in Tang dynasty and the Christian concept of God through quotation "Substantia Sive deus deus sive natura" (本体即神, 神即万汇). Moreover, Guo Moruo repeatedly discusses with other May Fourth writers about universal love. He absorbs the Christian concept of "Love thy neighbor as thyself", but makes the following adjustments: eliminating the theological source of the "commandment of God" behind universal love; incorporating universal love into the pantheistic view of the oneness of cosmic life, namely all things share the same origin, the self is interconnected with the universe, and love is the inherent nature of life. Hence, Christian's conception of ego, universe and life value is totally adapted to fit for the situation of nation and society. More importantly, citing story of Samson and Delilah

about atoning for the depravity of carnal desires and returning to a pure and untainted soul, quoting lines such as "You quickly wash away all the filth from my life!" (你快把我有生以来的污秽洗净了罢!) from *Faust*, Guo Moruo's words exhibit strong repentance for his guilt, remorse for his wife and son owing to destroying the sanctity of love, desire of resurrection and rebirth as Phoenix. Needless to say, Guo Moruo's mindset and cognition are greatly influenced by Christianity's fundamental faith logic of sin-atonement-revival. His intertextuality with Christianity is not confined to quotation of words or cultural images, but develops into in-depth exchange of thoughts, concepts and narrative logic.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Generally speaking, Guo Moruo's early creations constitute a typical cross-cultural dialogue with Christian texts. Christianity's one and only god Jesus and symbolic motifs such as the cross, martyrdom, death and rebirth, purgatory appear frequently in Guo Moruo's narration. This certainly belongs to direct quotation of intertextuality. However, Guo Moruo consistently adopts the strategy of creative transformation. In *Goddess*, Guo Moruo focuses on innovation of character image and narrative logic. Firstly, the image of Jesus is reconstructed. He is no longer the Savior of mankind with the responsibility of atonement, but turns to be pioneer of rebelling against outdated rites and order. Thus, the spiritual connotation of Christ's passion changes from expiation for human's guilt into sacrifice to resistance against tyranny. In addition, *The Bible*, as an important pre-text, provides the May Fourth writer with important reference for plot organization. The framework of tribulation-death-rebirth is adapted to miseries and hardship-individual enlightenment-dedication of life-national rejuvenation. As for *The Drifting Trilogy*, Guo Moruo's attention is paid more to alternative explanation about suffering. He eliminates core theological content such as original sin and divine revelation but transforms

them into hardship in the mundane world that shows stronger sympathy to the general public. Apart from that, the cross is rewritten from a symbol of atonement and mission of God as consistently interpreted in Christianity to representation of spiritual suffering of modern intellectuals, and replaces the narration of religious resurrection with a process of self-salvation and rebirth. The sufferings of Ai Mou derive more from present-day miseries of the turbulent society, ethical responsibilities, and heavy burdens of fate that modern people voluntarily bear than from naturally born sin imposed on people as believed in Christianity. Another key concept is "Purgatory" which in the Christianity implies transitional tribulation space before entry into the kingdom of heaven where souls undergo purification and sins are cleaned after death; suffering in this way carries theological significance of "atonement and passage to eternal life". But in the story of Ai Mou, the theological implications of Purgatory are completely erased, while giving more emphasis to the spiritual dilemma of intellectuals in the decayed world from which they have no escape. In brief, misery is restructured as the inevitable fate that the awakened must endure in their rebellion against the old world. When it comes to *Three Leaves Collection*, theoretical generalization of Guo Moruo's creative ideas is more obvious. Guo Moruo transforms the Christianity's entire set of theological doctrines, namely creation, original sin, and redemption. Conversely, he centers on secularization of Jesus's image by removing divinity and supernatural attributes while stressing personality as an ordinary people. Guo Moruo deems Jesus as the exemplar of highest human personality and gives higher priority to noumenon and self. Besides, the "love" defined by Guo Moruo is no longer a religious obligation, but a natural expression of life itself, becoming foundation of the lyrical thought in Guo Moruo's sentimentalism. Lastly, Guo Moruo holds strong will to wash away his guilt and dirt of soul while achieving renovation of life, which turns to be implicit intertextuality

with Christian's thoughts about redemption and rebirth.

What can be clearly summarized from the above information is that Christian elements did not shape Guo Moruo's belief system, instead served as resources of cultural symbol integrating with his pantheistic thoughts and radical spirit of the May Fourth Movement, reflecting May Fourth intellectuals' selective and instrumental acceptance of foreign religious culture during the transformative times. Intertextuality of Guo Moruo's literature with Christianity ranges from the micro dimension including image of God and cultural items such as cross and Purgatory to macro dimension consisting of ethical connotations or spiritual core of tribulation and love as well as narrative structure of suffering and resurrection, meanwhile manifests more adaptative adjustments catering to people's enlightenment and social revolution during Chinese May Fourth period. The writer's appropriate use of initiative and creativity as well as his flexible and adaptative strategies of intertextuality provides valuable lesson for any other forms of intercultural communication, especially Chinese culture going global in the present age.

Furthermore, intertextuality between Christianity and Guo Moruo's literature indicates cross-cultural features of the writer's poetic views, creative ideas, and cognitive concepts. It can be easily discovered that the May Fourth writer followed the trend of the times and actively engaged in introducing advanced Western culture and ideology while integrating them with China's urgent needs of national salvation, ideological and cultural transformation together with people's awakening. Nonetheless, when boldly learning from western religious culture and related literature, he still found it difficult to completely shake off the deep-rooted influence of traditional Chinese ideology of personal ambitions, social responsibility and patriotism. The May Fourth writer's struggle against contradictions between the inside and the

outside, the new and the old, inspires us to rationally carry forward the spirit of inheritance, integration and innovation from our predecessors against the backdrop of Chinese culture going global. At the same time, regardless of nationality and cultural background, all the people within the tide of globalization must maintain a strong sense of responsibility, reasonably take advantage of the essence and significance of traditional and foreign cultures, actively seek common ground among cultural diversity while reserving differences, search for effective and diverse methods to draw upon, promote and disseminate value of excellent culture through the Internet and emerging social media, so as to play due role in preserving various cultures in the global village and strengthening equal status of multiple ethnic groups.

In terms of religion's function in cross-cultural exchange, we should not merely consider it as a driving factor or vital channel, but carefully ponder its applicability to different political, social and cultural environments along with coordination of recipients' application purposes and strategies. Religious transmission is sure to correspond with specific social and cultural context. What is more complicated is that religious belief or totem worship may not be an absolute paradox with scientific, democratic and revolutionary thoughts. Its reverence for humanitarianism, worth of life, universal love, rebellion and individual sacrifice shall become significant tool for realizing the intention of social reform and ideological revolution. In the ever-changing contemporary age, discovering religion's multifaceted and unfading merits is imperative and pressing.

Eventually, as for the concept of intertextuality, it does not refer to the simple reproduction of words or sentences, but implies profound "synthesis" of texts including semantic messages, emotional theme, narrative structure and cultural image, which brings about interaction of discourse involving dimensions such as linguistic expression, artistic

design and cultural dissemination. Given the rapid development of multimodal technology, new media, and artificial intelligence, to achieve higher profit of communication, future intertextuality and textual synthesis should transcend the mere collage of written text, mobilize multiple senses and modes of expression, combine advantages of diverse creative techniques and expression methods, further explore the value of different artistic formats, thereby truly breaking down the barriers between literature and other art forms as well as the gaps between various cultural categories, so as to inject stronger enthusiasm into authors' creative experiments, independent innovation and mutual cooperation.

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