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**“So Close, yet so Far Apart”: Orientalism, War and the
Philhellenic Paradox in Byron and Shelley**

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Abstract

The objective of the dissertation is to analyze those literary works by George Gordon, Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley that showcase the complex and ambiguous relationship between the Occident and the Orient, characterized to a large extent by aggression and accusations of tyranny, as well as to unravel their nuanced representations of stock negative depictions of the East. The dissertation initially maps the contours of both Orientalism and Philhellenism and then focuses on Byron's collection of stories that has come to be known as *The Turkish Tales*, comprising of five poems, four of which will be presented, namely *The Giaour*, *Bride of Abydos*, *Lara*, *A Tale* and *Siege of Corinth*, as well as his narrative poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*; and Shelley's closet drama *Hellas* and his lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*, in order to address the aforementioned issues.

Historically, the nineteenth century marked a turning point as many revolutions throughout Europe took place. With the support of many European intellectuals and the creation of the Philhellenic movement, Greece subjugated by the Ottoman Empire rebelled to oust despotism and establish freedom and democracy. Paradoxically, though, Philhellenism led to a distrust of the orient, a point that the dissertation deals with as it demonstrates that both poets adopted a critical Philhellenic stance as well as a mild anti-orientalism.

Key Terms: Orientalism, the paradox of Philhellenism, tyranny, war

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1. INTRODUCTION

The early decades of the 19th century constitute a period of historical, political and social upheaval, but also one in which new and progressive ideologies shaped, as well as were shaped by a plethora of literary texts. Romanticism, as this particular literary movement eventually came to be known as, was marked by a number of literary figures, among which George Gordon, or Lord Byron as he is most often referred to, and Percy Bysshe Shelley are amidst the most well-known ones. Their works present a fervent support for the plight of the Greeks for independence from the Ottoman Empire through the creation of a sovereign state, and the adoration of the ancient Greek texts and art; both of which came to be known as “Philhellenism”. The literal definition of the term is love for Greece and Greek culture and, by extension, support for the Greek cause of Independence in the context of the European history, with “Philhellene” being the adjective that denotes the ‘lover and supporter, (Collins dictionary). It should be noted that in ancient Greece the term had a completely different meaning; it suggested “a Greek patriot”, specifically referring to the Spartan general Agesilaus as it becomes apparent in Xenophon’s writings; the term itself was probably coined by Herodotus during the 5th century BC who used it to refer to the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis II during the 6th century BC (Argyrakos). Unlike its usage in antiquity, the term in its present definition is used instead to describe feelings of love and adoration that a non-Greek person experiences with regard to Greece and its culture. In a sense, the term is also used to describe “collective organized forms of supporting the Greek cause of national independence during the third decade of the 19th century”. This renders the term ‘philhellenism’ a politico-cultural force that can inspire change and revolution not only on the national stage, but also on the international European level (Vohler et al. 225). In a sense, philhellenism is deemed a national Greek cause applied to a European end, but also the opposite, a European end applied

to a Greek national cause (Beaton and Ricks 65). Taking both definitions into account, it becomes evident that the proponents of this movement aimed not only at the creation of an independent Greek state, but also at a cultural revolution throughout Europe that would herald a new age of freedom and the abolition of tyranny. At the same time, Byron and Shelley, by using Greece as the setting of their works showcase customs, ideas and personal opinions, influencing the Westerners' views of the Orient. Indeed, the term "Orientalism", which is used extensively to this day, could easily be applied when analyzing the literature of the era or when expressing the opinions of the Western countries about the Muslim states of the East, the Levant states for example; they both reinforce and subvert Orientalism.

The term "was originally used to denote the work of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philologists that have been referred to as "Orientalists". The term's meaning was nuanced by Edward W. Said to refer to the use of knowledge of the Orient in the West so as to create and maintain the latter's cultural, political, religious, and economic hegemony over the lands and peoples of the East. Said's much-debated 1978 book, *Orientalism*, established a school of thought that preoccupied itself with the idea of Orientalism and its perceived hegemonic influence. The publication of *Orientalism* provoked strong reactions by Bernard Lewis and other contemporary scholars of the Middle East, who claimed that Said misrepresented Orientalists collectively and individually. Although Said focused on the Middle East, particularly the Arab world, subsequent academics applied his thesis and methods to a variety of regions and topics". (Stearns)

At the same time, through the display of contrarianism against social norms, the East became a locus for Byron and Shelley, through which they expressed their progressive ideologies and critiqued the tyrannical practices, the corruption that the nobility and the ruling monarchs imposed on their subjects and even the moral degradation of individuals in positions of power. This is the reason why wars, revolutions and the fight against tyrannical institutions are central set pieces in their narratives, forming much of the dramatic conflict in their work. This "contrarian" element in their texts had been largely influenced by their own lives. Shelley, for example, was radical in his expression of revolutionary views, as seen in *The Necessity of Atheism* and in his being

expelled from the university of Oxford, which he attended, in 1811 (Scrivener 3). Reportedly, Shelley was a supporter of anarchism as it was expressed by Godwin (5) and he was also in favor of universal human values, such as love, peace, humanity and kindness in opposition to rules, laws and regulations, consciously adopting this particular revolutionary and polemic mentality (Scrivener 3). In fact, William Godwin seems to have cast an influence on Shelley more than any other radical philosopher (Scrivener 8). As a result, Shelley became a pariah in his contemporary society and highly controversial in terms of his personality and ideology. He spent much of his time travelling throughout Europe, before perishing in a boat accident in 1822 while vacationing in Italy with his wife and his circle of friends and acquaintances. Similarly, Lord Byron was notorious for his scandalous personality, allegedly having extramarital children and “absolutely refusing marrying in a church” (Bloom 5), thus showing a mistrust or an aversion towards the institution of organized religion. His radical ideology enabled him to take part in battles, and, to essentially become the commander-in-chief in Missolonghi, during the Greek War of Independence (55). His death during the siege of the city led to his idealization by his fellow British and Greeks as a war hero and a symbol of a soldier’s duty, by persevering in hard times. No wonder that he is considered a paragon of Romantic radicalism at a time when the political left in Britain was incoherent and without influence, and its adherents were prone to adventures or mimicked the established ideology out of fear rather than actual political conviction (Calder 18). Following the French Revolution of 1789, there was a great rift between the state and the writers/poets (18). Similarly, food riots throughout England and the so-called “Radical War of 1819-20”, during which weavers participated in a nationwide anti-capitalist strike, influenced the radicalization of not only Byron, but Shelley as well (18). Their sociopolitical beliefs are of utmost importance; apart from influencing their tales of individuals fighting against an unfair status quo, they also provide the stage for and bring the conflicts of East and West to the limelight. The revolutionary influence of both poets culminated in the Near East, where the downtrodden people, tricked by the system, fought against tyrannical forces. Thus, the Levant in general and the Greek lands in particular became the melting pot of people of different backgrounds, nations and ideologies. The poets’ love for Greece

and their presentation of the racial other- that is, the Muslim people- become the focal point through which their own viewpoint is presented. Their interactions with each other are of paramount importance, since they allow both Byron and Shelley to showcase inhumane practices by both easterners and westerners against each other and underscore how despotism obstructs people from attaining happiness and peace of mind. As a result, the term “Orientalism” is of utmost importance and should be analyzed, as the central conflicts of the narratives often take place in the East, which is presented as a violent and dangerous liminal space. In short, Orientalism is portrayed to a great extent by both poets in their works. While the trans-national importance of the Romantic Movement was both significant and positive as a metaphor for fighting against tyranny in order to acquire freedom, it may have led to or even exacerbated an already existing negative view of the Orient. In fact, since so much of the work of Shelley and Byron has to do with Greece and their fascination with the Greek culture, and moreover due to the expression of their radical ideology, they are considered to be revolutionary, philhellenic writers on a frequent basis. At that time, Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire. The call for an independent Greek state, naturally, brought about friction and enmity to the sovereign state, as the land that traditionally formed Greece in antiquity was essentially a province of the Ottoman Empire. This led to the demonization of the Turkish state, which was viewed as tyrannical and unworthy of occupying the descendants of such “enlightened” people in the minds of the more extreme supporters of philhellenism. In that way, the rhetoric against the Ottomans was actually against tyranny, and the nationalistic fight of Greece had collapsed with that of the rhetoric against tyranny. This could, in fact, suggest that the particular ideology was faulty up to a point.

The works that will be analyzed bearing this context in mind, include Shelley’s closet drama *Hellas* and his lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*, together with Byron’s collection of stories that has come to be known as *The Turkish Tales*, comprising of five poems, four of which will be presented, these being *The Giaour*, *Bride of Abydos*, *Lara*, *A Tale* and *Siege of Corinth*, as well as his narrative poem *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. The reason why Shelley and Byron rather than any other British Romantic writer are studied in this analysis as well as the reasoning for choosing the aforementioned works of theirs as

opposed to any other is twofold. First and foremost, both poets display views of the Orient in them, while using it as a setting as will be demonstrated; secondly, they present extensive accounts of a juxtaposition between the East and the West, thus presenting similarities and differences between two different worlds, with Greece being the meeting point of both, rendering its setting as extremely important, essentially liminal, as aforementioned. Hence, the terms “Orientalism”, “Philhellenism” and the idea of war and tyranny, which have already been either defined or alluded to, will be analyzed further in the present dissertation, along with the role that “war” plays in the aforementioned texts and how it ties in with the fight against despotism. Potential problems with the way the Orient was viewed, as well as contradictions within the term “Philhellenism” itself will become the central argument for a possible “Philhellenic Paradox”, with the term implying that Philhellenism may have been poorly-thought out, ignoring the liminality of Greece and the modern state of its citizens in a propaganda-like manner.

2. Historical Background Of Orientalism and Philhellenism

2.1 Background of Orientalism

Following the above definition of the term “Orientalism” and how it was used in an effort to convey the notion of hegemony over the East, it is important to explain the origins of the term. Despite Edward Said’s popularization of the term in modern academia, it has existed for a long time beforehand. The first recorded appearance of the term took place in 1727 in the writings of Joseph Spence, specifically in his *Essays on Pope’s Odyssey* as a new word that showcases the true sublime of the Orient, invoking the idea of a government in the world and heaven (Kada 4). According to Ivan Kalmar, quoting Spence, ever since it was originally coined, the term has always held significant negative connotations, with Spence in particular speaking of:

“The sun being perished out of Heaven, and of darkness rushing over the Earth! I cannot express the fullness of the words – But you know the original; and, I fear, will never see a translation equal to it. This whole prophetic vision ... is the True Sublime; and in particular, gives us a higher Orientalism than we meet within any other part of Homer’s writings. You will pardon me a new word, where we have no old one to my purpose: You know what I mean, that Eastern way of expressing Revolutions in Government, by a confusion or extinction of light in the Heavens”. (19)

This passage is very interesting as a few noteworthy facts are immediately apparent. First, by mentioning the ancient Greek writer Homer, it seems that in its essence, despite the term appearing for the first time in the early 18th century, during a period well into modernity, the idea of Orientalism has existed since at least the time of the ancient Greeks, probably even longer before that, from the 13th century BC, the period that constitutes the chronological setting of *Iliad*. Homer lived a few centuries afterwards, nevertheless the implication that the archetypal epic war, the Trojan one, could potentially have been an early war between the East and West still remains. The idea of conflict

between the Orient and the Occident has been part of the collective consciousness of westerners for millennia, applying both to the arts and the historical reality. Ironically enough, this inadvertently adds a Greek nuance to the traditional idea of Orientalism. At the same time, the literary texts about the Orient, Shelley's and Byron's included, seem to be part of a long tradition and not the first of their kind that attempts to paint the Orient in a specific light. Instead, Orientalism is a worldview that has existed for a long time indeed; similarly, at its core, and since the very beginning, it has been tied to Greece to some extent and it presupposes bloody conflict by presenting the Eastern Other as an enemy. Similarly, through the reference to a "true sublime", a certain mysticism is ascribed to the Orient, endowing it with an almost supernatural element and separating it from the Occident. This however, does not seem to be a positive connotation according to Spence, as the sun "perishes" in heaven and darkness rushes over to conquer the Earth. The supernatural sublime is likened to an apocalypse, one that seems to be particularly dangerous and in conflict with the western European states. A clear division is formed between the two geographical spaces and the racial other is portrayed as a threat to the ways of life that Europe values. Interestingly enough, the excerpt does not include any reference to the ways in which the Oriental subject is considered to be dangerous, a fact that further signifies that their will is unknown and their way of thinking and acting wholly different to the subject of the Occident. Thus, ever since its original appearance in a written text, the term Orientalism could be considered a racially inflected one, with Spence noting that he coined the term specifically to denote this exact idea. Finally, the reference to "revolutions in government" that comes as a result of some sort of confusion or destruction of heavens implies that both secular and divine order are in danger and that the Oriental subject is an entirely "barbaric" individual that does not respect the rulers of the land that have been chosen by heaven to rule. In contrast to the English subject that displays positive attitudes towards the institution of monarchy, an oriental person appears to hold a radical view in comparison. It is known that the general English view on the subject, as long as such a view existed, seems to have been that a system of monarchy based on familial succession was rightful and it need not be discussed further, such as the reign of Elizabeth I, who was celebrated and left her mark on British and European

history (Sampson 215). When a British monarch was ultimately executed, the backlash was indeed fierce, as was the case with Charles I in the 17th century. Yet, the oriental subject is presented as having instigated and participated in various revolutions, painting it as wholly alien to the English person, creating distance between them. Finally, it is noteworthy that both in the definition provided in the introduction, as well as in the above passage of Spence, when referring to Orientalism, there seems to be no definitive explanation of what the term means; in short, there is no proper definition. Rather, every time an attempt is made to define it, characteristics are presented, which could suggest that the term was created with the intent to demonize the other from the very start and, potentially, that knowledge about them is faulty and/or incomplete.

Taking Greece into consideration for a moment, as in its culture we find the origins of Orientalism, the ancient citizens also held deep-rooted beliefs regarding the East and its denizens long after the time of Homer. For example, Hippocrates, the well-known doctor- a profession that afforded him a certain gravitas when expressing opinions, especially by being a man of science in an era where technological and scientific advancements were relatively limited and when many of his fellows were not as educated as himself- had expressed the notion that there is a very clear division of East and West, as presented in his book *Airs, Water, Places*. He argued that certain physical characteristics exist that not only differentiate people in terms of physical appearance but also the effects that cause the two groups to act differently on a social, behavioral and political level (Swamy 3). In a way, Hippocrates “embraces the natural science philosophy of the ancient Hellenic Greece and in doing so [he] laid the foundation for the idea that both the natural and human environment have a bearing on human health and psyche” (Barrett 6). Thus, a clear distinction is formed between two racial others. Furthermore, Hippocrates attempted to present the people of the Orient as weaker, tamer and more effeminate than their Occidental counterparts, implying that the former should be subservient to the will of the Greeks (Swamy 4). The idea that geography and climate have a bearing on one’s character is used by Hippocrates to explain that thought process, suggesting that the weather of the Orient is accountable for mental flabbiness, timidity, and weak character in general (4). Even before the time of Islam, the people of the East were thought of as passive and naturally

submissive. In short, it seems that, as Frank Barrett put it, “Hippocrates laid the foundation for medical geography as well as geographical medicine, because in establishing the geographical aspects of disease, he also recognized the medical implications of geography” (6). “In sum, the specific work is an early example of the Orientalist conceptualization of the East as a separate entity, people, and culture, due to various mental, physical, and behavioral differences cited by Hippocrates, all of which are based on the primary difference of climate” (Swamy 7).

Similarly to Hippocrates, Herodotus in his *Histories* continues the Orientalist narrative of classical antiquity by focusing extensively on the relationship between Greece and the East and the causes of conflict between them (7), a conflict which is presented through the image of the Persian Empire as a “barbaric” nation that attempted to conquer the Greek city-states. The renowned historian was also instrumental in swaying public opinion on social and political affairs. His influence on “later Greek writers and orators, with regard to his commentary on the East and Persia, as well as his discussion of Athens as the exemplary democracy [was great]. Herodotus is thus the example of Orientalism for which the Persians are referred to as the ‘Other,’ and he uses political geography as the basis for this argument since he ‘begins his text by creating the framework of the two groups giving his reason for writing these records, that great and marvelous deeds-some displayed by Greeks, some by barbarians-may not be without their glory; and especially to show why the two peoples fought with each other’” (7). By establishing all non-Greeks, and especially oriental people as barbarians, the historian summarizes the belief of his time, while also employing science in his opinion, since he mentions that the reason for the schism between the two sides lies in the abduction of Helen and Europa (7), implying that the long tradition of conflict is pre-ordained because the two subjects are fundamentally different to one another on the basis of their biology. In that sense, a very strong “us versus them mentality” is created and Herodotus builds:

“On this idea to explain the causes of eternal hatred between the two, mainly the conflict that occurs between Greece and Persia. These various women, who were viewed as possessions, played a role since they were the ones that ignited the turmoil. But the crucial part was the act of invasion of

territories, which is the primary cause of hatred between Greece and Persia. In this case, the idea of Orientalism is seen in the Greeks' mentality of the Persians, who assumed Asia as part of their territory, thereby distinguishing themselves from Europe and Greece solely on the basis of region and the geography of their landmass". (8)

There are a few interesting conclusions that can be drawn from the historian's work. First, the hatred between Occident and East is mutual to an extent. Second, religion and mythology, while not the instigating factor in the conflict, nevertheless they are still employed nowadays to justify the ongoing tension. Third, when it comes to the West, the idea of a person's or a community's responsibility is non-applicable, since victims of specific stories- in this case, Helen of Sparta who was abducted by Paris and Europa who was similarly kidnapped by Zeus- are used to justify extreme prejudice and countermeasures against the racial Other, instead of simply being portrayed as the victims of singular acts of aggression. It so happens that collective punishment is not only justified as a result, but a moral background is also added to it. In other words, entire communities and countries were demonized by the actions of particular individuals or mythological creatures. Moreover, Herodotus commits two logical fallacies in his narrative. The first is the depiction of the oriental person as a "barbarian". The truth of the matter is that in his example, while he successfully employs Paris as a figure to explain the hatred and distrust of the West, he ignores the fact that Europa was an eastern princess and that she was kidnapped by Zeus, king of the Greek pantheon. This means that we have a similar act of aggression perpetrated by the West as well. Herodotus fails to make any mention of this discrepancy, even though he successfully employs it to explain the mutual hatred. Unfortunately, it is impossible to figure out whether this is a genuine flaw of logic on his part, or an attempt to sweep this contradiction under the rug by not acknowledging its presence in the text to begin with. In short, if the same example is used by the Orient, the Greeks could also be referred to as barbarians in this particular case (by considering the present definition of the term, rather than the antique one which included all non-Greek subjects in general). Similarly, the second contradiction is the failure to mention the thoughts and feelings of the easterners on this issue. Herodotus showcases the feelings of enmity experienced by the

Greeks in an efficient manner, but when it comes to the other side, he either presumes their feelings or completely ignores them. These two fallacies point out that orientalist discourse is mere propaganda.

Part of this discourse is an attempt to deny or eradicate the existence of culture in the Orient. What cultures the Orient displays is of little value. Alternatively, culture has been stolen from the Greeks according to the historian, who states that “no race is so ready to adopt foreign ways as the Persian” (8). In his view, the Persian men in particular, are lacking a strong cultural background, a fact which leads the Persian Empire to do so, out of jealousy for the West.

As Eashwar Swammy acknowledges, “thus Herodotus makes the clear distinction between the two cultures and has set the tone for the rest of his text by creating an orientalist view of the Persians as a culturally foreign nation, a separate entity from the Greeks. Also, being distant from the Persian capital also may have given those outlying nations additional reasons to resent Persian rule, which was ruling them from afar, and thus those cities may have been more prone to dissent. Herodotus, writing as a Greek author, is clearly in support of the idea that Greeks are superior to all other uncivilized groups, which are viewed as barbarians”. (9)

The above excerpt also reinforces the role of history and how it can alter the perception of a particular civilization.

“Aristotle’s writings, like those of Hippocrates and Herodotus, include a narrative against the East. The Greek philosopher also employs cultural geography to argue in his *Politics* that “the people of cold countries, generally, and particularly those of Europe, are full of ‘spirit’, but deficient in skill and intelligence; and this is why they continue to remain comparatively free, but attain to no political development and show no capacity for governing others; the peoples of Asia, although endowed with skill and intelligence, are deficient in spirit, and hence are subjected to slavery. Possessing both spirit and intelligence the Greeks are free to govern all other peoples. They possess both spirit and intelligence: the one quality makes them continue free; the other enables them to attain the heights political development and to show a capacity for governing every other people – if only they could once achieve political unity”. (10)

The philosopher's statement is of great importance for a variety of reasons. First of all, he stereotypes the peoples of both East and West, presenting the latter as dynamic in action but inferior in terms of intelligence and the former as skillful and intelligent, yet as individuals prone to practices of slavery. Apart from this problematic division, Aristotle also indirectly refuses to acknowledge potential practices of imperialism and colonization of the Orient from the Occident. Once again, a moral justification is created; one that allows abhorrent practices to take place in the Levant by Westerners. Additionally, the Greeks are presented as inhabiting some sort of "liminal space" between East and West, thus bearing characteristics of both cultures. The Greeks are mentioned as having all of the aforementioned positive characteristics: they are free, intelligent, and skillful, all of which allow them to exert influence on other nations. Hence, Greek colonization practices are not only excused but celebrated as well. The only fatal flaw traced in Greeks, according to Aristotle, is an apparent inability to be united in a cohesive front that would allow them to colonize the racial other. This distinction is applied in government through the ruling system. As an extension to the above, Aristotle states that "there is another sort of monarchy not unfamiliar among the barbarians and it nearly resembles tyranny. But this is both legal and hereditary. For barbarians, being more servile in character than Hellenes, and Asiatics than Europeans, do not rebel against a despotic government" (11), which comes in contrast to the aforementioned view that would become dominant many centuries later, that is, that the people of the Orient are different to the Europeans merely due to the fact that they rebel against lawful governments. This contradiction within Orientalism indicates that the specific narrative bears its discrepancies. Aristotle juxtaposes the democracy of Athens and the rightful kings of the Greek city-states with the monarchs of the Orient, tyrants who ruled in a state of fear and despotism and were scared of being deposed. The philosopher states that:

"Such royalties have the nature of tyrannies because the people are by nature slaves; but there is no danger of their being overthrown, for they are hereditary and legal. Wherefore also their guards are such as a king and not such as a tyrant would employ, that is to say, they are composed of citizens, whereas the guards of tyrants are mercenaries. For kings rule according to law

over voluntary subjects, but tyrants over involuntary; and the one are guarded by their fellow-citizens the others are guarded against them". (11)

This suggests that the oriental people are politically inferior compared to Greeks. Aristotle's ideals constitute a prime example of the prejudice inherent in Orientalism. He concludes that "Greeks combine European spirit with Asiatic intelligence and competence, and avoid the moral and physical pitfalls due to their ideal climate and environment" (13) and by employing this prevailing idea in his text, he suggests that there is a very clear-cut distinction between Europeans and Asians. In any case, the three aforementioned Greek intellectuals show clearly what Orientalism is all about.

In present times, following the slow decay of the colonial empires, Orientalism came to represent a corporate institution that has aimed to create a one-sided perspective of Islam and to establish an epistemological and ontological difference between East and West (Macfie 1). The constant changes in the term and the initial ambiguity of meaning that it held has led Anouar Abdel-Malek to declare that Orientalism aims to create false enigmas and that it is of paramount importance to revise it, as well as set new standards for the critical re-evaluation of its conceptualization, along with the implements and the methods employed, so as to create a new view of the Orient that better represents reality (103). He also showcases that the Orient and the Oriental subject are largely viewed as the "object of study stamped with an Otherness; as all that is different, whether be it 'subject' or 'object' but of a constitute Otherness, of an essentialist character" (107). This essentially means that the Orientalist ideology was created to demonize, rather than explain or present truths about the state of the world and of history. This is, in fact, a racist view by today's standards and Abdel-Malek presses this point by underlining that "according to traditional Orientalists, an essence should exist sometimes even clearly described in metaphysical terms which constitutes the inalienable and common basis of all the beings considered: this essence is both historical, since it goes back to the dawn of history, and fundamentally ahistorical, since it transfixes the being, 'the object' of study, within its inalienable and nonevolutive specificity, instead of defining it as all other beings, states, nations, peoples and cultures as a product, a resultant of the vection of the forces operating in the field of historical evolution" (108). This indicates a very

conscious and deliberate effort to remove the oriental subject from historical reality, not taking the circumstances of origin, history, and nature into consideration, essentially to deny its very existence. By removing it from history and by creating a narrative of otherworldliness, not only does it cause demonization, but it also forgives anything that a person from the Occident could do or say, since their accountability is also negated.

The issue of religion should also be mentioned in the millennia-old history of Orientalism. In fact, throughout the more recent centuries, religion has been used as a way to combat the racial other as well. Abdul-Latif Tibawi has shed light particularly on the Judeo-Christian distrust of and hostility towards Islam and its Holy Book, the Quran, by claiming that the believers of the Old and the New Testament, both Jews and Christians, have conceived the most prominent religion of the Near and the Middle East- Islam- as “the work of the Devil” and the holy text as nothing more than “tissue absurdities”, and the prophet of the religion, most of all, as an impostor and a false prophet, going as far as likening him to the figure of the Antichrist (6). Despite later attempts at bridging the huge gap between the two cultures, the true objectives of the western-Christian world were to have enough knowledge of the Quran to expose its shortcomings in a subversive manner and to christen the populations of the eastern world, an act that could be considered as an endeavor to colonize the Other (6-7).

Tibawi has also expressed the opinion that English speaking students of Islam, and by extension the western populace as a whole, have been "less scholarly Objective in their studies and interpretations of texts," for they provided a scanty "scientific detachment" to fan the flames of "fixed ideas" of Islam dwelling for ever more in the minds of Western scholars (12). He also maintains that "the late medieval image of Islam remains substantially unaltered; it has only discarded old-fashioned clothes in favor of more modern attire" (24). Following this train of thought leads to the conclusion that "Orientalism has on the whole failed to come to terms with Islamic thought and methods" (33), further showcasing efforts in creating division. Studies on the subject even at the university level are hence deemed more similar to propaganda than part of an actual study and opinions held since the middle Ages are presented as historical reality and fact. According to Zachary Lockman:

“Scholarly work is another form of purveying orientalism which exerts influence in a different section of the populace, specifically targeting academia, policymakers, and government officials. Concerning Islam there were two positions taken up on the issue, the liberal stance which supported the idea that Islam was not wholly violent and anti-democratic, and the hardline position which viewed Islam as a threat to the West. The hard-line position of these scholars which viewed Islam as a threat, began a successful movement within the area of scholarship to foment anti-Islamic sentiment”. (221)

This means that both science and religion, along with fearmongering have done a lot to foster as well perpetuate Orientalism in the Occident. Consequently, Islam came to be viewed as “as a wounded civilization, and ... Islamism in all its forms as a pathology and potential threat to the West, with an inability to tolerate the domination of infidels over true believers” (217). According to Kabbani, the issue of conflict brought upon by a differing religion begins from the very start of Islam, where the newly formed armies of Arabia, rallying under Muhammad, launched an attack and conquered much of the Mediterranean, a region deemed the center of European power throughout the ages (14). The rising of an alien nation and its rapid expansion were threatening to the great empires of the Occident, even causing them to abandon the region, hence many future expeditions and voyages would deliberately try to avoid the Levant.

This policy of avoiding the Orient in favor of western and northern expansion would lead to an even greater rift and the two sides would be relatively isolated despite their proximity, easily allowing notions such as the ancient Greek conceptualizations of Orientalism to survive for many years unchallenged, ultimately straining the relations between the two when contact would be largely restored. Kabbani refers to this as a mental barrier separating the Occident and the Orient, supported by myth-making and ignorance (14). An unintended side-effect from this frontier would be the rendering of the lands close to the Orient that are still Mediterranean as well as European to the state of acquiring a borderline mythical status as well in the collective consciousness of the West, while also being held as not quite European and yet not quite oriental, essentially viewed as liminal, with Greece being a prime example.

Apart from philosophy, the Middle Ages would be the first era in which the peoples of the Orient would be viewed as anathema in the larger West and labelled as dangerous, monstrous, and ugly in a manner that can be considered racist by today's standards, fueling anti-orient literature in a polemic manner, along with widespread attempts to make the Occident appear superior (14). Narratives of sexual deviancy in the East would also pop up for the first time, and apart from fueling religious polemic, they would also influence the writings of westerners to the extent of, unexpectedly enough, romanticizing the Levant in writing and travel accounts well into the 19th century, influencing even the British Romantic writers, including Byron and Shelley (15).

Taking all of this into consideration, Alexander Macfie, quoting Tibawi, states that

“In content and in tone the writing and teaching is still largely anti-Islam and anti-Arab, particularly so regarding contemporary affairs. Those who graduate at the hands of Orientalists being thus indoctrinated and who come into contact with Arabs and Muslims in the course of their business or duty often find it imperative to form a fresh point of view and even a pioneering vocabulary in order to express their relationship in a realistic manner different from that which they had learned in the books of the Orientalists. This is one of their colossal failures”. (168-169)

Indeed, the gap between cultures seems to be too big and even in the present day it is extremely difficult to be bridged. It stands to reason that during the early decades of the 19th century, in the era of Byron and Shelley, it would have been even more difficult to do so and that potential views of the Orient would be skewed as well, given that even learned and cultured individuals are unable to avoid this pitfall.

The term has, once again, in more recent years been popularized by the American-Palestinian critic Edward Said. In his highly influential book titled *Orientalism*, he attempts to analyze this phenomenon. Despite not providing a clear definition, he maintains that Orientalism connotes the “high-handed executive attitude of the 19th and 20th-century European colonialism” and points out that Orientalism is a philosophical thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction drawn between the East and the western European powers (2). It is, in short, an attempt to fragment and restructure the eastern

world in order to dominate over it and exert authority over it (3), establishing a very clear-cut hierarchy between the East and the West. Essentially, ever since the Enlightenment, following the popularization of the ideology among westerners, the East came to be defined as wild, uncivilized, and taboo. Said has collected many of the aforementioned characteristics used to describe the ideology behind Orientalism. The book “was the outcome of a rejection; yet, a challenge to what Western scholars have referred to as Orientalism, as a rooted way of thought, a misrepresentation of the non-western world, a prejudiced interpretation of the East and false assumptions shaped by the attitudes of European imperialism towards the Middle East” (Kada 7). Kada, quoting Said underlines that Orientalism is “a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on its special place in European Western experience and [stresses] that Said believed that the chief reason of a Western visitor to the Orient is “a European representation” of the eastern world through an archaic romanticized image as “a place of Romance, Exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (8). This last part is of great importance to this dissertation, as both Shelley and Byron have presented the Orient in this exact way, as will become evident later on. Meanwhile, returning to Said, he has also set three designations for Orientalism, associating it with “anyone who teaches and writes about the Near East (2), as an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and much of the time, by virtue of association, to the Occident” (2) which means an Orient uncivilized by nature which possesses no knowledge but is of a Western background (Kada 8). Such categorization implies that anyone could be an “orientalist” even without meaning to and that purposefully, faulty science is employed by orientalism to support conclusions that have already been decided a priori. Similarly, there is also the implication that the Orient cannot survive on its own and that the West should intervene to save or guide the people of these lands to the right path as if they did not have autonomy over their thoughts and actions. This notion aims to serve as a “moral” justification for colonialism that would apply not only to the land and the countries of the Orient themselves but also to the psyche of the individuals; essentially they would become slaves serving the westerners, giving up their right to be masters of themselves. The view that a particular group of people cannot govern themselves and can only be kept in line by a

different interfering force is racist in both conception and application. As a result, Orientalism itself, by excluding the “other” could be considered a “racist” ideology, at least as regards the behavior of Westerners towards the people of the East.

Furthermore, concrete facts and pragmatism as well as science are skewed either on purpose or deliberately, creating a variety of archetypes instead to render both East and West as antithetical forces (Kada 8). An out-of-the norm opinion may be perfectly valid on occasion, however; it is not necessarily wrong to express a certain opinion toward an institution or a people on its own. Said in his book recognizes this belief and states that:

“One ought again to remember that all cultures impose corrections on raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these cultures not as they are but, for the benefit of the receiver, as the way they ought to be. Yet the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture; in some cases for what he believes to be the sake of the Oriental”. (67)

Europeans typically have projected negative views on other cultures, yet the Orient is still disproportionately demonized. It should be noted that Said does not reject Orientalism merely because of its characteristics. He is actually willing to accept it as a legitimate one, provided that its problematic elements are done away with and the general outlook of it alters. Therefore, in the preface of his work, the critic calls the reader to take part in this action by stating that “history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and rewritten, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated, so that our East, our Orient becomes ours to possess and direct” (xiv). In short, Said means that if the demonization of the East ceases and attempts at imperializing the Levant stop thoroughly, then relations between the two sides can be ameliorated to a large extent.

Lastly, one needs to bear in mind that Orientalism is not only ancient, dating back to at least the time of the Trojan War, prevalent during classical

antiquity largely in its present form; it is ongoing. The problematic European projections are so deeply integrated within the western collective psyche, often being considered a fact rather than an opinion, a stance of artificial division. Thus the statement "it is a commonplace of Orientalism that the West knows more about the East than the East knows about itself" (Kabbani 10) reflects historical reality.

2.2 Background of Philhellenism

Following the analysis of the term “Orientalism” and the role of Greece in shaping the relevant views that would eventually be inherited by the great European powers later on, it is time to turn to “Philhellenism”. Following the aforementioned first appearance of the term, albeit with a very different meaning in ancient Greek writing, its usage carried on throughout the next half millennium. Meanwhile, according to George Argyrakos, “mishellenism”, a distrust for or hatred of Greece, would appear too at the same time and would actually go on to influence anti-Greek writing during the early 19th century, as it will be shown later. According to the critic, important and influential Romans, such as Horace and Nero would be considered philhellenes, but for many centuries afterwards, particularly from the advent of Islam onwards, the term fell into disuse, except for very specific regions, such as the Mediterranean and Russia, and would not appear again until well into the 19th century, returning with largely its present meaning, which would be established around the years of the Greek revolution of 1821. Argyrakos also states that the reason why “Philhellenism” was not used earlier was that the Greeks were thought of as “pagans”, hence expressing love and admiration for such a civilization would be a cultural taboo of sorts, even though the Greek letters were studied in the schools of the West, along with ancient Greek literature, historiography and philosophy. More specifically, “dominant historiography traces the robust restoration of classical education in Europe during the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. That period coincides roughly with the birth and development of the printing industry, which functioned as an enhancer of a pre-existing trend, found at least in the scholastic philosophy and theology of the middle Ages. It is indicative that there were about 590 editions of works of Aristotle with their commentaries by the year 1500, when typography was still in its infancy. In the region of the Byzantine Empire, for historical and cultural reasons, philhellenism (of Greeks or others) took a different course and form, due to the fact that sections of the Byzantine subjects gradually developed a Greek national (or pre-national) identity commencing from the 13th century onwards. Modern historiography has revised its views about a ‘theocratic Byzantium’ that

was supposedly hostile to Hellenism, and revealed that hellenophilia did not decline during the Byzantine period”, according to Argyrakos in his online article. It seems that despite the negative view of Greeks as borderline infidels (the previously mentioned term “pagans” alluding to this notion), at the same time, admiration and cultural/scientific interest were also present as well. It is interesting to note that similarly to how Greece has been viewed as a liminal space in terms of geography, as the land represented a natural border between Asia and Europe; this attribute has also contributed in Greece being a culture of both eastern and western ideals. Byzantine hellenophilia is of great importance in the sense that since a Christian Empire considers Greek culture as not antithetical to the religious dogma of Europe, the acceptance of pro-Greek feelings could be relatively easily acceptable among the peoples of the Occident, since it did not necessarily contradict their own religion and cultural beliefs. Yet, a lingering element of “otherness” would estrange some people, creating ambivalent views towards Greece that would culminate in the late 1810s/early 1820s as will be shown later. These contradictions would also be embedded within the basic characteristics of the movement that would result in Philhellenism being viewed as a weird amalgam of admiration, mimicry in art and cultural continuity with antiquity (Argyrakos page?). The implication of this seems to be that every adherent of Philhellenism viewed it differently and the movement would not be homogenous. In short, Philhellenism was not a cohesive whole.

The aforementioned common ground between Europe and Greece was what allowed the Philhellenic movement to become popular and attract a lot of support throughout the 19th century. It was in fact viewed as a European struggle, and the persistence of the Greeks in the fight for independence became a source of inspiration for the Europeans, coupled by a variety of written media in literature, newspapers and travelogues (Argyrakos page?). The importance of the connection between Hellenism and Christianity should not be underestimated as, according to Argyrakos:

“It is almost self-evident that Philhellenism would not have flourished during the Revolution, had there not been a Greek cultural substratum in the Western / Christian world. Christian Serbs also revolted shortly before 1821, as did other Balkan ethnicities later, but there was no philo-serbianism’ (except

in Russia) or ‘phil-albanianism’ etc., let alone to an extent comparable to Philhellenism. Also, by definition, there would be no Philhellenism if the revolutionaries had not declared and felt themselves Greeks (“*We are the Greek nation of Christians...*”, Declaration of Patras, March 26, 1821) and if this had not been obvious to third parties due to the use of the Greek language and the continuous habitation in the historical Greek lands. These obvious elements of national identity, coupled with the resistance of the revolutionaries in a long bloody struggle, played a huge role in the emergence of the philhellenic movement, which turned the political balance decisively in favor of Greek independence”.

In other words, the emergence of the Greek nation is intrinsically tied to the idea of Philhellenism and the fact that it would have never formed otherwise. Thus, the importance of Philhellenism in shaping European culture and history is not to be understated.

In conclusion, there seems to be a crucial connection between Greece, Philhellenism and Orientalism, owing to Greece’s liminality between Europe and Asia, with two different cultures meeting and the conflicts that arise as a result. Having analyzed the two terms, it is now time to turn to the seminal poets of the British Romantic canon, Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, whose works present as well as problematize these ideas, including the clashes of the aforementioned civilizations and worldviews. Their works mentioned in the introduction will be analyzed in the following chapter within this framework.

3. Analysis of the Individual Works

3.1 Byron's Grand Tour and its Importance

Before proceeding to the textual analysis of Byron's poems, it is important to refer to the poet's journey to the Orient, as everything he experienced in his travels formed the basis of his narratives and the setting in his works, including the views he presents as regards the eastern people, the customs and even the relationship between the Occident and the Orient in general. This journey has been referred to as his "Grand Tour". According to Kada, "the Orient has always been an objective for which Europeans' prospects grow intensely with an intention to have authority over it. In the early 18th century the Oriental gates were largely opened to receive European travelers. The world was Orientalizing, in a clearer sense 'Romanticizing' which bestowed a chance to form literary products, depicting the Europeans' encounter with the Ottomans, their relationship and their interest in the Orient" (9). Byron himself is part of the same tradition; a British poet adhering to the Romantic literary movement, travelling to the East, with this journey informing his work. The poet was certainly not the first or last individual to do so. In fact, the long-standing European tradition at that time dictated that "an explorer was always a civilized man and the act of exploration itself constitutes an advanced intellectual concept", according to Byron, as quoted by Farwell (Kabbani 86). The implication seems to be that the western man is privileged in comparison to the Oriental other, being superior to the primitive in a sense, but also to women who, due to the social norms of that time, could not easily undertake such dangerous journeys; hence, both a racial and a patriarchal divide are created. (86). An explorer's point of view is of importance in the sense that his own experiences, which would eventually become part of the discourse on a certain group, would play a very important role in cultivating notions and opinions that could remain deeply ingrained in the collective conscious afterwards. For the explorer is an "Adam-like figure", arranging everything he

sees and experiences as he desires, giving significance to the remote, the unknown and the chaos in general (86). At the same time, mythic figures of literature are likened to the explorer in an interesting way: both begin the journey from a certain geographical place that is considered to be a stronghold of culture and tradition and through this journey they find themselves in distant and exotic lands wholly alien to their homeland (86). This journey can only be important and “heroic” if both the mythic figure and the explorer have gone through and overcome the challenges found in the alien world, thus reconfirming their initial moral vision and keeping their cultural ideals intact, ultimately both strengthening and affirming their personality (86). Lord Byron fits this mold perfectly as in his works he provides us with information about both the Occident and the Orient and through it he shapes the views of the western subject in a particular way. At the same time however, Byron assumes a different stance regarding the Orient: some of the pre-existing narrative on Orientalism is confirmed in his work, while some is subverted.

Before moving to Byron’s journey, the historical status quo of the time should be explained. The historical reality of the time dictated that the Orient was mostly under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, which was viewed as particularly violent, reveling in having conquered and reduced the opposition to rubble, thus being notorious as an empire that “lived for war” (Goffman 1). Following the failure of the Crusades in the medieval times to purge Islam as well as the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the widespread belief was that the wars were dictated by religion, with political and imperialist views being secondary. The fall of Constantinople reinforced these traditional beliefs and the conflict between Orient and Occident was deemed a “holy war” (Inalcik 5-7). Europe was unable to fight back, a fact that led to the belief that the “Other” was a threat. Indeed, it has been suggested that “for much of the fifteenth century... the Europeans had been relatively inconsequential on the world stage. Indeed, they were unable to prevent the advance of the Ottomans into the Balkans, a process that led in 1453 to the dramatic fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire” (Black 56). It is not an exaggeration to claim that European feelings were not only of distrust, but also of fear, since “until the end of the seventeenth century the Ottoman peril lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole Christian civilization a constant danger” (Goffman 5).

Nevertheless, in these times of uncertainty, the idea of an adventure to the Orient appears for the first time, being viewed as some kind of game, since the travels were based on “wager upon a journey in which the traveler laid out a stake to be repaid at an agreed rate of multiplication if he returned safely having met a particular set of conditions” (Parr 350). Journeys to the East were considered a certain “privilege”, undertaken by the social elite, as the main participants, apart from literary figures included “ambassadors, aristocrats, merchants... because travel required a certain wealth and was conducted on the grounds that “gentlemen have reason to forbear it” (353). This gave a certain prestige to such endeavors. At the beginning of the 18th century, the term “Grand Tour” was coined, and was practiced by “a picked class... with their aristocratic temper, their wealth and their insular characteristics. The Grand Tour was not merely a pleasurable activity, but an indispensable form of education” (Mead 2). It is not an accident that during the years of the consolidation of the travels to the East, the predominant narrative underwent a shift, as “the historical animosity between Christian Occident and Muslim Orient gradually changed, as the Ottoman threat grew continuously less threatening, into a fascinated distrust instead. And it was precisely this shift in attitude that brought about the political circumstances that the literary fabrication of and fascination with the Orient became invaluable to the Western imagination” (Kabbani 138). The more the Orient fell under the control of the European powers, the more sublimated it became in the arts (138). The Grand Tour was important in the formation of the Orient as a place of danger, but also of opportunity and romance in the Western literary canon. This view of the importance of these travels was reinforced even further in the early 19th century both prior to and following the Napoleonic Wars and Byron advocated it.

Within the context of the British tradition of the early 19th century, Byron began his own journey to the East, together with his close friend John Cam Hobhouse, the Baron of Broughton, in 1809. The voyage lasted two years, during which they visited Greece, Albania and Turkey, experiences which eventually became part of the second Canto of the *Pilgrimage*. This journey was not simply about experiencing the Orient, rather it signified an attempt to connect with the ancient Greek past, as interest in the occupied country had shifted from purely academic to a material one (Grammatikos 67). It was at this

time that admiration of Greeks and antiquity had reached a status of imitation of the morality and the formal elements of ancient discourse, including the way of life, yet a general view of primitivism that still permeated Greece was common as well (67). Hence, the aim of the journey was two-fold. On the one hand, it provided the opportunity to connect with the distant past, on the other it was a chance to learn more about both the Orient in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular (67). The *Pilgrimage*, which alludes to extensive accounts and descriptions of the Orient, along with some common elements including the visit to Ali Pasha's castle in the second Canto can be considered as, at least partly, an autobiographical work.

3.2 Analysis of Byron's Works

Having established the significance of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* as a work that showcases Byron's experiences with regard to travelling around Europe and the Orient, it is time to focus on the second Canto, as it is the one in which ideas of Orientalism and Philhellenism are the most obvious. First of all, Byron (through Harold) recognizes the downfall of the ancient Greek civilization, wondering what had happened to the glorious antiquity and its men, through an invocation to the goddess Athena, who used to symbolize both wisdom and war, in these particular verses: "Ancient of days! August Athena! Where, / Where are thy men of might? Thy grand in soul? / Gone—glimmering through the dream of things that were..." (2, II, 10-12). The narrator also recognizes that these men were of excellent character, well-versed in many aspects of life, including the arts, knowledge and war ("The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole" 16). Clearly, the Greeks are held in particularly high regard, yet a sense of loss and melancholy prevails, as their deeds acquire a sense of legend in the early years of the 19th century, "a schoolboy's tale" (15). Even though this was the first civilization to begin towards the path of glory, the ancient Greek magnificence is "sought in vain...dim with the mist of years" (17-18) and the modern Greek subjects are but a shadow of their ancestors, having lost their power and autonomy, an obvious reference to the centuries-long occupation of Greece by the Ottoman Empire, an Oriental nation. The occupation is mentioned more explicitly in the following stanza, with Greece

being “a nation’s sepulchre” (III, 21) and with the old pantheon being replaced by Mahomet’s Islam, as even the celebrated deities of old must give way to the new ones to take over (23-14). There also seems to be an idea that the Greeks are suffering under the Ottoman yoke and this occupation is a great injustice to the natural order of things. Yet, at the same time, the Western nations do not attempt to rectify the situation, as Harold mentions that the “Pict”, the British subject, only visits Greece to steal what has not been already violently taken, in other words to “rive”. At the same time, Athena’s statue remains along with other statues and monuments, which are displaced, as the Greeks are too weak to guard them properly (XII, 100, 105-6). This is a reference to the Scottish lord Elgin, who had arranged for the marbles of Parthenon to be transferred to England. The verse’s significance is based on the fact that while Greece had long been celebrated as a Western nation, there was opportunistic injustice committed against its people and their cultural heritage as monuments of a more oriental country in comparison to those of Western Europe had been brought to England for the pleasure of the Occidental individual. Apart from separating Greece from the rest of Western Europe and considering it as more “liminal”, namely as partaking of both the Occident and the Orient, such acts also represent an underlying issue, a possible hypocrisy within the Philhellenic movement; despite the admiration for the ancient Greek civilization, advantage is taken of it by disrespecting its culture through the aforementioned act of appropriation. In other words, the words of the admirers of Greece do not match their actions. The narrator goes as far as to explain that this injustice does far more to hurt Greece than the Ottomans themselves, since the latter had left the monuments untouched throughout the occupation, while, at the same time, it was the Europeans that were looting them. In other words, it is only after this that “the weight of the Despot’s chains” is felt (108), following the “defaced walls, the mouldering shrines removed by British hands, never to be restored” (XV 130-32). In short, the West’s view of Greece was ambivalent, to say the least, its actions not quite aligning with proper feelings of admiration and adoration. At the same time, despite an apparent decadence, Greece was still fair and great (LXIII 693) and there was still a chance of rebirth, as Harold begs Greece to rise up and get rid of its shame, which is the country’s occupation (LXVII 728).

Throughout the Canto, there also is the notion that the land is wild and inhospitable. This is more obvious once the narrator reaches Albania and begins to describe the country. He mentions that it is “savage”, but new and exciting nonetheless (XLIII 385), inhabited by wolves, by eagles ready to strike at any moment as they keep whetting their beak, by beasts of prey and even by wild men; all of them in a region where nature is unfriendly (XLII 376-8). Harold’s desire to explore the land despite the dangers involved in doing so and the subsequent thrill he feels hearkens back to the idea of the natural and unpredictable/wild lands of the Orient that exist for the aim of pleasure and for the sake of adventure, so as to be enjoyed by the Occidental traveler, while at the same time that landscape impacts the psyche of its inhabitants, rendering them savage, as opposed to the industrial nature of Britain. Yet, it is a place of wonder, as well as exotic, highly different to the narrator’s homeland. These verses imply that the grand tours undertaken by western Europeans were for pleasure and not about being informed and becoming knowledgeable of the Orient. The Balkan landscape also falls in this category, as it is a liminal space, a “frontier” of sorts, both familiar and alien. However, despite the apparent wilderness of the Greek lands at the time, the narrator still exalts their beauty, juxtaposing the wild crags to the blue skies, the beautiful olive trees and the verdant meadows (LXXXVII 819-20) and concluding that the land is a “Haunted, holy ground/ No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould/ But one vast realm of wonder spreads around” (LXXXVIII 828-30). The beauty of the Orient is also described in a similar fashion in *The Bride of Abydos*: “Know ye land of the cedar and vine?/ Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine?/ Tis the clime of the East, tis the land of the sun (1-11). While Byron was one of those visiting the land of Greece to experience adventure, he seems to have developed genuine affection for it, expressing his feelings in verse. While in Albania, Harold also mentions visiting the ruler of the land (Ali Pascha), who is portrayed as an individual of “dread command, lawless law, with a bloody hand, who sways a nation, terrible and bold” (XLVII 417-19). Apart from being an autobiographical element that Byron has added to the *Pilgrimage*, the verses show that the Ottoman rulers reigned through fear and that they constituted tyrannical figures, further showing that the East was dangerous and its people more easily led to violence as opposed to the West. In fact, Ali Pascha has been

viewed as “a paradigm of Turkish cruelty and rapacity, the quintessence of barbarism, an Antichrist” (Fleming 3). The Pascha still constituted an Oriental ruler, due to the widespread belief of the Occident at the time that Greece in particular and the Balkans in general, constituted a geographic, cultural and economic bridge between East and West; with the latter using the term “Orient” to refer not to the Far or Middle East, but rather the Balkans, an otherwise European territory (5). At the same time, ironically, the ruler’s cruelty proved to be a catalyst in the cultivation of the European Philhellenic movement and the Oriental sensibilities of the West (5), his demeanor and exactions a perfect mirror of what the typical Turkish subject was all about- surely an overgeneralization, yet one that played a major historical role in the years to come.

At the same time, Greece’s liminality is also obvious in the poem’s descriptions of its inhabitants. The narrative persona notes that “The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian and the Moore freely mingle with each other” (LVII, 510) and even mentions the Ramadan, a popular Muslim celebration taking place in the Greek lands (LX 532). Throughout the years, there have Western views of the Greek subject being of mixed origins, even though he is a pure descendant of the ancient Greeks, an idea that will be explored later, which does not escape the narrator’s attention. While there seems to be no animosity among the various peoples, there exist individuals who hold no agency, in this case being women. Their voice is never heard, they are guarded and veiled and yield to a single male figure (LXI 541-3). The implication seems to be that, unlike the situation in the West, certain individuals hold no freedom, yet at the same time, no hatred occurs between the followers of different religions and races. This image of peace could appear as shocking to the Europeans, who had been conditioned to expect war among the diverse populace of the Near East, due to differences in religion and values. At the same time though, it informs them that freedom is not present, since women appear without agency, both confirming to and discrediting certain notions of the Orient. The citizens also appear “liminal” as a result: They are fierce- that is the way a European would expect easterners to be- but they do not lack virtues such as maturity, friendship, valor and gratitude (LXV 577-85), undermining, in this way, the Orientalist narratives of the time.

This image of communal living and of peace is set in juxtaposition with the people the reader encounters in *The Turkish Tales*.

As opposed to the idea of relative unity and the general sense of purpose examined in the *Pilgrimage*, the *Tales* are concerned with the ideas of “war” and “fragmentation”, but they also present some potentially anti-orientalist sentiments. The Ottoman controlled the Balkan peninsula, a replica of the actual tales, and this peninsula has been viewed as a place of “fragmentation”, a mixture of people living together with huge differences from one another, in a state of permanent disconnection and of essentialist and dangerous gaps between peoples and locals that can never be fully closed, a place where hostility is, more often than not, exhibited (Green 128).. The fragmentation/liminality of the place leads its human subjects to suffer either because of their own psyche or as a results of the actions of others. Examples of this idea can be encountered throughout the *Tales*. For example, in *The Giaour*, an instance of xenophobia instead of unity is presented when the fisherman, horrified that the titular character is present in religious festivities, states that the glimmering of the mosque and its crescent as well as the peal of the bells are proof of the Muslim’s zeal (222-28). Similarly, Leila and her lover, the giaour, are hated by the majority of people , since she is considered to be a rebel for her love, hence "her treachery deserved a grave" (462). She is but "the faithless slave that broke her bower, / And, worse than faithless, for a Giaour" (535-536), showing that there is great animosity between Christians and Muslims, but also mutual hatred and exclusion of the racial other. In fact, the very word “giaour” is a derogatory term for a Christian or a foreigner in the Near East (Gulderen-Krasniqi and Okumus 202). Thus, the giaour has become fragmented in this society and cannot co-exist with the rest, hence his rebellion against authority. The fact that he becomes a supernatural being serves this idea as well, and as the dichotomy between him and society increases, his otherworldliness signifies his non-belonging. Following this pattern, Byron’s view of the Orient and Greece seems to be bleak: “Twere long to tell, and sad to trace/ Each step from splendor to disgrace; Enough/ -no foreign foe could quell/ Thy soul til from itself it fell” (136-139). These verses indicate that Byron could not reconcile “with the fact of Greece being under Ottoman ruling, going further to criticizing them (the Greeks) for losing their power” (Gulderen-Krasniqi and Okumus 198). At the

same time, the Ottomans also appear as fragmented individuals, portrayed in a negative light, since they are unable to feel love, unlike the *giaour* who states, regarding love, that “their love can scarce deserve the name/ But mine was like the lava flood” (1000-1001). Similarly, the following tale, *The Bride of Abydos* also presents an individual that is fragmented as a result of tyranny. Selim is confined by his cruel stepfather, becoming an “unmanned” subject:

“What could I be? – Proscribed at home,
 Denied the courser and the spear –
 Though it unmanned me, still had cheered –
 To Brusa’s walls for safety sent,
 Beneath inaction’s sluggish yoke,
 (Canto 2, st.18, 803-22)

War and the fight against tyranny are also presented in this particular Canto. While Selim does indeed fight so that he can reunite with Zuleika, his love, he also rebels because he is essentially a slave, fighting against a cruel and uncaring master that has robbed him of his masculinity. It is very interesting that a Turk is chosen to represent this idea; the readers of the poem would certainly expect an individual from a different ethnic group instead; a member of a nation enslaved by the Ottoman Empire. The message seems to be that tyranny affects everyone. In this sense, the tale presents a humanist, even anti-racist idea. However, the fact that the two lovers are half-siblings can be read as an allusion to Byron’s life, specifically his erotic love for his half-sister Augusta Leigh (Gulderen-Krasniqi and Okumus 206) and society’s condemnation of it. Byron takes a forbidden act, a taboo from his own experiences, and Orientalizes it in the poem, removing it geographically from his own land and assigning it to the East, as an example of decadence.

Similarly, Lara, the titular nobleman, after returning from his trip to the East, he stays aloof and keeps a distance from his compatriots. After being accused of having committed murder, he takes up arms, rises in revolt and dies, while his scribe, Kaled, stays forever at the site of his passing away, and is subsequently revealed to be a woman he loved and brought from the East. While the poem otherwise contains few accounts of the East, the fragmentation that

the Orient has caused on both Lara and Kaled is obvious. The former is described in his interactions with other people in the following manner:

He mingled with the magnates of his land;
 But still he only saw, and did not share
 The common pleasure or the general care;
 Repell'd approach, and showed him still alone;
 (Lara, A Tale, Canto 1, st. VII)

Despite coming from the Orient, Kaled is presented as not belonging to either society, having abandoned her homeland and not mingling with Westerners. Interestingly, “Kaled’s unique behavior of loyalty introduced to the western world the value of devotion that can rarely be expected from a modern European woman of Byron’s age.” (Gulderen-Krasniqi and Okumus 209). This constitutes an attempt in the poem to showcase that Eastern women are more subservient than Western ones as well as more loyal, epitomized through Kaled’s refusal to abandon Lara’s gravesite. This exaltation of Eastern women is problematic, as it implies fundamental differences between the peoples of East and West.

Finally, in the *Siege of Corinth*, Alp is also eager to rebel against his country, Venice, which is at war in the land of Greece against the Ottoman Empire, due to having experienced unrequited love and believing that he has been irreparably wronged. Alp is, first of all, all alone even on the Muslim side, not being a homogenous part of either host. The following verses display this perfectly:

He stood alone – a renegade
 Against the country he betrayed.
 He stood alone amidst his band,
 Without a trusted heart or hand;
 They followed him, for he was brave,
 They crouched to him, for he had skill
 But still his Christian origin
 With them was little less than sin.

They envied even the faithless fame
 He earned beneath a Moslem name
 (12. 261-272)

While Alp is accepted by the Muslims, he fails to integrate with them, nor does he forge any bonds of friendship. In fact, his acceptance within the Muslim ranks does not really materialize, as he is valued solely for his skill in combat. The dichotomy between Islam and Christianity, European and Oriental, sets him, similarly to the aforementioned characters of the rest of the tales, in a liminal position, similar to the one that Greece occupies both in the collective consciousness of the West and in Byron's poems.

War seems to be a common theme in portraying the way that East and West interact with each other, with catastrophic consequences for all parties involved. In the *Tales*, it seems that the differences between individuals cannot be bridged, hence both sides suffer. However, claiming that the oriental subjects are solely responsible for such outcomes would be a hasty conclusion. After all, they still experience complex feelings and display determination similar to the Europeans. There is no definite answer to the question of whether the tales promote anti-orientalism or not, as the burden seems to lie merely on the individual. Similarly, war can occur for a noble cause, but also for more selfish reasons. For example, the giaour, Conrad, and Selim fight against specific individuals they view as tyrannical, while Lara and Alp organize armies and fight against their country. Byron's images of war and the way it is portrayed have already been noted through the descriptions of the European Napoleonic wars in the *Pilgrimage*. Rather than the wars of Europe however, the ones described in the *Tales* take place in the Balkan region and the Near East, as Byron moves away from the issues of the West and focuses on the Orient. Byron's interest in the Greek cause and his exile from his own country, to which he did not return until his death had taken place may have influenced this change in his stance. Byron appears both knowledgeable in contemporary issues of war, identity and nationalism, and disillusioned, without though losing his sense of idealism. Despite his own experiences, it would be a pitfall to categorize his works as strictly autobiographical or use them as a historical source for the state of the world during the early decades of the 19th century; instead, they are meant

to showcase that tyranny is ever-present. For example, according to Drummond Bone:

“What may appear to the average Western European as personal themes of dislocation and unrequited love, are actually part of a world of violence and quasi-feudal authority which would be very recognizable to those who have lived through the Napoleonic wars and to whom the rhetoric of personal freedom and the reality of unlicensed tyranny were everyday issues”.
(15)

Similarly, a reader in the Balkans may be tempted to view the *Tales* through a present-day lens and to take the politics of the collection more seriously than a British reader, while ignoring the fact that they are not set in a perfectly recognizable present, as the descriptions of Greece and Turkey are, to a significant degree exotic and exaggerated (15). Similarly, the idea of war in the works of Byron concerns the personality and the choices of the characters, rather than the desire to create an account of how to view both the Western Europe and the Orient. Thus, despite the idealistic elements of his canonical work at large, war is never idealized as it leads to utter destruction, not only of the individual, but of his/her friends, relatives and lovers as well, as seen throughout the poems.

In any case, when it comes to the issue of depictions of the Orient, it should be mentioned that these individuals are not revolutionaries, as they do not believe in a high cause, instead they are driven by their personal desires. As a result, they fight for themselves and not for the Orient or the Occident. Neither side is preferred or blamed, both have virtues and faults. Furthermore, it is this fragmentation that leads to wars in the first place, not only between subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but also of Europe and Asia. In fact, when it comes to *The Giaour*, it has been suggested that the story is, at its core, one of conflict between the East and the West, which is symbolized by the confrontation between the Giaour and Hassan (Alber 115). While the Turkish Hassan represents the oriental despotism of the Ottoman Empire, the Venetian Giaour stands for Western imperialist politics or Tory (British) foreign policy (115). Likewise, the release from suffering that cannot even be found through death, as the Giaour returns in the form of a vampire (another idea with Orientalist connotations), constitutes a form of irony, since the persona that represents

Western imperialism and colonialism cannot be laid to rest. Byron continues to present the extreme dichotomy between the two sides in *Lara*, a poem that expresses the Western fear of being turned into an Orientalist (120), with the values of the East symbolically defeated through Lara's death. The poet continues to do so in *The Siege of Corinth*, by not only presenting both sides as equally bloodthirsty and destructive in the ensuing war, but also as equally despotic, the Venetians being displayed as such through their denial of Alp's wish (123). The fact that the Near East is used to portray the downfall of Byron's heroes could be considered as anti-orientalist in a sense, as it is in this region where moral decay occurs. However, by considering the aforementioned interpretation, the story shows that Western imperialists can be as destructive as Oriental despots; thus the poem critiques at the same time both Eastern and Western forms of tyranny (115). Even though it may seem that Byron has adopted an anti-Oriental stance, nevertheless, he showcases that despite their differences, both sides have much in common and that the West may be equally responsible for the fragmentation of the Balkan region due to its imperialist and colonialist politics. Byron, being a savvy analyst of the sociopolitical status quo, he is able to present this idea perfectly in his stories. Specifically, Byron's critique is aimed against both the Occident and the Orient, based as it is on his own experiences of the Grand Tour. His tales are supposed to be tales of adventure first and foremost, not political or social manifestos, while at the same time they are somewhat realistic (Gulderen-Krasniqi and Okumus 212). Therefore, some potentially problematic accounts, such as misogyny in *The Giaour* and *Lara*, the violence of the easterners in *The Siege of Corinth* and *The Bride of Abydos* are counterbalanced by Western individuals that are equal to, or in some cases, even worse than the oriental subjects.

3.3 The case with Shelley and the Comparison to Byron

Percy Bysshe Shelley, similarly to Lord Byron, was a highly idealistic writer and his two works that will be examined are the verse drama *Hellas* and the lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound*. Just like Lord Byron, on the surface he seems to adopt traits of extreme philhellenism and anti-orient propaganda. *Hellas* was written in 1822 as, at least partly, a celebration of the Greek war of

Independence and a critique of the failure of the Ottoman Empire to put an end to the “righteous” Greek cause and the formation of the Modern Greek state. Shelley was a major proponent of philhellenism, believing that “we are all Greeks” as he claims in the prologue of the work. In a way, *Hellas* fuses the political element with the ideal and this can be traced in the play’s final lines, delivered by the semichorus and the chorus, where Greece’s freedom is likened to the idea of paradise on Earth:

The world’s great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.
 Another Athens shall arise,

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 The world is weary of the past.
 (Hellas, 51-53)

Clearly, the poet advocates the disillusion of the current empires, especially the Ottoman, simply because it contradicts the idea of freedom due to its enslavement of the Greek descendants. The political commentary continues with the idea that the “new Athens”, representing the Greek nation, will rise in power and bring forth a new golden age of humanity through its restoration to its past glory, with death, war and decadence disappearing from the world, becoming things of the past. It can be claimed that the new reality that Shelley advocates is, essentially, a utopic one, and the text can be read as a political manifesto. The struggle for freedom is not a notion limited exclusively to Greek nationalism, as it concerns the future of the entire human race. This “perfect” state of being can only be achieved by painful struggle through warfare as the Greeks do in *Hellas*, but love and hope are also required for such a purpose. *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley’s lyrical drama features the monster Demogorgon that expresses a similar idea in the final lines of the text:

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
 These are the seals of that most firm assurance
 An empire o'er the disentangled doom.
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
 To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.
 (Act IV, 554-578)

Like Byron, Shelley seems to idealize positive emotions, such as joy, love and gentleness, while also expressing the idea that fighting is necessary to achieve a utopia. Furthermore, unlike Byron who states that love exists in the East, Shelley in *Hellas* presents the sultan and his subjects as fearless and not believing that they would lose their power and status, and portrays their rule as unpopular among the various peoples they had conquered, since their subjects are willing to rebel, one after another, when they realize that the empire is weak and on the verge of collapsing. The imperial powers are not employing arcane powers to help themselves, but even Ahasuerus, the Jewish magician, cannot offer help to Mahmud. The eventual Greek victory is, therefore, inevitable. The choice of employing a chorus alludes to the practices of ancient Greek drama and it plays an important role in this particular work, as the focus on the women that comprise it along with their joy in the new rising of Greece, signify the new dawn of humanity and the crucial role that Greek culture will play in achieving it. Moreover, it shows that the dawning of the New Greek empire is important not for the current ruling powers of the world, but because the common folk will live in peace and prosperity, showing love and appreciation to each other. In that sense, the specific text could be considered “anti-historical” or, in other words, both utopic and subversive, progressive to a significant extent, providing support not only to the 1821 Greek insurgency, but also to a variety of European states, seemingly unrelated to the conflict at hand, such as Naples (Italy was comprised of various states at the time) and Spain, while opposing the institution of the Holy Alliance that was indifferent at best or held an

outright hostile view at worst towards European revolutions in general; and like any “good” piece of revolutionary “propaganda”, Shelley’s text associates the progressive movement with the utopian evolution of humanity in general (Kipperman 148). While indeed aiming to generate sympathy for the Greek plight through his works, Shelley and the rest of the Romantic philhellenes, including Byron, did not attempt to do so in the name of nationalism, or in the name of Christianity, or even democracy, but rather in the “cause of a probably unending historical struggle of constant reform, in which institutions have yet to accept the ideals of liberty presented by philosophers and poets” (Cox 77). This subversive view, apart from Kipperman as seen earlier, is also presented by a number of other critics, including Simos Zeniou, who points out that Shelley’s philhellenism is akin to political liberalism (72). As he points out, in the past the poet had also an image of the lands settled by more liberal folk, not necessarily Greeks (75). The victory of the Greeks in the text does not only concern the formation of their own nation, it is also important for the wider European continent, as there is an invocation towards the people of England, France, Austria and Russia to also seize power against their monarchs who rule (47). In short, the victory of the Greeks would very well prove to be the catalyst for the freedom of the entire European continent. Byron shares this idea with Shelley, as his works were not wholly about Greece and its struggles against the Ottoman Empire. The state of Europe, for example, is described in great detail throughout *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, by focusing on the theme of war and the barbaric practices that the narrative persona witnesses in the Iberian Peninsula in the first Cantos. Moreover, in the notes of *Lara, A Tale*, Byron mentions that even though the name may conjure Spanish connotations to the reader, the character was not meant to represent this particular country; instead his place of origin is left deliberately ambiguous, as he is meant to represent the entire Europe. Thus, the term “serf” that is employed, even though it is most commonly used when referring to Spanish subjects according to the poet, is here used to designate the followers of fictitious war leaders. In fact, the western European powers are seemingly characterized by one common element, namely that of despotism. This has resulted in a decay of morality in the entire European continent, which is present in the works of both and this is symbolized by the anti-revolution status quo in the continent that was established by the great

powers. Byron specifically viewed Napoleon as a revolutionary figure that opposed the great monarchies of Europe and his fall as a regrettable event that also halted the spirit of the revolutionary movements while he enunciated the belief that the Congress of the Holy Alliance was a discreditation of freedom (Diakonova 51-2). Similarly, Shelley's distaste for the Holy Alliance was not unknown; after all, the publisher of the poem himself deleted a radical attack that the poet had included towards the institution in the preface and the play was dedicated to Prince Mavrocordato, whom the Shelleys knew personally, the cousin of Ypsilanti, himself being the initiator of the Greek revolution (Kipperman 150-51). With both of the poets being staunch supporters of change and revolution, their stance towards the subject is only natural. In short, both Byron and Shelley were supporters of freedom and expressed this idea through a philhellenic lens.

On the other hand, Prometheus in the poem takes a more neutral stance, portraying Greece as a liminal space. In the poem, Zeus is presented as a tyrannical ruler, responsible for the chaining of Prometheus on Mount Caucasus, torturing him for millennia onwards. At the same time, Zeus appears fearful of the future. He is afraid that his reign will come to an end and promises the captive Titan that he would be freed if he shares the secret of his downfall, so that he could avoid his destiny. Like a true revolutionary, Prometheus is not tempted and does not do so, bringing about Zeus' rage and he promptly shows his anger and promises even worse retribution against the Titan. In a scene where Shelley's idealism is evident, the Demogorgon is eventually responsible for the fall of Zeus, bringing forth an age of freedom, not only for humanity in general, but also for Prometheus himself. Just before his inevitable fall, Zeus is portrayed as a coward like Mahmud from Hellas, pleading for mercy (Act 3, Scene 1, 65). There is apparently a common theme in these two works by Shelley which suggests that tyrants are also cowardly persons. However, just like Mahmud, Zeus seems to accept his destiny with a heavy heart, choosing to take Demogorgon down with him to the abyss (70-1). According to Shelley, it is inevitable that tyranny will eventually fall and will be replaced by freedom and happiness. In the following scene, the Ocean expresses the idea that the new world dawning will be different:

Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea
 Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,
 Round many-peopled continents, and round
 Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
 And desolation, and the mingled voice
 Of slavery and command; but by the light
 Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odors,
 And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
 That sweetest music, such as spirits love
 (Act 3, Scene 2, 18-34)

Just like in *Hellas*, the downfall of a tyrannical figure is all it takes for the world to enter a new golden age. The spirit of the hour also describes the change that has occurred in the world in the verses “Soon as the hour has ceased whose thunder filled/ The abysses of the sky and the wide earth/ There was a change; the impalpable thin air/ And the all-circling sunlight were transformed/ As if the sense of love, dissolved in them” (Act 3, Scene 4, 98-102). Jupiter’s fall resulted in the abolition of despotism and slavery throughout the world. The new state of humanity is described by the spirit in the final verses of the act:

All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;
 The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
 Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
 Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
 Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
 Over himself; just, gentle, wise; but man
 Passionless--no, yet free from guilt or pain...
 (Act 3, Scene 4, 192-198)

The above verses constitute the most characteristic example of Shelley’s political and social ideology. In his ideal world humanity no longer acts on falsehood; instead, it shows respect for other individuals. With the

abolition of tyranny, only happiness remains. By presenting a Greek figure as a tyrant, Shelley takes a step back from his habit of constantly idealizing Greece. The subversive elements of the poem stand in the naming of the characters and the roles they fulfill: the Orient is portrayed in a positive manner, where love can exist, Asia loves and is loved by Prometheus, "Asia's" name signifying the Orient. In contrast to the play, Greece can also be under tyrannical regime, revealing both its liminality and the fact that the Occident can be violent too.

4. Philhellenism and Greece

“We are all Greeks”, writes Shelley in the preface to *Hellas*. He maintains that the Western “laws, literature, religion and the arts have their roots in Greece” and that “the modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to humankind, and he (the modern Greek subject) inherits much of their sensibility, the rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm and their courage” (viii-ix). The above excerpt was written following the declaration of the Greek War of Independence and Shelley expresses his approval of this significant historical event. Regarding the Romantic movement as a whole, philhellenism was a trend primarily concerned with the period of Greek greatness that could be traced in the 5th century BC, that is, the era following the conclusion of the Persian wars and the preoccupation of the glorious war heroes with culture and art (Roessel 27), and was characterized by the convergence of the aesthetic, the political and the educational under the banner of “Romantic nationalism” (Findley 281). The attempt to forge a new political and imaginative allegiance to Greece was seen throughout Europe at the time of Shelley and Byron, with the aim of creating a new status quo that would not only recognize the achievements of classical Greece and revere them to the extent that the movement’s proponents felt that they deserved, but also to assist in the formation of a sovereign nation (281). These individuals, who were interested in the idea of freedom first and foremost, saw Greece as a “powerful emblem of the costs of colonization and political domination, and an important opportunity to allegorize their own situation.” In fact, “such allegories, more or less elaborate, abound in Romantic art and scholarship and reveal much about the empathy, intelligence, determination of a new kind of discourse which put into currency a Romantic version of the Greek ideal and the Greek actuality” (281). Both Shelley and Byron, among others, have played a very important role in inciting public awareness of the significance of the events occurring in Greece during the early parts of the third decade of the century, with Shelley specifically re-appropriating the classical past in the name of freedom and the individuals’ ability to determine their own futures (281). *Hellas*, most of all,

constitutes an impressive attempt to connect the past and the present, not only in a poetic sense, but also in a political and philosophical one, in order to challenge hegemonic powers by resisting oppression (281). As a result, the movement of philhellenism enjoyed huge support in both academic and political circles. However, such supportive statements were not the only ideology expressed among the populace of Europe at large. For example, the historian William St. Claire adopted an entirely different stance on the matter, baffled as he was by how such ideas could be popular in the first place, considering them both wrong and preposterous. He claimed that they reflected little knowledge of the historical reality of the Near East in general, since the bands of criminals and the marauding tribes formed by those “descendants of Greeks” were not being taken into account and pointed out the lack of interest in organized city-states, while he concluded that, at least when it came to their practices, they were no different from the Turks themselves (Kipperman 148). Similarly, according to Grammatikos, the idealized image of Greece has been referred to, at the time, as a “pale cold shade” and thoughts of revolution constituted a provocative suggestion (28-30). The belief that philhellenism was also the de facto choice for British Imperial arms was not unheard of (Kipperman 151). After all, philhellenism as an ideology was intrinsically nationalistic, and the idea of a new nation emerging from a collapsed empire was shocking in the period of the Holy Alliance, as Turkey was still a powerful nation and the Greeks were scattered tribes (151). Most crucially so, a possible Greek victory could potentially inspire similar revolutionary movements throughout the European continent. In a sense, *Hellas* may be considered “historically myopic” and pure propaganda, deluded by the poet’s own brand of philhellenism, yet it is a radical piece of literature opposing the tyrannical practices of Ottoman imperialism, such as those performed by Mahmud who acts as a stand-in for all sultans, as well as extremely progressive for its time, showing support for the downtrodden people (148). Yet, the call in the text itself, to form a brand new Greek state that will lead the entire world towards salvation seems completely paradoxical too, since the empire that is about to fall will be replaced by another, an important contradiction in the poet’s political and social ideology. It has been suggested that the British Romantic canon in general was highly naïve in terms of political ideology, and all the more so when it comes to the formation of the

Greek Empire seen in *Hellas*; this is evident in the seemingly antithetical call for both freedom and a new empire at the same time. These particular contradictions seem to have been already observed by Shelley, according to Van Kooy, who notes that “Shelley’s drama also engages the idealism of Hellenism and reveals how it is undermined by its philosophical inconsistencies and by the violent conflicts that link it to imperialism. Shelley’s play contends against its own utopianism when that idealism sustains empire while at the same time it protests against the confining realities that constrain its vision” (Van Kooy 44). She also maintains that “with its (*Hellas*)” “display of newspaper erudition,” its “hot topicality,” and its concern with “imperialism”, “religious mythos”, the “geo-politics of revolution”, and the “cultural formations that both inhibit and make way for historical transformations”, *Hellas* belongs to a dramatic tradition that includes improvisations; it also inhabits the same theatrical world as other plays that dealt with the relevant issues of slavery and empire” (Van Kooy 45-6). These particular improvisations, as well as the play’s desire to be similar to the ancient plays of classical Greece in order to present very specific ideas on culture and policy further fuel these contradictions. The world that the ancient Greeks inhabited is, after all, vastly different from the one of Shelley’s time, however the poet maintains that the solution to humanity’s problem is universal and that it can be found in those texts, or similar ones. Yet, according to Shelley, who explains this so-called “naivety” in the prologue of *Prometheus Unbound*, the purpose was rather simple, namely “to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of readers of poetry with moral excellence and beautiful idealism” as hope, love and trust seem to be abandoned in real life, either consciously or unconsciously, leading people to unhappiness. Shelley’s originality and his grand vision have led him to take a huge step forward in order to dramatize his vision. Even though his ideas may have appeared unrealistic or unattainable among his readers, yet the values he supported were universal and he had to obtain the readers’ trust, even at the cost of realism (Sperry 66), meaning that his grand vision for Greece could only be showcased through demonizing the Ottoman Empire. Mary, Shelley’s wife, maintained an interesting opinion about *Prometheus Unbound*, claiming that an important feature of Shelley’s works was his belief that the destiny of humanity was not an inherent evil but the result of some sort of accident that had to be

expelled, an idea also present in Christian dogma. If humanity had enough will and the desire to change for the better, then that would have been more than enough to rid the world of evil (66). This may appear as an oversimplification that contradicts the complex nature of humanity, but there is an important element of truth in the statement, the fact that all people, regardless of their differences, whatever they might have been, have the potential in them for both good and evil (66). Society and culture may, therefore, hinder or help individuals in their desire to do good and the fault of evil lies to a large extent in social institutions, not in individual human subjects (66). However, the inherent nature of an individual is still important, as it derives from within and presupposes the denial of love and trust; evil is the “repudiation of man of all that is best in his true nature” (67). A hegemony of pure fear, cynicism and self-interest that transcends the boundaries of time and reflects through the institutions was blamed for the state of humanity, for the lack of love and trust and for the failure of the humans to reach their ultimate potential, with history becoming an endless circle of perpetual errors. If a change were to ever take place, then it would start from a realization of the state of the world and would spread like a chain-reaction, ending this vicious cycle once and for all, culminating in a complete and idealistic transformation of the world which can be achieved in real life (therefore it is in no way inevitable), with humanity itself wondering why it had never reached this state of being to begin with (67-8). These ideas are expressed perfectly in both of Shelley’s aforementioned works, considering their conclusion of the ultimate triumph of good and the eradication of evil. It seems that Shelley’s personal idea of philhellenism was fueled by this particular ideology: through the revival of the ancient Greek spirit- the ancient Greeks being a prime example of espousing these universal values, at least according to Shelley- the aforementioned chain-reaction would herald the new Golden Age of humanity throughout the world, the new empire that would be unlike the ones of history, both the ancient and the contemporary ones, including the despotic Ottoman Empire and the imperialistic nations of western Europe. Thus, strangely enough, Shelley’s anti-imperialism proposition substitutes an empire for another, a fact that constitutes an obvious contradiction.

Hence for Shelley, philhellenism was not only tied to the improvement of mankind, but also to the historical fight against tyranny. Kipperman showcases the latter when he claims that

“The significance of philhellenism was actually independent of the character of the Greek people and the reality of Levantine politics; in fact, it lay in the European appeal of classical tradition and oppressed Christianity, and, above all it acted as an outlet for energies compressed by the Conservative (Holy) Alliance. This outlet was welcome, as it drew attention away from the problems of the western European countries and presented them as problems of the eastern world, thus creating a convenient distance from issues that plagued the West. As many intellectuals had been brought up in classical education and were knowledgeable of ancient Greek culture, many felt sympathy for the cause, but it was also a chance for Quixotic adventures abroad. The philhellenic movement, as a result, manifested itself in different forms, not only as an ideology that philhellenes and romantics could support, but also as a form of zeal within anti-slavery groups”. (152)

When it came to Britain specifically, the stance on the Greek revolutionary movement was divided, as the politics of the time did not favor diplomatic and military intervention, and if the British Empire were to do so, then the Holy Alliance would fall from within, being betrayed by one of the nations that supported its founding in the first place. Moreover, British trade with the Turks would suffer, since the Ionian Islands were part of the British Empire and if the English were to support a Greek insurgency, then mercantile interests in the Levant would surely suffer (153). Furthermore, Turkey was a means of defense against another eastern empire, the Russian one, and a possible collapse of the Ottoman power could very well mean war with Russia; hence the British ambassador of Constantinople, Lord Strangford, urged the Greek surrender and suggested that Britain aid Turkey instead. Even as late as 1827, following the sea battle of Navarino, British reception of the Greek revolutionary movement was still mixed. On the one hand, the British crown apologized for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and the Egyptian allied fleet and King George IV lamented the event, while on the other, intellectuals and supporters of philhellenism proclaimed that the battle was a glorious victory (153). This mixed reception further solidified the philhellenic movement as

liberalism. Shelley and his contemporaries came to be viewed as “left-wing cultists”, overly obsessed with myth (153). The label of “overly-idealistic” did not appear in contemporary analysis of the Romantic writers. Even in the early decades of the 19th century, idealism was understood as a means to employ subversive ends, with Shelley being a prime example of this, as he constantly sought to undermine the sociopolitical status quo (158). Shelley’s “bright Hellas”, apart from a utopian idea, may be a flight from the present (158), nevertheless, the idealism is still important as it fuels the narrative of revolution; a perfect state of being has to be attainable. A similar notion is present in *Prometheus Unbound* as well, with the Demogorgon being a “borderline Romantic figure”, heralding a new age as well, one of a better future that does indeed take place, following the fall of Zeus (161). For the poet, history and ideality converge, and for his immediate readership, there would be no question of escapism, rather the sense of present would be intensified, with the British Empire having the choice of either supporting the Holy Alliance or interfering on behalf of Greece in the name of nascent nationalism, and there on, the chain-reaction of revolutions mentioned before would begin (165). This would be a catalyst for the end of tyranny. Shelley’s idealism is his own political agenda is evident first and foremost in the fact that like many of his contemporaries, he believed that philhellenism was tied to the battle for freedom, since the practical objective of the whole struggle could be simply summarized as the attempt towards freedom that would encompass the entire world, far beyond the narrow confines of separate nations.

Philhellenism though was employed not solely as a means of freedom from tyranny, but to better the individual from within. This is evident in Prometheus who, despite his torture for millennia by Zeus, he would learn to overcome his hatred and choose love readily when the chance to do so presented itself (Jung 96). The Romantic fascination with the figure of Prometheus was based on the belief that he was a symbol of enlightenment, a fighter against tyranny, a pro-republicanism figure, mirroring the beliefs of the era’s philhellenic supporters (Ferber 66). The Titan represents the moral perfection that Shelley idealized. It is due to his kindness- having bestowed the gift of fire to mankind, allowing it to develop civilization- that he suffers from tyrannical forces. He is a stand-in for humans in general, as his accusation against Jupiter

is the cry of humanity against cruel gods and rulers that demand blind obedience, while his inability to rest in his chains is akin to the restless spirit of humans that desire to live freely by deposing such cruel forces (Jung 98-9). Prometheus does not, in fact, hate Zeus. Doing so would have been a betrayal of his ideology, hence the answer provided by the Titan when asked if he hates Zeus is that he pities him instead. Moreover, by denying to reveal the secret regarding the fall of the Olympian, he is indeed responsible for his fall and for the advent of the new era (100). The spirit of humanity, in short, cannot be killed by tyranny, while the latter will not prevail against positive emotions, such as love and beauty. Just as Prometheus has been freed from Zeus, so can humanity escape the despotism enacted by tyrannical rulers in real life as well; similarly the freedom of humanity in real life is also guaranteed.

It goes without saying that for a large number of western Europeans, Greeks had been viewed as nothing more than savages, cunning slaves who would easily turn to genocide and piracy in order to take revenge on their oppressors, with even literature expressing the imperfection of the Greek subject as seen with the *giaour* in Byron's work. Yet, this particular dislike towards Greeks at the time had been claimed to be the result of western Europeans projecting their own values on an eastern civilization, creating a mirror image of what they both liked and hated in themselves (Van Kooy 43). Interestingly enough, Van Kooy states that:

“The geo-politics and the imagery Shelley employs throughout *Hellas* align it with an Orientalist tradition; likewise, its liminal setting in Greece, between the expanding forces of European imperialism and the slowly floundering Ottoman Empire, locate it within a similar context. However, with the writing of *Hellas* as an adaptation of Aeschylus's *Persians*, Shelley looks back to the emergence of the monument-like philosophical and sociopolitical constructs during the Classical period and their reification within the aesthetic conventions of tragedy and Hellenism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Hellas* functions as a Janus figure, fixing its gaze on the East and the West as this conflict unfolds within the contemporary historical context and looking to the past and the future, attempting to imagine a future that is no longer subject to these dominant cultural configurations”. (46)

Prometheus Unbound is similar as a poem, since it also acts as a mirror image through its presentation of freedom in the East, love in Asia- the figure being a synecdoche for the east- and a tyrannical ruler of the West, similar to the ones of the European Empires. Despite Shelley's attempts to paint the Orient in a positive light, something unusual for his time, he still falls into stereotypes as "Greece represents a Hellenistic ideal, but it also embodies the darker realities of imperialism that lay just below the surface of Hellenism. He produces this dual focus by negating the cultural edifices of Eastern culture, Japan and China, in his final line, in the prologue to *Hellas*" (47), where he expresses his anti-oriental views. The important roles that these civilizations have played throughout history are seemingly ignored, a fact which may either be a personal choice on Shelley's behalf or it may betray an ignorance among western Europeans as regards the reality of the East, which could potentially contribute to the negative and distorted view of the Orient. The contradictions do not stop here, however, as Rome, the great civilization of the West, which was inspired by the ancient classical tradition of Greece, was the center of one of the greatest empires the world has ever known. As all of the western European empires of the early 19th century owe their cultural background to Rome, and by extension to Greece as well. Hence, "European Hellenism is one of the disturbing contradictions that undermine the idealized legacy associated with classical Greece and Rome. The relationship between Rome and Greece is not simply fraternal; rather, it is defined by the conflict and the destruction of war. The cultural treasures of Greece specifically are tied to the horrors of war, which in the first instance, established Greece's cultural hegemony over the Persians; in the second, Greece educated Rome and provided it with its first, Greek, spoils; and finally, the example of Greece allowed Rome to justify its continuous warfare with others as a means of "spread[ing] . . . illumination with her arms." (47). This line of reasoning renders the Europeans indistinguishable from the easterners, since they also spread their ideals through war. The above excerpt is interesting for a couple of reasons. First of all, the conflicts with nations of the Orient was not a peculiarity of the 19th century; in fact, such wars had already taken place multiple times in the past. Just like the Greeks, who were long-time enemies of the Persian Empire with which they had battled many times- the Persian Wars being the prime example, when the occupation of the Greek states

was averted thanks to the valiant heroism of the Athenians and the Spartans—similarly there was a great enemy in the East that was equally threatening, namely the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the distant past however, this enemy had managed to conquer Greece and, consequently, civilization had been suffering ever since. Moreover, there was still danger for the rest of the European nations, as this empire was still powerful and could potentially wage further wars on the continent. On the other hand, for many philhellenes, trade deals and alliances with Turkey ultimately meant that the Greek people would continue to suffer under slavery and tyranny and there were even phobias about the possible moral decay of the British, an idea that will be explored further in the following section. To many, the slavery of the Greeks was viewed as a perversity, a wrong that had to be made right through revolution and the timely intervention of the West. Another significant conclusion from the aforementioned excerpt is that the early views of the Orient managed to persevere through the Roman Empire, which held very similar beliefs on cultural matters to the Greeks, a fact which meant that such ideas had willingly or subconsciously been adopted by the western European powers, perpetuating a cycle that had been open for thousands of years. Essentially, this means that countries such as Britain and France in the early 19th century not only viewed the eastern world in exactly the same way as ancient Greece and Rome, but also that their practices were similar, despite the huge temporal gap of these civilizations. At the same time, philhellenism is tied, at least to an extent, to anti-oriental feelings, since it presupposes some sort of hatred towards Turkey to begin with. The fight for liberty that was supported through the philhellenic movement often conveniently ignored the desires of the rest of the citizens of the Ottoman Empire, including the Turks and the rest of the people of the Levant, being concerned as it was primarily with the plight of the Greek people. It is in this sense that the term “philhellenism” actually acquires some troubling dimensions and could even be considered “problematic”. A final paradox is that despite their hatred of the Ottoman Empire, the western powers by being apathetic and by distrusting the Greek Independent movement, they essentially sided with the former (at least initially, before they understood that there were advantages in supporting the creation of a Greek nation instead). More specifically, in spite of the aversion towards Turkey, the members of the Holy Alliance held that every

empire of the continent was expected to protect the others from nationalist movements. Notably, even the eastern European country of Russia did not opt to support the Greeks, despite being much closer geographically and sharing the orthodox Christian dogma with the populations of the occupied lands. Lastly, it seems that anti-orient ideas in the arts were not just a characteristic of the poets' times, rather they had appeared in the classical Greek canon beforehand. As already mentioned, with the status of the play *Hellas* as a "modern" version of the works of Aeschylus, the above stance continues to be perpetuated. An important difference though between the classical times and the Romantic era that has to be pointed out is that the ancient Greeks knew first hand just how terrible and destructive war could be, especially in the long run. On the other hand, the majority of the writers producing philhellenic discourse during the Romantic era, have never experienced war in their lifetime, having lived a sheltered, aristocratic life as the offspring of nobility and affluent individuals, thus a distorted view of reality is to be expected. Although many of them would undertake journeys throughout Europe, including Shelley who traveled to Italy, very few would ultimately visit the Near East, with Byron being one of the exceptions, the implication being that anti-orient and pro-Greek views were skewed and uninformed.

Meanwhile, Lord Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, saw Greece as not only a site of classical splendor, but also one of downtrodden past, present and of a problematic future. Thus, he was hesitant at first when it came to showing support for the Greek war of Independence, yet he expressed it in the early 1820s by opting to fight in Missolonghi, which was the culmination of his liberal beliefs transforming into political action. In fact, from that point on "Byron's letters, and the absence of any significant poetry, reveal an overwhelming dedication to what he called the 'Cause,' and a remarkably clear-sighted determination that the future for a reborn Greece must lie in a liberally constituted nation-state" (Beaton 2). In this way, Byron's last months in Greece, and his political contribution to the outcome of the Revolution, can be seen as the culmination of a defining quest for European Romanticism that lies at the root of Modernity as it has come to be understood since: to transform words into things, ideals into action (2). The success of this quest is demonstrated by the fact that as early as 1830, three decades before Italy and Germany, "modern"

Greece came to be recognized as the first of the newly constituted nation-states of Europe—thus establishing a precedent which continues to prevail throughout the continent, and indeed much of the world, today” (2). It seems that the advent of philhellenism and its establishment among the aristocracy of the western countries was a gradual process, only reaching its climax with the Greek War of independence in 1821. Byron’s canon, in a similar sense, becomes more supportive with the passage of time, mirroring the changing attitude and the steadily increasing popularity of the movement in Britain. Byron, in his travels to the Greek lands, he most probably expected to find an enslaved people that still displayed and reflected the ideals and the values of the distant past. Instead, he came face to face with simple, everyday people, no different from the ones that could be encountered everywhere else, yet at the same time, still worthy of splendor for their simplicity and profound character. Even though the glory of the ancient civilization had long faded by this point, nevertheless the inhabitants, not just the Greeks, but also the Turks, the Albanians and the Souliots were peoples of the highest moral character in his eyes (3). For the poet specifically, it appears that certain people are of no higher or lower “moral value” compared to others, certainly a revolutionary idea for his time. Thus, it is no wonder that initially the poet did not consider himself a philhellene. While he must have certainly been impressed by the patriotic character of many locals, he held serious doubt whether they could govern themselves at that point in time, revealing to his friend Hobhouse that his mind was not made up on the subject, but that he certainly had little patience with both extremes of the philhellenic spectrum, the detractors of the movement and the fanatic proponents equally. Similarly, in the early editions of the *Pilgrimage*, he argues that the Greeks will never form an independent nation and that may be a good thing, as such a regeneration of so important a civilization will surely mean that the rest of the countries in the world will be insignificant in comparison (3-4) / This view is in stark contrast to Shelley’s idea that the formation of a sovereign Greek state will lead humanity into utopia. Furthermore, Byron was even critical of the ancient Greeks, as he stated that the Greeks’ return to barbarism is not necessarily new, just a return to the ancient past (15). This means, essentially, that despite his caring for the Greek people, Byron’s stance on the subject was initially considerably more reserved than Shelley’s. In a way, this

also means that Byron had a more developed sense of history (8). Thus, it appears that philhellenism was rather fluid, with many different interpretations, as vague as orientalism, and its adherents did not form a cohesive whole.

Having examined Byron's views on the subject of Greece, his total change on the subject, his fight for the Greek cause even if it ultimately ended in his death, seems particularly surprising. Many theories have been developed to examine this radical shift, yet the answer continues to remain elusive. From personal accounts in his circle of acquaintances, he seems to have grown weary of his life of extravagance similar to that of Childe Harold, he started believing more in the revolutionary "cause" and acknowledged change in his character (8). However, it has been suggested that he chose the worse time to join the revolution, since by the mid-1820s, the progress of the insurgency was stalled significantly due to a successful counter-attack by the Turkish armed forces and a number of civil wars concurrently fought between opposing Greek factions (13). In that conflict there would have been little practical difference that his personal contribution could have made, at this or at any other stage of the war. But to the internal conflict between competing interests and models of what "liberty" might mean, and how it might be protected, Byron had something very definite to contribute (13). He quickly came to adopt three basic principles, and despite provocations and prevarications by those around him, and his own vagaries of temper, he never substantially wavered from them. The first was essentially a prerequisite for the other two: a free Greece must be a "centralized state with a constitutional government, in effect what today we would call a nation-state" (13). Second, "such a government, and only such a government, could secure and responsibly disburse the economic support from without that a successful revolution would require" (13); and, third, "to reach an accommodation through diplomacy with the Great Powers of the day, without which true independence would never be possible" (Beaton 13-4). Despite being a highly idealistic person like Shelley, Byron saw the issue of Greece more realistically than his fellow compatriot. The main difference lies in the idea of "freedom" and the role of the great powers. Firstly, Byron's suggested institution of government is far more typical and organized than Shelley's idealistic anarchy; second, rather than Greece bringing enlightenment and fundamentally changing the empires of the west, Byron understood that

alliances were necessary and change was not feasible at the time. Compared to the other philhellenes, he was a grounded individual, neither idealizing nor discrediting republicanism but being acutely aware that the organization of the institutions of the nascent state were of paramount importance. In short, he was ambitious, just not in a vain sense, as he realized that utopian solutions were impossible (14). In other words, philhellenism was a cause that required urgent action and despite its high message of prosperity, fighting against the Orient was a necessary sacrifice.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that both the philhellenic movement and the orient have been viewed with a certain degree of bias by Byron and Shelley's contemporary society. The early 19th century prevailing narrative of the Orient, while definitely problematic, especially by present day standards, was used by hegemonies of the Occident as an excuse for the support of liberalism and of the Greek people, since the freedom of the descendants of ancient Greece has been an important cause for many learned westerners during the early years of the 19th century. In similar fashion, views on what was truly going on in the Near East had often been skewed, if not outright wrong, leading not only to an overt hatred of the Orient, but also to a faulty stance on the issue of philhellenism and freedom. That is to say, the apparent fight against despotism required the destruction of the racial other on the battlefield while the support of the Greek Cause, which was about freedom, prosperity and happiness, presupposed a hefty price of bloodshed against the easterner. This is the reason why war and violent revolutions take center stage in both poets' canon. Byron and Shelley showcased these contradictions in their individual works, yet they still opted to support the movement, becoming fervent proponents of it, since the sacrifice was both necessary and unavoidable. This is what constitutes the "Philhellenic Paradox". It is, essentially, the idea that the movement displayed so many apparent and subtle contradictions. Yet, demonizing the movement instead would also be wrong, since it resulted from good will, aiming to ultimately help humanity as a whole and not simply to confine it within the borders of a Greek nation. For the movement's ultimate aim was to help every human being through the revival of the antique, classical splendor, even if such an image was highly idealized and the ancient perfect Greek nation never existed. This view has already been recognized ; Alexander Grammatikos points out that the Greek War of Independence was a global affair and that it was important for the struggles of the downtrodden people of Europe in general (158). In short, despite the long-standing demonization of the Orient, an act which is definitely inexcusable, it would be wrong to blame Philhellenism on

its own contradictions. Similarly, the works of Byron and Shelley, despite their problematic opinions as they have been delineated in this work, are not anti-oriental, since they do not demonize the Orient, endowing it as they do with a variety of positive attributes. Philhellenism is not perfect in their works either, and neither was it to begin with. Its impact in the shaping of present day society not only in Greece, but throughout the world as well, as well as in literature and history is crucial and should not be understated.

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Σύνοψη

Ο σκοπός της παρούσας διπλωματικής εργασίας είναι η ανάλυση εκείνων των λογοτεχνικών έργων του Τζώρτζ Γκόρντον, Λόρδου Βύρωνα, και του Πέρσυ Σέλλεϋ τα οποία αναδεικνύουν την πολύπλοκη και αμφίροπη σχέση μεταξύ της Δύσης και της Ανατολής, η οποία χαρακτηρίζεται σε μεγάλο βαθμό από έχθρα και κατηγορίες για τυραννία, καθώς επίσης και η ανάδειξη της λεπτής αντιπροσώπευσης των συνηθισμένων αρνητικών τρόπων με τους οποίους παρουσιάζονταν η Ανατολή. Η διπλωματική αρχικά παρουσιάζει το περίγραμμα του Οριενταλισμού και του Φιλλεληνισμού και μετά εστιάζει στην συλλογή ιστοριών του Λόρδου Βύρωνα που έμεινε γνωστή ως *Οι Τούρκικες Ιστορίες*, η οποία αποτελείται από πέντε ποιήματα, εκ των οποίων αναλύονται τα τέσσερα, τα οποία είναι *Ο Γκιαούρης*, *Η Νύφη της Αβύδου*, *Λάρα*, *Μία Ιστορία* και *Η Πολιορκία της Κορύνθου*, μαζί με το αφηγηματικό ποίημα *Το Προσκύνημα του Τσάιλντ Χάρολντ*, μαζί με το θεατρικό έργο *Ελλάς* και το λυρικό δράμα *Προμηθέας Λυόμενος* του Σέλλεϋ, με σκοπό την ανάδειξη των προαναφερθέντων θεμάτων.

Ιστορικά, ο 19^{ος} αιώνας χαρακτηρίστηκε ως σημείο καμπής λόγω των πολλών επαναστάσεων σε όλη την Ευρώπη. Χάρη στην υποστήριξη πολλών Ευρωπαίων διανοούμενων και του Φιλλεληνικού Κινήματος, η κατελιμμένη από την Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία Ελλάδα, επαναστάτησε για την εκδίωξη του δεσποτισμού και για την καθιέρωση της ελευθερίας και της δημοκρατίας. Κατά παράδοξο τρόπο ωστόσο, ο Φιλλεληνισμός οδήγησε σε μίσος για την Ανατολή, ένα σημαντικό θέμα της παρούσας εργασίας, καθώς δείχνει ότι και οι δύο ποιητές υιοθέτησαν μία κριτική στάση όσον αφορά τον Φιλλεληνισμό, καθώς και ήπιο αντι-Ανατολικισμό.

Λέξεις-Κλειδιά: Ανατολικισμός, το Φιλλεληνικό Παράδοξο, τυραννία, πόλεμος