Staging Transcultural Relations: Early Nineteenth-Century British Drama and the Greek War of Independence

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Abstract

This paper examines two British Romantic dramas written during the Greek War of Independence and its aftermath: George Burges's The Son of Erin or the Cause of the Greeks *(1823) and John Baldwin Buckstone's* The Maid of Athens; or, the Revolt of the Greeks *(1829). The paper discusses the plays' portrayals of transcultural interactions between Greeks and Europeans (Irish and British) and argues that the two dramas encourage audiences to see similarities between themselves and Greeks, while also critiquing British apathy toward the Greeks' efforts to achieve liberation. Despite Burges's and Buckstone's shared support for the Greek war, however, an important difference between the two texts exists: while* The Son of Erin *maintains a relentless attack on the British government for aligning British politics with Ottoman policies and remaining indifferent toward the Greek war,* The Maid of Athens *suggests that Britons who take advantage of Greeks' subjugation misrepresent Britain's true feelings about the Greek War of Independence.*

Keywords

Nineteenth-Century British Drama; Greek War of Independence; British Romantic Hellenism; Philhellenism; Lord Byron

Introduction

In his seminal text, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence*, William St. Clair writes that "[o]ne of the surprising features of the history of philhellenism during the Greek War of Independence is the slowness of the response in Britain. English literature had a long philhellenic tradition and the British people had a long tradition of espousing causes abroad, yet in 1821 and 1822 Britain was less affected by the calls to help the Greeks than any other part of Western Europe."[1] Edith Hall and Fiona Mackintosh corroborate St. Clair's assertion by writing that, "[h]owever much they may have supported the idea of a pan-European revolution, the phlegmatic residents of London in the early 1820s were less likely to risk their lives in support of Hellas and global liberty than their contemporaries on the European mainland."[2] The British public's initially muted response to the Greek revolution, I suggest, reflects in part the broader conservatism of post-Napoleonic Britain and its Tory government. While European liberals may have supported Greece's liberation from Ottoman rule, the predominantly reactionary governments of Europe's great powers, including Britain, emphasized the need for political stability, which included stifling national uprisings like the Greek War of Independence. In Britain, "[a]rrayed against the philhellenes were the mightiest establishment forces in British politics: towering Tory figures like the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, as well as the conservative King George IV himself, who all wanted the Ottomans to crush the Greeks."[3] Without the support of Europe's great powers, the Greeks' efforts for liberation would have been regarded by many Britons as futile or premature, thus contributing to the public's overall unenthusiastic response to the Greek cause.

Despite the British government's official non-interventionist policy toward the Greek war (which continued until 20 October 1827, when a combined British, Russian, and French fleet defeated the Ottoman Empire's navy in Navarino Bay), there was nonetheless, at least "from the standpoint of literature, . . . a prominent and noisy minority" of Britons who supported Greek independence.[4] Philhellenic literature published in Britain during the Greek War of Independence included pamphlets aligning Greece and Greeks with European political and cultural values, articles outlining the atrocities committed by Ottomans against the Greeks in newspapers like *The Times*, and also verse celebrating Greek heroism, written by famous authors like Percy Bysshe Shelley and Felicia Hemans, the country's best-selling female poet during the Romantic period.[5] In this paper, I focus on two

1 William St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free: The Philhellenes in the War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 138.

2 Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre, 1660-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 267.

3 Gary J. Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 48.

4 David Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow: Modern Greece in the English & American Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

5 In 1822, Reverend T. S. Hughes published a pamphlet entitled "Address to the People of England in the Cause of the Greeks," in which he suggested that European nations should assist the Greeks in their revolutionary war as the Greeks were Christians and the Ottomans were Muslims. Hughes's pamphlet elicited responses from Charles Brinsley Sheridan (*Thoughts on the Greek Revolution* [London: John Murray, 1822]) and Edmund Henry Barker (*A Letter Addressed to the Rev. T. S. Hughes, Occasioned by the Perusal of the "Address to the People of England in the Cause of the Greeks"* [London:

plays written during the 1820s which drew upon Lord Byron's reputation and legend to criticize (to varying degrees) the British for their apathy toward the Greeks and feature European (Irish and British) characters in Greece supporting the Greeks in their bid for independence: George Burges's *The Son of Erin, or, the Cause of the Greeks* (1823) and John Baldwin Buckstone's *The Maid of Athens; Or, the Revolt of the Greeks* (1829).

British Romantic theatre was a genre especially well-suited to portrayals of the Greek War of Independence, as Romantic-era audiences understood that there was an explicit connection between the theatrical and political stages. Writing about the late eighteenth-century dramatic stage (but equally applicable to early nineteenth-century theatre), Betsy Bolton submits that:

> Late eighteenth-century discussions of theatre and politics tend to dwell on the theatre's ability to shape a mass of spectators into an audience and, by extension, its power to shape that audience into a nation. In emphasizing the links between politics and the stage, social critics in the 1780s and 1790s drew on a long-established association between theatre audiences and the body politic.[6]

As Bolton argues, British drama "staged" matters of state and invited audience members to become active participants in discussions and debates about the British nation. She writes: "The playhouse as a microcosm of the state could be used to present an idealized view of English people coming together as a nation."[7] However, if the late eighteenth-century British stage was focused on redefining the nation following Britain's disastrous loss during the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the 1820s British stage I discuss would have reflected entirely different historical and political preoccupations, as the Britain which emerged after the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) was a confident empire seeking to strengthen its global position.

In this paper, I extend upon Bolton's discussion of the late eighteenth-century stage as a microcosm of state politics and nation by reflecting upon how Romantic drama invited audiences and readers to think not only nationally, but *inter*nationally.[8] Specifically, I examine the ways in which Burges and

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G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1823]). Sheridan supports the Greek revolution but adopts a conciliatory tone by suggesting that he is, unlike Hughes, "more anxious to soften the minds of my countrymen toward the Greeks, than to influence them against the Turks" (7). In his publication, Barker rejects the premise of Hughes's pamphlet and provides examples of Greeks massacring Ottomans during the war. For more on *The Times'* support of the Greek War of Independence, see Chapters 5 ("The Scio Massacre") and 6 ("The London Greek Committee") of Bass, *Freedom's Battle*. Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Hellas* (1822) was one of the first philhellenic works published during the war and remains one of the most popular. Felicia Hemans published many philhellenic poems in the 1820s and 1830s, including "The Voice of Scio" (1823), "The Bride of the Greek Isle" (1825), "The Suliote Mother" (1828), and "The Sisters of Scio" (1830).

6 Betsy Bolton, *Women, Nationalism, and the Romantic Stage: Theatre and Politics in Britain, 1780-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11.

7 Ibid., 12.

8 In *Romantic Globalism: British Literature and Modern World Order 1750-1830* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2014), Evan Gottlieb argues that advances in industry, literacy, and print technologies, combined with a relative decline of the authority of traditional elites and religious institutions in Romantic-era Britain, all contributed to the country's increasing preoccupation with the rest of the world, what Gottlieb defines as the advent of a "global imaginary" (3). As he writes: "What I am calling Romantic globalism held not only that Britons needed to learn to see themselves as members of a nation whose geopolitical destiny was intimately bound up with those of the rest of the world, but also that

Buckstone ask audiences to think about the Greek War of Independence as a global event in which Britain is implicated, and argue that for the two writers, the stage became an internationalized space to discuss Britain's role in Greek-Ottoman affairs and the ways in which British intervention in the war had the potential to reshape the futures (and national identities) of Greece, Britain, and Europe. Burges and Buckstone use their plays in order to attempt to shift public discourse and opinion about the Greeks and their desire for national independence. As Gioia Angeletti argues, "late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century dramas, whether they were performed or not, were shaped by the historical contingencies in which they were published or produced, and had an ideological impact upon contemporary social and political culture."[9]

By staging and dramatizing Greek-European transcultural relations in the ways that they do, Burges and Buckstone attempt to transform British perspectives of Modern Greece and Greeks, and anticipate how British involvement in Greek politics might positively alter both Greek and British political and national identities. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha proposes that "[i]t is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated."[10] Encounters between Greeks and Europeans in these plays—what we might call "contact zones" after Mary Louise Pratt who coined the term[11]—encourage British spectators (or readers) to think transculturally in considering their shared cultural, political, religious, and (emerging) national values and affinities with Greeks, and even, perhaps, to alter their own beliefs about what constitutes British identity as a result of their identification with another ethnicity.

However, as Pratt warns, contact zones are neither neutral nor innocent spaces of human interaction, but instead "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power."[12] In fact, as I argue in this paper, Burges and Buckstone both recognize Britain as a dominant power in relation to Greece and use their plays to address and

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such relations could be conceived as cooperative and egalitarian rather than competitive and hierarchical" (148). Nineteenth-century British theatregoers were encouraged to imagine many different worlds, including India, South America, and the Orient. During the Romantic era, theatre was becoming increasingly diversified, and thus capable of engaging a large number and wide range of viewers (and readers) in Greece's struggle for national liberation (the two Theatre Royals, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, could seat approximately 3000 spectators). According to Frederick Burwick, *Romantic Drama: Acting and Reacting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7, "[f]rom the 1790s through the 1820s theatre performances adjusted to the expectations of the larger middle-class audiences. The period saw the rise of melodrama and a pervasive musical presence. Historical costumes and elaborate set designs provided a new verisimilitude". Discussing specifically British theatre about the Greek war, Hall and Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy*, 272, emphasize that dramas like C. E. Walker's *The Greeks and the Turks* (Coburg, 1821), J. Dobbs's *Petraki Germano* (Coburg, 1824), and H. M. Milner's musical drama *Britons at Navarino* (Coburg, 1827) engaged not only London audiences in Greece's bid for independence, "but that such plays were also popular in the British provinces".

9 Gioia Angeletti, "Introduction," in *Emancipation, Liberation and Freedom: Romantic Drama and Theatre in Britain, 1760-1830*, ed. Gioia Angeletti (Parma: Monte Università Parma, 2010), 4.

10 Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 2.

11 Mary Louise Pratt, "Introduction: Criticism in the Contact Zone," in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1-12.

12 Ibid., 7.

rectify "asymmetrical relations of power" between Greeks and Britons.[13] Specifically, I propose that Burges's and Buckstone's theatrical pieces set themselves apart from most other philhellenic literature of the period by drawing from the works and persona of Lord Byron, the most famous philhellene of the Romantic (and arguably, of any) era, to promote a British philhellenism which eschewed rendering Greece as primarily *female* or *feminine*. In *In Byron's Shadow*, David Roessel discusses Byron's literary influence upon other writers who produced works about Greece and argues that publications like *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *The Giaour*, and *Don Juan* encouraged readers to regard "the feminization of Greece [as] an integral part of the depiction of the country as a politicized space."[14] Importantly, Roessel proposes that Byron's promotion of a feminine Greece likely appealed to the West, as this conceptualization of Greece gave European men an incentive to rescue the Greeks from the Ottomans, providing them with "a noble role in the Greek revival."[15] As Roessel explains, during the Greek War of Independence (and especially after the poet's death in 1824), Byron himself became integrated into the "romance of Greek liberation" when European artists began to allude to his writings and life in their own renderings of a feminized Greece under Ottoman threat and in need of European intervention.[16]

Certainly, Burges and Buckstone were aware of these philhellenic representations and uses of Byron and likely understood that Britain's (or Europe's) potential assistance to a *feminized* Greece also implied power over the country. As such, their plays—which avoid portraying Greece as female (and Europe/Britain as male) while still endorsing support for Greek independence and aligning Greece with European Enlightenment values and beliefs—draw upon Byron's Greek legacy to critique a British politics that exploits the Greeks' subordinate position for personal gain. Both Burges and Buckstone wrote their plays to endorse a liberalist vision of Greece's future and a relationship between Greece and Britain predicated upon their shared personal, cultural, and national values and beliefs. However, whereas Burges's *The Son of Erin* mounts a sustained attack on the British government and aligns Ottoman and British state politics, Buckstone's *The Maid of Athens* critiques Britons' apathy toward the Greek cause but deflects blame away from the British Government by suggesting that those Britons who take advantage of Greeks' subjugation do not represent the country's true feelings about the Greek war. This was in part due to the context in which they were written: published in 1823, Burges's play was released during a period when Britain had not publicly endorsed the Greek cause, making it difficult for the playwright to envision British governmental support for the Greeks. On the other hand, in *The Maid of Athens*, staged two years after the British Government had intervened on behalf of the Greeks, Buckstone is better able to critique Britain's disregard for the Greeks, particularly because the play is set in 1824, when Byron had already travelled to Greece in order to support the Greek cause. By 1829, it would not have been as radical to critique Britain's treatment of Greece, especially if that treatment was portrayed as being a thing of the past.

13 Byron, too, addressed the power imbalance between Greece and Britain in the Notes to Canto 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. For more, see Alexander Grammatikos, "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, British Travellers to Greece and the 'Idea of Europe,'" in *Byron: The Poetry of Politics and the Politics of Poetry,* ed. Roderick Beaton and Christine Kenyon Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 226-38.

14 Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow*, 65.

15 Ibid., 88.

16 Ibid., 77.

"And Europe's Sons, Who Fled the Tyrants' Clutch, / Shall Meet in Paradise of Equal Rights": Greek-Irish Transcultural Relations and the Ottomanization of Britain in George Burges's The Son of Erin

When George Burges (1785-1864), the nineteenth-century classicist who translated into English many Ancient Greek writers, including Thucydides, Demosthenes, and Euripides,[17] decided in 1823 to write a play critical of the British Government's attitude toward liberal causes like the Greek War of Independence, he did so at a particularly infelicitous time. Although the staunchly conservative Lord Castlereagh had been replaced as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the slightly more liberal George Canning—who declared Britain neutral in Ottoman-Greek warfare and in March 1823, "formally recognized the Greek revolutionaries as belligerents, giving them the protections of the laws and customs of war"—Britain was officially still an ally of the Ottoman Empire that rejected Greek claims to independence.[18] More problematic than Burges's timing, however, was the content of his play. In *The Son of Erin or the Cause of the Greeks*, an Irish pirate named Gerall who has been living in Greece chooses to forego his life of piracy in order to support the Greeks in their bid for independence. In the course of the play, Gerall meets the Greek men Demetrius and Pargas and decides to fight alongside them; however, he and his Greek friends are captured by Pacha Mustapha. This development causes the play's protagonists to initiate a scathing, pages-long rebuke of the Ottomans' suppression of universal rights, a critique also directed at the British Government, an ally of the Ottoman Empire. Importantly, too, as I will discuss in more depth later on in this paper, Burges aligns the Greek revolution with the Irish rebellion of 1798, thus indicating that the Ottoman Government's authoritarian conduct toward the Greeks is reflective of the British Government's conduct toward the Irish. Unsurprisingly, *The Son of Erin* was rejected by London's two "legitimate theatres" (Drury Lane and Covent Garden), which compelled Burges to instead publish the play with John Miller of Fleet Street (Burges was the printer) and compose a preface that criticized the Royal Theatres. As Burges writes: "[I]lliberal laws and monopolizing licenses debar a population of nearly a million of souls from the power of enjoying the regular drama, except at two houses,"[19] a point that agitated him because, as he states, "I wrote a play, which I meant to be heard as well as seen."[20] Britain's theatre laws also prevented Burges from staging his drama elsewhere after it had been rejected by the two Royal Theatres, a fact that limited the writer's ability to spread his message of support for the Greek cause.

17 Alfred Goodwin, "George Burges (1785/6–1864)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), n.p.

18 Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 114.

19 George Burges, *The Son of Erin, or, the Cause of the Greeks*[…] (London: John Miller, 1823), vii.

20 Ibid., viii. In the preface, Burges's tone is haughty and inflammatory—he suggests his play was rejected because it is "above the intellect of the audience" (viii)—but he does bring up valid arguments against Drury Lane and Convent Garden, the only two playhouses in Britain that could legally stage dramas until 1843. In particular, Burges complains that the Royal Theatres are not political enough and provides his suggestions for helping to ensure "radical reform take place on every point connected with the [British] stage" (vii)—an idea that is thoroughly mocked by *The Monthly Review* in its critique of *The Son of Erin*. For more, see: Unsigned review of *The Son of Erin, or, the Cause of the Greeks: A Play in Five Acts*[…], by George Burges, and *A Letter to the Rev. T. S. Hughes*[…] *occasioned by the Perusal of his "Address to the People of England in the Cause of the Greeks*, by Edmund Henry Barker, *Monthly Review* no. 102, September 1823: 31-35. http://bit.ly/2sQi4E7.

Over the course of *The Son of Erin*, readers learn about Gerall's life prior to his time in Greece. Born to a revolutionary Irish earl who was forced to flee his homeland for Spain after Ireland's failed rebellion against England in 1798, Gerall himself had to depart Spain when his friend Don Juan discovered that the Irishman was having an affair with his wife Donna Elvira.[21] Upon leaving Spain, Gerall's ship was attacked by a group of pirates whom he agreed to join as a member, and later, to lead, as is the circumstance at the beginning of the play. By emphasizing throughout *The Son of Erin* Gerall's revolutionary familial roots and rebellious character, Burges signifies that his protagonist is the ideal supporter and defender of "the cause of the Greeks," the play's subtitle.[22]

In fact, abandoning his life as a pirate, Gerall eventually joins forces with the Greeks, a decision foregrounded by Burges's stage directions at the beginning of Act III, scene i: "In a defile through a hilly country, a side-view of a Grecian temple in ruins on the top of a hill, and a waterfall, with a double leap."[23] As it did for many European visitors to Greece in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this picturesque classical scene inspires Gerall to meditate upon Greece's glorious past.[24] He calls the ruined temple a "Proud relic of the better days of Greece" and exclaims "What joy to view / Thee, Greece, the sower and the soil of all / This life hath seen, man to instruct, improve."[25] And, just as other travelogue writers (including Byron) did before him, Burges politicizes Greece's ancient past by associating the land and its ruins with the degradation of the present:

> But, oh what tortures, hapless land, for thee
> These heart-strings tear, to see thee trampled thus
> By barbarous hordes, whose ancestors their grave
> Thrice found by Grecian weapons, drench'd in gore,
> Dug in Earth's clay, and Amphitrite's wave.[26]

Gerall recalls Greece's past martial successes (both on land and at sea), when the Greeks "thrice" de-

21 On the Irish Rebellion of 1798, see Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish Rebellion of 1798* (London: Abacus, 1969); Helen Litton, *Irish Rebellions 1798-1916: An Illustrated History* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1998); Stuart Reid, *Armies of the Irish Rebellion 1798* (Oxford: Osprey, 2011).

22 Gerall is undoubtedly influenced by Byron's creation of the "Byronic hero," a heroic, but complicated, character with a secret past that plagues him. Gerall's pirating lifestyle recalls Byron's "Turkish Tales," and especially *The Corsair*, while the Irishman's affair with Donna Elvira recalls Byron's mock epic *Don Juan*, the majority of which had been published by 1823, the year Burges's *The Son of Erin* was released.

23 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 32.

24 Further on the ways in which British (and some European) writers engaged with the Ancient Greek past, see Timothy Webb, *English Romantic Hellenism, 1700-1824* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982). In the introduction to his book, Webb emphasizes that Romantic Hellenism was not exclusively the purview of the mind and imagination or merely an extension of neoclassicism's engagement with Ancient Greek aesthetics, but also entailed a cultural and geographical (and thus, material) connection to Greece. Webb's study presents thirty-four textual excerpts from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers and travellers, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

25 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 32.

26 Ibid., 32. cf. Canto II, stanza 73 of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, in *Lord Byron: The Major Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 75. Indeed, Burges cites Byron's poetry and prose in various Notes to *The Son of Erin*.

feated the ancestors (the Persians) of the "barbarous hordes" (the Ottomans) who now rule over the country, though he remains skeptical about the "hapless" and "trampled" Greek land, prompting him to declare:

> But what
> Boots it in this lone wilderness to cry,
> 'Greece, be thou free!' when saviours none reply?
> I'll on, and thoughts of gall in silence feed,
> To find, in soil so rich, so poor the seed.[27]

For Gerall, the Greek land and its ruins recall Greece's glorious past, and by looking at them while considering Modern Greece's liberation (during the 1820s Greek War of Independence), the Irishman evinces a *logos of continuity* that provides his Greek contemporaries with a model for revolutionary action. That is, the ruins inspire Gerall to consider a future for Greeks wherein they are liberated from the Ottomans *through* their association with the Hellenic past. Indeed, as Yannis Hamilakis argues, classical monuments were, during and after the Greek War of Independence, considered "the material foundations of the new nation," while Ancient Greece's material artifacts became the ideological basis of the new nation after the war.[28] And, as Artemis Leontis argues, Greece's natural landscape and ancient ruins not only consolidated Greece's bid for independence, but also contributed to nineteenth-century Greek and European discussions about Hellenic identity: "In its intersection with a national tradition, *topos* gives historical roots to imagined community."[29] Burges emphasizes Greece's materiality not only to encourage his British audience to advocate for the safeguarding of the Greek past by supporting the revolution, but also to identify contemporary Greeks with the classical past that surrounds them.

If, as Leontis argues, "homeland requires that one narrate a past, claim a present, and prophesy a future," Gerall initiates this process at the beginning of Act III by looking to Greece's ancient land and ruins to think about the revolutionary present.[30] However, although Gerall's meditations reinforce the idea that Greece's glorious past can inspire contemporary heroism, the Irishman is not convinced that this present is yet possible, compelling him to declare that "saviours none reply".[31] Nevertheless, the potential "saviours" of Greece to whom Gerall makes reference *do* reply a mere few lines after his

27 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 34. The Persians and the Ottomans, of course, are not ancestors; instead, it had become a common trope by the time of the Greek War of Independence to associate the two "Eastern" peoples with one another. For more, see Gonda Van Steen, *Liberating Hellenism from the Ottoman Empire: Comte de Marcellus and the Last of the Classics* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).

28 Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 63. As Hamilakis continuously emphasizes, Ancient Greece's material artifacts became the ideological basis of the new nation after the Greek War of Independence. Hamilakis writes, "[a]s the new imagined community of the nation was establishing itself, and as it was attempting to create its own nation-state, antiquities, the material signifiers of continuity between classical Greece and the new nation (soon to become state), became extremely prominent" (78).

29 Artemis Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism: Mapping the Homeland* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 11.

30 Ibid., 2-3.

31 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 34.

monologue when Burges introduces the Greek characters Demetrius and Pargas to his play.[32] Listening to Demetrius and Pargas speak amongst themselves, but not initially revealing himself to them, Gerall hears the two men discuss Greece's subjugation and their plans to help liberate their people. Demetrius, for example, tells Pargas that "The game, we play for life and liberty, / Is never lost, till won. We have been check'd, / Not mated yet"[33] and that Greece, "tho' withering, still her charms / Shows in her form and fire not all extinct."[34] Pargas, in turn, declares that although Greece "The Spartan's breath once animated,"[35] the Greeks are now "Mere shadows, with the outside form of man."[36] Like Gerall, the two men conceptualize Greece's current state of subjugation by referring to the past, which provides them (and their fellow countrymen) with the stimulus to revolt and with heroic models with which to identify. If, as Michael Herzfeld argues, the early nineteenth century witnessed Greeks beginning to think about themselves in relation to their ancient forebears,[37] this identification resulted in Greeks "understand[ing] themselves both as members of a shared national culture and as the bearers of an illustrious national history. This new sense of history and of collective identity, in turn, gave them a new belief in their political agency."[38] During the period of crisis which the Greek revolution was, ancient culture became a means through which men like Demetrius and Pargas could assert their country's power, and through which Burges could attempt to convince his readers of Greece's and Greeks' cultural (and proto-national) exceptionalism.

More than merely focusing on contemporary Greeks' affinity to the ancients as a means of gaining independence, though, Burges emphasizes the importance of intercultural relations between his Irish

32 While Demetrius is a personal name in Greek, Pargas is not. Instead, Parga, which Byron names in Canto 3, stanza 13 (line 762) of *Don Juan*, is a mainland town in Greece that was politically significant during the period in which Burges composed his play. According to Roderick Beaton, *Byron's War: Romantic Rebellion, Greek Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 57-58, "A delayed and unintended consequence of the arrangements concluded at the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and 1815, that had given Great Britain control of the Ionian Islands, was that the mainland town of Parga had to be ceded to Ali Pasha". Souliote Greeks who refused to "submit to their arch-enemy, Ali" (Beaton 58) moved to the Ionian island of Corfu. Significantly, as Beaton discusses, "the British government in Corfu had accepted a substantial sum of money from Ali in return for ceding the territory" (58). While, "[i]n reality, this was paid as compensation for the displaced townspeople," liberal Europeans considered this payment a betrayal of the Greeks by the British and yet another indication that Greeks must "trust no outside help but to stand up for themselves" (Beaton 58) in their bid for independence.

33 Burges, *Son of Erin,* 35.

34 Ibid., 37.

35 Ibid., 36.

36 Ibid., 35.

37 In *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), Michael Herzfeld demonstrates how nineteenth-century Greeks "constructed cultural continuity in defense of their national identity" (4). Rather than criticize the practice, however, Herzfeld insists that "the Greeks were acting no differently than the representatives of other, older European scholarly traditions. The selective character of their research was a well-established trait: Europeans of widely-separated times and cultures had long been apt to reconstitute Classical Greece in the terms most familiar to them. The concept of Hellas was already a quicksand of shifting perceptions when the modern Greeks came to it in their turn, bringing with them their specialized nationalistic concerns" (4).

38 Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 24.

protagonist and the two Greek men, as well as Gerall's own connections to Greece, in consolidating Greek freedom. In fact, during Demetrius's declaration that "Greece hath seen its star of glory rise" but that the fate of its people "'tis now / To weep her sun, that sinks to rise no more,"[39] Burges's stage directions indicate "Gerall *advances nearer, behind* Demetrius."[40] And following this stage direction, Pargas proclaims:

> And hear, ye heroes of the olden time,
> The prayer of Pargas. Let one sunny smile
> Play round your lips, in sign that if we fall
> In this last fight of freedom, we have quaff'd
> The foretaste of immortal glory, such
> As consecrates your name.[41]

Ostensibly, Demetrius's and Pargas's declarations are supplications to Greece's ancient heroes, but Gerall's approach behind them as they pray invites readers to acknowledge the Irishman as their "saviour" (the one that he himself had earlier called for), who hears the Greeks' prayers. Indeed, upon introducing himself to the two men, Gerall tells them that "With joy I've heard, unseen, thy hopes, thy fears, / Your prayers and plans; and my soul yearns to make / The trinity of noble hearts."[42]

Gerall—the former corsair leader with a rebellious past and radical familial inheritance—is the foreigner who best identifies with the plight of the Greeks and who is best-positioned to assist them in their bid for independence because, as he tells the two Greek men:

> Like yours,
> The land, where first I drew my breath, has groan'd
> Beneath a master's tread; in Freedom's cause,
> Like you, I've suffer'd much; and I am bold,
> And free—this good at least the exile boasts,
> To those, who cower at home, denied—the flag
> Of Liberty, where'er through Slavery's night
> With lightning-ribbands flashes it and floats,
> Still to pursue.[43]

By alluding to the Irish rebellion of 1798 against the English and comparing this uprising to the 1821 Greek War of Independence, Gerall creates a moment of historical and transcultural *hybridization* (to use a term from Homi K. Bhabha) wherein men from two different ethnic backgrounds share their experiences (and forces) in order to establish a stronger movement for freedom. In fact, Gerall underscores his affinity with Demetrius and Pargas by recalling that his father was so inspired by Ancient Greece's dedication to Liberty that he "Bid me thy letters, Greece, with lisping lips / To

39 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 37.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid., 37-38.

42 Ibid., 39.

43 Ibid.

sound" and became "A martyr to the cause of equal rights" by fighting for his country's sovereignty.[44]

By drawing parallels between the Irish and the Greeks, however, Burges forces his English audience into a difficult position, as they must confront the playwright's indication that similar parallels should be made between the Ottomans who subjugate the Greeks and the British who oppress the Irish.[45] In fact, in his notes which appear after the play, Burges criticizes the Holy Alliance and the Foreign-Enlistment Bill, an 1819 act introduced by ministers George Canning and Lord Castlereagh (Burges only mentions the latter) in order to restrict Britain's involvement in foreign uprisings, including the Spanish and Greek revolutions.[46] Burges writes:

> Had the majority of the House of Commons not been dead to the shame of acting the part of spiritless slaves to a cold-blooded minister, they would have rejected with abhorrence any proposal to prevent Englishmen from assisting the weak against the strong. The damnable doctrine laid down by Castlereagh, that Liberty is not suited for all times, places and conditions of men . . . could never have met with support, except from those, who … are forbidden to act, speak, or think like honest men.[47]

By focusing his critique on the British Government in his Notes, Burges indicates that *The Son of Erin*, rejected by both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, had not meant to antagonize or alienate a London audience, but instead to criticize a government that the playwright suggests fails to reflect the spectators' values. If Castlereagh "embod[ied] to the philhellenes all the uncaring forces of high policy, the cruelty of the imperial courts, calmly prepared to see Greece meet an Irish fate",[48] Burges's task is to convince a broader audience (or readership) that Britain's foreign policy is misguided and contrary to the country's esteem for national sovereignty and human rights. He attempts to do so, I propose, by ending *The Son of Erin* with Gerall, Demetrius, and Pargas expressing their adherence to shared Enlightenment beliefs and contrasting their beliefs with the Ottoman commander Mustapha's defense of an authoritarian state that imposes upon the will of the people, a form of governance the playwright suggests resembles that of Tory-led Britain.

Captured by Pacha Mustapha after the Ottoman officer learns of the Greeks' intention to revolt, Ger-

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44 Ibid., 40.

45 During the Romantic period, Britain maintained (mostly) positive relations with the Ottoman Empire, with whom they traded and partnered in order to prevent the expansion of both France and Russia in the Mediterranean area. For more on nineteenth-century British-Ottoman relations, see Steven Richmond, *The Voice of England in the East: Stratford Canning and Diplomacy with the Ottoman Empire* (London: Tauris, 2014).

46 Burges's decision to attack Britain's Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, for his advocacy of a staunchly conservative Europe hints at the type of audience the playwright sought to influence, as the minister's "secretive and often reactionary foreign policy, cozily aligning Britain with the despotic empires of the Holy Alliance, made him a lightning rod for liberal and radical hatred at home" (Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 59).

47 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 118.

48 Bass, *Freedom's Battle*, 60. Perhaps even more damning for Burges was the fact that Castlereagh himself was Irish, of the Protestant Ascendancy, a term used to designate the Protestant Irish who had social, political, and economic dominance over other Irish people (including those who were Catholic and Jewish) and who could attain positions of power in England. For more on the formation of the Protestant Ascendancy, see Patrick Walsh, *The Making of the Irish Protestant Ascendancy: The Life of William Conolly, 1662-1729* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010).

all, Demetrius, and Pargas use their audience with Mustapha to express their belief in the values of liberty, equal rights, and universal love. Pargas tells Mustapha that nature's "will is Universal Liberty" and repeats the phrases "Universal Liberty" and "Intellectual Liberty" multiple times throughout his monologue.[49] Demetrius, in turn, extends upon Pargas's celebration of liberty by suggesting that it is a value sought for globally—"from the Arctic to th'Antarctic pole"—and one that leads to equality amongst people, stating: "And Europe's sons, who fled the tyrants' clutch, / Shall meet in Paradise of equal rights."[50] By referencing "Europe's sons,"—and before this, the "Arctic," "Antarctic," and "Colombia's climes"—Demetrius emphasizes the universality of the fight for freedom, thus strengthening Greece's right to stage a national uprising.[51]

Although Pargas's, Demetrius's, and Gerall's panegyrics on liberty and equality are directed toward Mustapha—the Muslim man who deems equal rights a "wilderness" and independence and republicanism a "leaden weight"—the men's proclamations also act to critique a European alliance that has ignored European Enlightenment values.[52] In fact, in his speech Demetrius suggests that "freedom's dove" has "been chased by beaks of eagles," and "By leopards bay'd at"[53]—eagles and leopards (lions) appearing on the coat of arms of the Holy Alliance and Britain, respectively. Mustapha *id est* Britain becomes even more apparent when Burges has the Ottoman ruler reject Gerall's claim that "At nature's banquet, Universal Liberty, / To prince and peasant equal place and plate"[54] by emphasizing the primacy of the state. Mustapha tells Gerall, "Nor will I parly with the man who dares / To question pow'r's legitimacy, / Or the state's creed. The necks that will not bend, / The bow-string soon will break,"[55] a defense of state power that reflects the British government's own authoritarian mode of rule since the late eighteenth century.[56] In fact, just in case Burges's readers have missed his critique of the Tory government in these lines, Burges adds a footnote to the passage: "To the *dicta* and *facta* of English judges I owe this sentiment, almost too despotic for the mouth of a Turk."[57] Later still, Burges has Gerall inform Mustapha that he has joined the Greek cause out of a "Universal Love" not shared by Europe's "Giaour Kings" who with "the Sultan's leagued; / And they no doubt have guarantied his crown."[58]

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49 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 101.

50 Ibid., 104.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid., 105.

53 Ibid., 103.

54 Ibid., 106.

55 Ibid., 106-7.

56 In his Notes to *The Son of Erin*, Burges writes "It is nearly thirty years ago since the gagging-bills were passed by a House of Commons, whose only business during the time of Pitt and Castlereagh was to read the edicts of the minister" (122). In 1819, the Tory government implemented The Six Acts, which prevented weapon training; allowed public officials to confiscate weapons; reduced opportunities for bail and sped up court proceeding times; banned most meetings of 50 or more people; created stricter blasphemy and seditious libel laws; and increased taxes on certain publications (Evans 26). See Eric J. Evans, *Britain Before the Reform Act: Politics and Society 1815-1832* (London: Routledge, 1989).

57 Burges, *Son of Erin*, 122.

58 Ibid., 110. This section of Burges's play resembles Shelley's *Hellas* (1822), a lyrical drama that was one of the first

While Burges aligns Greeks with progressive European Enlightenment thought, he portrays the British government as betraying these liberal values that it should be defending. His audience, he hopes, will support the Greek cause despite the British government's non-interventionist stance, a point that is corroborated by Burges's extensive Notes to *The Son of Erin*. His final note, especially, clarifies his intentions as he states that "my aim has been to rouse from the torpor of incipient slavery . . . a nation, who owes all its glory to its successful efforts to emancipate itself from despotic power, and all its disgrace to its abortive attempts to impede the independence of others."[59] If the British government will not assist the Greeks, suggests the author of *The Son of Erin,* the general populace must be encouraged to recognize the importance of the Greek war, which Burges portrays as a struggle for universal human rights. In aligning the Irish and Greek rebellions, Burges attempts to appeal to the liberal politics of his period by encouraging the advancement of national and individual rights. However, in so doing, Burges also participates in the (potentially) anti-Hellenic process of effacing contemporary Greek identity and aligning the people with an Enlightenment modernity that celebrates an ancient past foreign to a majority of Greeks. As Herzfeld argues, "[t]he 'liberation' of Greece from the Turkish 'yoke' was effected in such a way as to leave the newly constituted country heavily dependent on its ability to present as indigenous an ancient culture that most of its inhabitants experienced as foreign and preternaturally strange."[60] As radical as *The Son of Erin* was (its anti-British rhetoric likely accounts for its rejection by Drury Lane and Covent Garden), the play nonetheless adheres to a Eurocentric outlook that suggests Greeks must think and behave as "Westerners" in order for a British audience to relate to and sympathize with them.

"I Intend, by Means of Hydraulic Pressure and Floating Rafts, to Carry off Bodily the Temple of Theseus": Shifting the Blame from Britain to Britons in John Baldwin Buckstone's The Maid of Athens[61]

When John Baldwin Buckstone's *The Maid of Athens; or, the Revolt of the Greeks* was first staged at Drury Lane on 22 October 1829, it had been almost exactly two years since the British, French, and Russian navies joined forces and intervened at Navarino Bay (now Pylos), effectively ending the Greek War of Independence and creating an opportunity for Greeks to create their new modern

British works published in support of the Greek War of Independence. In the preface to the play, Shelley writes "The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?" (550), while in the play proper, the poet critiques the British who "frown on Freedom" (306). See Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Hellas," in *The Major Works, Including Poetry, Prose, and Drama*, ed. Zachary Leader and Michael O'Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 548-87.

59 Ibid., 124.

60 Herzfeld, *Ours Once More*, 13.

61 John Baldwin Buckstone (1802-1879) was one of the most famous actors and playwrights (and later, theatre managers) of the nineteenth century. Buckstone wrote over 100 plays, the majority of which were staged. In its 1836 profile of Buckstone (who was then only 34 years old), *Fraser's Magazine* deemed him "the Scribe of England" (720) and praised his work. "Gallery of Literary Characters. No. LXXIX. John Baldwin Buckstone," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, no. 14, December 1836, 720-21. For more on Buckstone, see Steven Craig Pounders, "John Baldwin Buckstone," in *Nineteenth-Century British Dramatists*, ed. Angela Courtney (Farmington Hills, Michigan: Gale Cengage Learning, 2009), 48-59.

nation state.[62] Buckstone was, therefore, writing in circumstances far different from Burges, with the playwright enjoying the privilege of being able to discuss the Greek War of Independence, and Britain's conduct during it, retrospectively. Nonetheless, even in 1829, Britain's support for Greek independence could not be taken for granted. Indeed, when Britain (with Russia and France) destroyed the Ottoman Empire's fleet in October of 1827, the British partook in the battle reluctantly, doing so in large part to prevent a Russian monopoly over the Mediterranean region. As Roessel notes:

> The battle of Navarino embarrassed the English government. The king in a speech to Parliament all but apologized to the sultan by referring to the action as "an untoward event," and Codrington was recalled as commander of the Mediterranean squadron for "misapprehending his instructions" (Finlay, 7:21). England was in the awkward position of having helped to free Greece without desiring or approving of the result.[63]

And indeed, after 1827, "[d]uring the European discussions which followed as to the boundaries of a new Greece, British proclivities were instrumental in keeping these within as narrow limits as possible."[64] *The Maid of Athens* may have been composed after the British intervened in Greco-Ottoman warfare, but just like Burges, Buckstone had to attempt to convince a potentially reluctant British populace to support Greek liberation, which I argue he does by demonstrating that approval for the philhellenic cause went beyond radical preoccupations.

In *The Maid of Athens*, a "romantic drama" (as Buckstone defines it) which featured many well-known actors of the period in starring roles, including Mr. John Cooper (who plays Lord Byron) and Miss Sarah Booth (who plays the British "maid of Athens," Madeline), Byron visits Greece in order to provide financial and moral support for the Greeks' bid for liberation, just as the real-life Byron had done.[65] While there, Byron travels around the country—to Messolonghi, the Peloponnese, Athens, and Lepanto—to organize the revolution. However, the British poet's plans to assist Greece are complicated by British and French foreigners who support the Ottoman Sultan. Importantly, the play includes a subplot wherein the young Greek man Demetrius and the British Madeline become romantically interested in one another, although their relationship is prevented by Madeline's guardian, the Earl of Flint-Harrington. It is not until the end of the play, when Demetrius and his Souliote

62 Will Smiley, "War without War: The Battle of Navarino, the Ottoman Empire, and the Pacific Blockade," *Journal of the History of International Law* 18, (2016): 43.

63 Roessel, In *Byron's Shadow*, 43.

64 R. F. Holland and Diana Weston Markides, *Britain and the Hellenes: Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1850-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2.

65 John Cooper (1793-1870) was a popular Shakespearean actor who performed at Drury Lane, Covent Garden, the Haymarket, the English Opera House, and the Surrey. As Joseph Knight says of him, "A steady, capable, and eminently conscientious actor, but heavy and mechanical, he played during this period a singularly large number of parts, some of them of leading importance" ("John Cooper (1793–1870)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], n.p.). Sarah Booth (1789x94-1867) performed in various plays at Covent Garden, the Olympic, Drury Lane, the Haymarket, and the Adelphi and, as Joseph Knight writes, she "achieved some popularity: a poem 'To Miss S. Booth' appeared in the *Theatrical Inquisitor*, written by one J. G. of Edinburgh, who had seen [her in Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Child of Nature*]" ("Sarah Booth (1789x94–1867)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], n.p.).

followers arrive at Lepanto to save Byron and Madeline from the treacherous (and, as it turns out, illegitimate) Earl of Flint-Harrington that the Greek man and British woman can finally be together.

In the play, Buckstone characterizes Byron as an astute diplomat who helps to organize and advance the Greeks' fight for independence by encouraging Demetrius (who later in the play learns, along with the audience, that he is the King of Greece) to lead his fellow countrymen into battle against the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, upon meeting Demetrius, Byron tells the audience that "[t]he modern Greek may be at present corrupt, profligate, and treacherous; but when the weight of the Mussulman's fetters no longer wither away his nerve, he will be found, I am certain, as pure, heroic, and high-minded as his ancient countrymen who bled at Marathon, Salamis, and Thermopolae."[66] Like Burges before him, Buckstone aligns contemporary Greeks with their ancient progenitors and proposes that the Greek War of Independence should be associated with the Ancient Greeks' celebrated battles for freedom against the "Eastern" Persians.

However, Buckstone suggests that Modern Greek liberation can only be achieved by overcoming British foreigners who undermine its realization. In Buckstone's play, the Britons who (both directly and indirectly) contribute to Greek subjugation are Sir Peregrine, the foppish Honourable Fitzfussleton Fume, and especially the corrupt Earl of Flint-Harrington, a British foreign minister who favours Ottoman rule over Greece. In fact, a conversation between Byron and Demetrius in Act I of *The Maid of Athens* demonstrates that it is the British Earl who helps to sustain a continual system of oppression against the Greek population of the Ottoman Empire:

> *Demet*.: Indeed, to be sure, I oppose injustice whenever I find it.
> *Byron*: And now it covers all Greece beneath the absolute power of a detested minister.
> *Demet*.: I am taught to believe that the minister knows nothing of these abuses.
> *Byron*: He commands them.
> *Demet*.: And the Sultan?
> *Byron*: Permits them.[67]

According to Buckstone's Byron, while the Ottoman Sultan is responsible for "permitting" the maltreatment of Greeks, the foreign minister Flint-Harrington is an even worse figure for the Greeks as he "commands" abuses against them. Indeed, even those who work closely with Flint-Harrington understand his treachery, with Sir Peregrine telling his wife Lady Platitude at the beginning of the play that the Earl "carries everything he hears to the suspicious Sultan, who enjoys his presence,"[68] and deeming him a "tool of state."[69]

Despite his recognition that Flint-Harrington promotes and helps to sustain Ottoman rule over Greece, however, Sir Peregrine does nothing to prevent it. In fact, Buckstone intimates that Peregrine

66 J. B. Buckstone, *The Maid of Athens; Or, the Revolt of the Greeks: A Romantic Drama, in Four Acts*, in *Dick's Standard Plays*, no. 832 (London: J. Dicks, 1887), 6. To further signal his support for Greek warriors like Demetrius, Buckstone has him enter "*dressed in a handsome Greek costume, carr[ying] a gun in his hand*" (6).

67 Ibid., 6.

68 Ibid., 3.

69 Ibid., 4.

is also to blame for the Greeks' continued subjugation, as he and his wife collude with the Earl by keeping Demetrius under their stifling care and, in compliance with Flint-Harrington's directives, ignorant of his royal background. As Sir Peregrine tells Byron, "I have brought up the young gentleman in perfect ignorance. He believes himself the son of a political fugitive. He lives without any idea of the world, and knows nothing of law, art, or science."[70] Buckstone suggests that figures like Sir Peregrine, who is not necessarily mishellenic, but who supervises Demetrius because he is well reimbursed by the Sultan, are culpable for the Greeks' degraded condition. Peregrine's desire for personal gain over the needs of an entire community, as well as his apathy toward the abuses committed against Greeks—he tells Demetrius that the arrest of innocent Greeks is "the custom of the country, and it is better for us not to notice such a trifle"[71]—are for Buckstone forms of complicity with despotic rule, prompting Byron to, in an aside, deem him a "Fool! Parasite!"[72] and ponder "At what a price is a royal soul bartered by tyranny and despotism."[73]

If Sir Peregrine (and, in part, his wife) represent one type of collusion with those who enslave the Greeks, the dandyish Fume (the son of a British MP) represents yet another. Arriving from England at the beginning of the play, Fume is for the most part regarded as an oblivious character whose outrageous ideas and dress (which includes Cossack trousers, an enormous cravat, and plaited sleeves to his coat) elicit laughter from the other British characters in the play. However, in Act II of *The Maid of Athens*, Buckstone associates Fume's foolishness with cultural appropriation when the young British man discusses his idea to begin a new entrepreneurial venture with Ancient Greece's material artifacts. Surrounded by Souliote Greeks who are curious about who he is, Fume tells the men that he is an Englishman who has "many reasons for visiting your country. I am a passionate admirer of nature and art. I have enriched science with many valuable discoveries, only, unfortunately, I could never get the *savants* to take the same views as myself. Before leaving England I invented a clock which was to upset all the nonsensical principles of time; but for the life of me I can't set it going."[74] Undoubtedly, Fume's self-proclaimed scientific knowledge is meant to provoke laughter from the audience, who has by this point in the play realized that the young Englishman is not as intelligent as he believes himself to be. However, when Fume's experimentation is combined with his admiration for Greece's "nature and art," the sights (and sites) which motivated many Britons to travel to Greece, the British man's ignorance becomes a bit more sinister.

Calling his newest idea a "*coup de main*" (or, surprise attack), Fume tells the Greeks that:

> I intend, by means of hydraulic pressure and floating rafts, to carry off bodily the Temple of Theseus, and transplant it to Hyde Park, while, in the end, I should like to adorn London with the art treasures of Athens. At a shilling a-head it's a safe speculation; and the money could go to satisfy the shareholders, because it would require a company to carry out the brilliant idea. The surplus, of course, might be used to pay

70 Ibid., 5.

71 Ibid., 6.

72 Ibid., 5.

73 Ibid., 6.

74 Ibid., 13.

> off the Greek national debt.[75]

Fume's "brilliant idea" to carry off "bodily" the Temple of Theseus, though a ludicrous proposal, would surely have reminded audience members of Lord Elgin's plundering of the Parthenon Marbles (among other foreign lootings), which eventually ended up adorning the British Museum.[76] Although not often described in such explicit terms, Fume demonstrates how much of Britain's interest in Greece's ancient past represents an imperialist (and capitalist) venture that seeks to aggrandize Britain at the Greeks' expense. Indeed, as Leontis argues:

> Early in the nineteenth century, Europeans began to deploy in Hellas the narratives, methods, rules of conduct, modes of expression, and institutions of the discourse of Hellenism. These functioned as disciplinary technologies . . . On the site of ruins, the disciplinary technologies of Hellenism applied their force on individual bodies by controlling access to the site and separating "safe" authorities from "dangerous" (i.e., heterogeneous to all other) populations.[77]

In the vision that Fume presents, the ruins of the Temple of Theseus will become commodified products debated by British "shareholders" who will decide their worth, rather than remaining the material remnants of a past era that belong to the contemporary Greek land. Greece's "art treasures" become integrated into a system of "discipline" wherein meanings of Hellenism are dictated and controlled by foreigners who restrict contemporary Greeks from accessing them. Fume epitomizes the kind of imperial-minded European travellers to Greece who, as Van Steen argues, envisioned the country as "a moveable entity, open to multiple acts of charged signification."[78] The young Englishman's attitude toward Ancient Greek monuments represents what Buckstone likely considered an all too common view amongst his fellow Britons, including those audience members who may in the past have paid for London exhibits to see ancient Greek monuments. The young Englishman's suggestion, too, that the "surplus" monies collected from Britons who have visited exhibits of Ancient Greek artifacts might be used to pay off Greece's national debt is a paternalistic proposal that further emphasizes Greeks' indebtedness to British foreigners who engage with Greece's wartime struggles only because they place a commercial value on the material remnants of the ancient world.[79]

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75 Ibid.

76 In 1801, Lord Elgin, then British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, acquired a firman from the Ottoman Porte allowing him to remove marbles from the Parthenon in Athens in order to bring them to Britain. Elgin's actions were both praised and criticized. Amongst his biggest detractors was Lord Byron, who in Canto 2 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* deemed him "The last, the worst, dull spoiler" (94) and "Cold as the crags upon his native coast" (102). For more on the "Elgin Marbles," see William St. Clair, *Lord Elgin & the Marbles: The Controversial History of the Parthenon Sculptures* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998); and John Henry Merryman, ed., *Thinking about the Elgin Marbles: Critical Essays on Cultural Property, Art and Law* (Austin, Texas: Wolters Kluwer, 2009).

77 Leontis, *Topographies of Hellenism*, 56.

78 Van Steen, *Liberating Hellenism*, 28. In *Liberating Hellenism*, Van Steen discusses the activities of the Comte de Marcellus, who stole the Venus (Aphrodite) de Milos from Greece and brought it to France. As Van Steen emphasizes throughout her book, however, the Comte's actions are representative of a broader foreign imperial attitude toward Greece.

79 Here, Buckstone makes a pointed jibe at the Greeks and their mishandling of loans sent from London in 1824 and

As treacherous as Sir Peregrine and Fume are, however, Buckstone suggests that, of all the play's British characters, the Earl of Flint-Harrington is most responsible for Greece's continued enslavement. After all, it is Flint-Harrington who puts Demetrius under the supervision of Sir Peregrine and Lady Platitude (thus keeping him ignorant of his royal lineage) and whose surveilling presence is felt throughout *The Maid of Athens*. When Byron first appears in the play, for example, Sir Peregrine hopes the poet has not come to deliver treasonable information against the Ottoman state as Flint-Harrington's "ears and eyes are always open, and he watches me as a cat watches a rat-hole."[80] Perhaps most importantly in terms of the plot of the play, Flint-Harrington denies Demetrius the hand of his daughter Madeline, the titular "Maid of Athens," who has been tutoring the young Greek man when the play commences. If romances in Romantic-era literature represented the unification of, or elision of tensions between, two separate nations or ethnicities—as they did in the novels of Sydney Owenson (i.e. *The Wild Irish Girl*) and Sir Walter Scott (i.e. *Waverley*), for example—Flint-Harrington's rejection of a marriage between Madeline and Demetrius forestalls the ability for a newly-conceived (and, ideally, equal) Greek-British transcultural relationship. Flint-Harrington, therefore, is a barrier to a philhellenic (and liberal) outlook like Buckstone's that supports British intervention in Greece on behalf of Greek independence.

The manner in which Buckstone ultimately discounts Flint-Harrington's treatment of Greece—and, thus, the way in which the playwright sets apart *The Maid of Athens*' politics from those of *The Son of Erin*—is by having Byron prove that the minister is a fraudulent diplomat who has adopted the identity of the real, and now deceased, Earl of Flint-Harrington. In a scene towards the end of the play, Byron and Flint-Harrington have a private conversation in which the poet explains that he is from the same village as the real Flint-Harrington and that the man now purporting to be the Earl resembles not him but "Jacob Armstrong, a wily, hypocritical, cringing scoundrel."[81] The Earl's death was, as Byron describes to the audience, "kept a secret, and the steward had only to present his credentials to pass as the veritable envoy of the British Government."[82] Eventually, Byron explains that he has been instructed by the British Ambassador to arrest the illegitimate Flint-Harrington, an act that serves finally to rid Greece of a British statesman apathetic to the Greeks' bid for independence. More importantly, though, I suggest that Buckstone's de-legitimization of Flint-Harrington serves partly as a (humorous) apologia for the British Government's foreign policy in Greece. If the Government was merely duped by an unsanctioned British diplomat, his removal from office would herald the prospect of improved relations between Britons and Greeks. Unlike Burges, who in *The Son of Erin* lambasts the British Tory Government for aligning its policies to and colluding with the Ottoman Government, Buckstone is able to balance a critique of Britain with a vision of a fairer British foreign policy toward Greece—a perspective that was bolstered (though not guaranteed) by Britain's 1827 intervention on behalf of the Greeks.

While Flint-Harrington represents an illegitimate form of British representation in Greece, Byron symbolizes a "legitimate" model for the way in which Britons should regard the Greek War of Inde-

1825. For more on this scandal, see Chapter 22 ("The English Gold") of St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free*.

80 Buckstone, *Maid of Athens*, 1.1.5.

81 Ibid., 20.

82 Ibid.

pendence. Buckstone's Byron—a character who is "[a]n ardent admirer of freedom"[83]; who sees in Greece's liberation "the fate of the monarchy, I might also say Christianity"[84]; and who is "an Englishman by birth, but a roving disposition, I may say, has made me a cosmopolite"[85]—represents a centrist hero a British audience could rally behind. Indeed, although Greece's (Orthodox) Christianity does not play a central role in *The Maid of Athens*, Buckstone's decision to have his Byron mention Greeks' Christianity in conjunction with monarchical rule represents how the playwright uses Byron to appeal to a different audience from that which Burges attempted to influence. While Burges created a Byronic hero associated with radical causes, Buckstone's Byron is, much less radically, a defender of Greece's Christianity and (fictional, but narratively effective) monarchy. Buckstone's Byron is not the man who lambasted the dead King George III in *The Vision of Judgment* (1822) or who wrote the blasphemous *Cain* (1821), but the tempered statesman who, as Roderick Beaton argues, underwent "the complete transformation of himself" in Greece by demonstrating outstanding judgment and leadership skills during his time in Messolonghi.[86] Buckstone's Byron, who contributes to Greece's fight for liberty by politicking throughout Ottoman Greece (while adopting multiple characters, including a Greek general, a rich Turk, and a fisherman) and associating with many different populations in the country (including the Souliotes, the real life war heroes Alexandros Mavrokordatos, Theodoros Kolokotronis, and Markos Botsaris, and, of course, the fictional Demetrius), represents a new way of understanding and associating with Greece and its people.

Important, too, in the world of the play, are Byron's skills as a matchmaker between the Greek Demetrius and the English Madeline, a relationship that the audience would have been invited to endorse as Byron's "The Maid of Athens," a poem about the poet's infatuation with a young Greek girl named Teresa Makri, plays in the background whenever Demetrius and Madeline are together on stage. However, while Byron's "The Maid of Athens" (and the many philhellenic works it inspired) portrays a young British man in love with a Greek woman, Buckstone's *The Maid of Athens* reverses this ethnic/gender dynamic. Buckstone's decision to feature a "male" Greece and a "female" Britain is a significant choice because, as David Roessel argues about nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American literature concerning Greece:

> European men will rescue and indeed marry the female Greece in numerous rewritings of the romance by English or American authors over the next century and a half. Greek males will sometimes marry and have a "happy ending" with Greek women, although more often one of the lovers will die. But Greek men will almost never become involved with European or American women until after the Second World War, when modern Greece becomes less of a political, and more of a primitive, sexual

83 Ibid., 6.

84 Ibid., 8. Shortly after this, Byron states, "We would recover the rights of the great vassals of the crown of Greece; the freedom of conscience, to prevent new attacks which are preparing in the dark against the Christian faith" (9), once again conflating Christianity and monarchy in Greece.

85 Ibid., 20.

86 Beaton, *Byron's War*, 264. Beaton also notes that "Byron's final transformation of himself into the new statesman was unlike anything he had imagined for a fictional character" and that he in the last days of his life "became serious—and stuck to it" (264).

> space in Western literature. There was a racial factor in the squeamish reticence to pair Greek men and Western women, as if the West could only recognize Greek women as European.[87]

Buckstone's decision to thwart convention and to make his Greek male protagonist a lover for the British female lead in *The Maid of Athens* represents the playwright's determination to portray—following the gender dynamics of the Romantic period—a Greek nation that was both self-determining (Demetrius is a king who eventually becomes leader of the Greek cause) and capable of becoming part of a European cultural and political sphere. In most Romantic literature—from Sydney Owenson's *Ida of Athens* (1809), to Catherine Grace Godwin's *Reine Canziani* (1825), to Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826)—British male-Greek female relationships represented Britain's dominance over Greece and, for the most part, ended disastrously for Greek women.[88] What Buckstone offers instead is not the reverse of this relationship where Greece dominates Britain, but a vision of a more equal partnership between the two countries. Demetrius's and Madeline's relationship represents a potential shift in the power dynamics between early nineteenth-century Britain and Greece. Important, of course, is the fact that Byron is involved in negotiating the British-Greek romance, which he finally determines to support when in Act III he asks Madeline "[c]ould you renounce for Demetrius all you possess in the world—your welfare, your hopes?" to which the young woman replies, "My very existence!"[89]

Ultimately, Greece can be a model (and partner) for Britain in Buckstone's work because Demetrius has royal lineage and is thus of a certain class (and political) origin. This point is confirmed multiple times in the play—for example, when Madeline herself rejects Demetrius's plea to elope with her by asking him "abandon my father, my rank, my family?"[90] In fact, Madeline only considers Demetrius a suitable match when she learns about his royal heritage, and by inventing a Greek monarchy, Buckstone offers his audience a way through which to conceptualize a connection between Britain and a foreign country like Greece: royal marriage.[91] By depicting a royal union between Demetrius and Madeline, Buckstone is able to balance his criticism of Britain with a vision of a more equitable British-Greek transcultural and political relationship. Nonetheless, *The Maid of Athens* still presents a classist vision of Greek-British relations and, like *The Son of Erin*, suggests that the Greeks must express "European" forms of identity and governance in order to become truly free. Whereas Burges's *The Son of Erin* aligns Greeks and Westerners through a radical discourse of equal rights and universal

87 Roessel, *In Byron's Shadow*, 66.

88 In *Ida of Athens*, the young Greek woman Ida is courted by the imperial-minded Lord B, who tries unsuccessfully to convince her to move to London with him. In *Reine Canziani*, the Greek Reine is seduced by the British Monthermer, who lives with her out of wedlock, impregnates her, and eventually abandons her. In *The Last Man*, the English Lord Raymond begins an affair with the Greek Evadne. Their relationship causes a Plague that spreads throughout the world. See Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan), *Woman, or, Ida of Athens*. 4 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809); Catherine Grace Godwin, *Reine Canziani: A Tale of Modern Greece* (London: Hurst, Robinson, 1825); and Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, ed. Anne McWhir (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 1996).

89 Buckstone, *Maid of Athens*, 16.

90 Ibid., 14.

91 Indeed, the British monarchy had a long tradition of marriage to foreign royalty. For more information, see Kenneth J. Panton, *Historical Dictionary of the British Monarchy*, Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2011.

liberty, Buckstone instead suggests, more traditionally, that Demetrius is well-suited to the British Madeline because he is royalty, though not necessarily conservative.

Instead, like the real-life Byron, Demetrius is liberal-minded and opposed to injustices against Greeks, telling the fictional Byron "I wish I were a monarch. I would listen to every complaint; I would redress every wrong; the tears of the unhappy should be dried, and my name should not be mentioned without a blessing. Why, in these are sovereign's rights—they are his happiness, they are his duty."[92] Demetrius is an example of good leadership in Greece and perhaps even of form of rule that replicates Britain's constitutional monarchy. Unlike the Ottoman Porte (or British government representatives, both real and fictional), Demetrius would do his "duty" to the people by "listen[ing] to their every complaint," thus ensuring their happiness. Indeed, Buckstone endorses Demetrius's ideas, as evidenced by the playwright having Byron approvingly tell the audience that the young Greek man is "[n]either weak nor foolish. The blood, fortunately, is not yet contaminated by the infection of the wily Turkish diplomatists"—by which he means the British characters in the play.[93] By the time *The Maid of Athens* ends with Demetrius and his Souliote followers arriving at Lepanto to rescue Byron and Madeline from the treacherous Flint-Harrington (whom they arrest), the audience has been fully prepared for such a conclusion. While endorsing Britain's assistance to Greece, Buckstone, in *The Maid of Athens*, also uses his portrayals of Byron and Demetrius to advocate for a Greek nation state that will have leaders who support a liberal democratic ethos.

Conclusion

Discussing Romantic theatre's "virtual absence from Romantic scholarship," Jane Moody suggests that "the sights, sounds and smells of a mass cultural public do indeed pose an uncomfortable challenge to that idealist history of Romanticism which has privileged imagination, solitude and critical self-consciousness over the claims of the body, the institution and the market."[94] It has been almost two decades since Moody made this remark and Romantic theatre has since then certainly established itself as a more prominent subfield in Romanticism; nonetheless, I believe that Moody's emphasis on the public character of British theatre is significant to my own paper which has explored the political and cultural aspects of Romantic Hellenism. If scholars of Romantic Hellenism have in the last two decades encouraged readers to "rethink" the field by considering how nineteenth-century writers engaged not only with an idealized Ancient Greek past, but also with a contemporary Greek present, then British theatre, with "the sights, sounds, and smells of a mass cultural public," might serve as an ideal genre through which to perform this reconceptualization.[95] Because of its potential

92 Ibid., 6.

93 Ibid., 7.

94 Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3.

95 Scholars who have contributed to the "rethinking" of Romantic Hellenism include Jennifer Wallace, whose *Shelley and Greece* portrays Percy Bysshe Shelley's relationship as a complex negotiation of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century European debates and discussions about Ancient and Modern Greece, rather than a naïve celebration of the "ancient ideal"; Constanze Güthenke, who in *Placing Modern Greece* insists that Greek materiality and ideality are interdependent in the works of German Romantic writers; and Stephen Minta, whose *On a Voiceless Shore* emphasizes that Byron's relationship with Greece went beyond the textual to include the material, cultural, political, and sexual realities of the

to reach thousands of audience members with each performance, British Romantic drama was in a unique position to influence British ideas about the Greeks and their war of independence. Reading these plays today provides scholars of Romantic Hellenism yet further insight into the ways in which British Romantic writers thought about Greece, as well as *through* Greece, in order to address the national, political, and cultural issues and decisions that confronted their own country.

George Burges's *The Son of Erin* and John Baldwin Buckstone's *The Maid of Athens* contributed to ongoing discussions and debates about Britain's role in the Greek War of Independence and its aftermath, as well as about Greece and Britain's potential future relations. Despite their different approaches to criticizing British foreign policy—Burges's barely veiled criticism is a sustained attack on the British government, while Buckstone's play is careful to blame only certain British figures who misrepresent his country's attitudes toward Greece's war—both plays demonstrate how British theatre attempted to convince audiences to support Greek independence. In particular, *The Son of Erin* and *The Maid of Athens* make the war appealing to British audiences by portraying Greeks as sharing the values espoused by the liberal protagonists of each play (Lord Byron and Gerall, a Byron-like figure). Indeed, by depicting transcultural relations between Europeans (British and Irish) and Greeks, the two playwrights demonstrate (and foreshadow) the complex international negotiations that contributed to Greek emancipation and the Greeks' integration into a European sphere of influence following the end of the Greek War of Independence. As such, these two dramas which discuss and rethink Greek (as well as British and Irish) identity illustrate how works of British Romantic Hellenism reacted to the conservatism of post-Napoleonic Europe and provided audiences with a vision of a future wherein liberation movements like the Greek War of Independence could help to redefine not only the culture, politics, and national identity of Greece, but of early nineteenth-century Europe.

country. See Jennifer Wallace, *Shelley and Greece: Rethinking Romantic Hellenism* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997); Constanze Güthenke, *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism, 1770-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Stephen Minta, *On a Voiceless Shore: Byron in Greece* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998).

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