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Spectral Empire: Anglo-Ottoman Poetics of Sovereignty

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Abstract

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This dissertation argues that British and Ottoman literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are linked and mutually informed in their representations of sovereignty. My study of the poetry, fiction, chronicles and travelogues from these periods demonstrates that both literary traditions respond to the rivalry between the British and Ottoman empires by envisioning imperial hegemony in an obscure form that transcends the limitations of time and space, such as an "influential spirit," "shadow of power," or "powerful radiance." This project blends physical and digital archival research and literary historicism with critical theory, recruiting insight from Jacques Derrida, Giorgio Agamben, Gayatri C. Spivak, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, to examine the figurative but forceful manifestations of empire. Through its analyses of the poems of John Keats and Şeyh Galib, fictions of Mary Shelley and Giritli Aziz Efendi, historical writings of Edward Gibbon and Abdülhak Molla, and travelogues of William Leake and Ömer Lütfi, among many other better-known and understudied authors, this dissertation renders traceable how imperial sovereignty sustains itself outside its historical-material dimension, and in doing so, it re-conceptualizes empire in global Anglophone literary studies. As it shifts the critical perspective on British literary depictions of imperial sovereignty by juxtaposing these depictions with their contemporary Ottoman accounts for the first time, this project expands the critique of empire beyond its US-Eurocentric contexts by introducing Ottoman sources to post-colonial debates on imperialism.

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Introduction: Hauntology of Empire

When Aşk, the moonstruck protagonist of Şeyh Galib's romance, *Hüsn ü Aşk*, bemoans his separation from his beloved Hüsn, he is encouraged not "to give up the ghost because of one blow" [Bir zahm ile kendin eyleme gayb] (120).[1] Plunging into a journey replete with tests and trials to reunite with Hüsn, Aşk finds himself in an "exile" [durî] that his beloved would not cease to haunt till its very end (174).[2] Occasionally confused with other "forms" [suret] that would leave Aşk "dumbfounded" [hayran], the beloved exerts an ever-growing influence on the lover in Galib's poem without always assuming a physical presence (175).[3] Hüsn establishes and exercises her authority over Aşk like a "great sovereign" [şahenşeh], in defiance of the limits of the matter, through her commanding absence (189).[4]

Afflicted by "the dreadful might/And tyranny of love," John Keats's Endymion implores his beloved Cythnia to "keep back [her] influence" so that she would "not blind [his] sovereign vision" ("Endymion" 175). While despair engulfs Endymion's body and soul, Cythnia remains corporally unidentifiable in the text. Although he misses her in flesh and blood, Endymion cannot help but "feel [her] orby power…coming fresh upon [him]" (198): the beloved surrounds the entire being of the lover in Keats's poem like a ruler who rules invisibly yet affectively. Cythnia appears to Endymion as one of those "glories infinite" that "haunt [him] till they become a cheering light" (149). The "sovereign power of love" enforces itself on Endymion spectrally but forcefully (171).

An Ottoman sheik and a British romantic echoed each other thus at the turn of the nineteenth century in their articulation of how imperial sovereignty haunts the subject in its figurative manifestations. *Hüsn ü Aşk*, written in 1783, records the strange endurance of the

sovereign's reign in its material indecipherability, while "Endymion" (1818) makes analogously legible the sovereign's capacity to subdue the subject without claiming any substance. Both poems are adorned with a vocabulary that openly references imperial jurisdiction when describing the relationship between the lover and the beloved. The power dynamics they amplify between the lover and the beloved reads therefore as a political allegory of how imperial sovereignty constitutes itself, that is, how submission to empire is generated and sustained. If, as Paul de Man suggests, "allegorical representation leads towards a meaning that diverges from the initial meaning," then *Hüsn ü Aşk* and "Endymion" deviate from their manifest content of romance and towards a realm of politically charged intimacies (*Allegories of Reading* 75). These intimacies register as symptoms of a geopolitics that, in Elizabeth A. Povinelli's words, curates "processes by which the dialectic of individual freedom and social bondage is distributed geographically" (10). The politicization of intimacies occurs in Keats's and Galib's texts when they allegorize the making of imperial power by blurring the line between the literal and the figurative, thus conflating love with subjugation, and the beloved with the sovereign. Both poems share a poetics of sovereignty in which empire registers without appearing as such, or even, without appearing in any form of materiality at all.

Hüsn ü Aşk and "Endymion" illustrate an unusual engagement with imperial sovereignty that was widely documented in the British and Ottoman poetry, fiction, travelogues, and chronicles from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Blending archival research, critical theory, and historical scholarship with close readings, *Spectral Empire: Anglo-Ottoman Poetics of Sovereignty* traces such reimagining of what empire is and how it operates in the Anglo-Ottoman literary landscape of the period, contending that the poetics of sovereignty found therein upholds imperial power by obfuscating it. The Ottoman archival sources, accessed

digitally and physically through the Library of Rare Manuscripts at Istanbul University, the Süleymaniye Library, Atatürk Library (all located in Istanbul, Turkey), and Widener Library's Middle Eastern Collection at Harvard University, showcase an attachment to empire that mystifies its underlying power structures. These collections help researchers inventory the Ottoman manuscripts that document figurative portrayals of empire as widely as possible, while also making it possible to cross-read manuscripts and their transliterations physically and virtually. Cross-reading in this context entails moving back and forth between Perso-Arabic and Latin scripts so as to ensure that Ottoman texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are rendered accessible in their archived and transliterated forms to the readers of contemporary Turkish. With clear indications as to where and in what language these archival materials are located, this dissertation offers a roadmap to readers and researchers fluent in Ottoman Turkish and modern Turkish to navigate these sources in their archived and transliterated versions.

The poetics of sovereignty, in the way this dissertation approaches it, designates an imaginative space wherein empire is inscribed in its least imperial-looking forms, in its arguably most mundane emergences. In his book *The Poetics of Sovereignty in American Literature, 1885-1910*, which gauges the interplay between "sovereignty," "state administration," and "literary conventions" in American "regulation of racialized populations," Andrew Hebard cautiously notes that his interest does not lie in "what the state is, but rather how it comes to be experienced in the everyday as a mode of power" (2-3). In a similar manner, in this study I seek to show how empire functions "as a mode of power" beyond its official domain —in sites and instances where it would not even be expected to exist— without attempting to define it in a singular, concrete way. In fact, what my readings establish is that empire pluralizes itself when it does not solidify its presence. Jack Wei Chen, looking at the seventh century Chinese imperial

context, detects that the poetics of the era archives the desire of the "emperor" to "transcend his political identity" and achieve "self-concealment" (70). This particular poetics of sovereignty facilitates the abstraction of the political, which is what I encounter in British and Ottoman writings across genres in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: empire becomes a specter of what it is, and yet it maintains its hold over the subject's relationship with the world.

"The specter is a paradoxical incorporation," explains Jacques Derrida; it is "neither soul nor body, and both one and the other" (*Specters of Marx* 5). When imperial sovereignty spectralizes, as it does in *Hüsn ü Aşk* and "Endymion," it inhabits a liminality that allows it to impinge upon existence untouchably but nonetheless tangibly. As it turns into an apparition so poetically, sovereignty haunts life by deactivating the delineation between presence and absence. More precisely, its absence does not equate sheer nothingness but just another state of being present that refuses to announce itself as such. Understanding sovereignty's ghostly intrusions, then, entails a consideration of what Derrida calls "hauntology," a nuanced rethinking of presence by reckoning with the absences that underwrite it (10). Insofar as "ontology is a conjuration," as Derrida argues, living with ghosts is an ineluctable part of being in and with the world (202). When the ghost is that of empire, accordingly, what becomes at stake is how life is imagined and lived since it is constantly interrupted or regulated by a power that escapes the eye. Aşk and Endymion's struggle to locate what ails them, their search for what suffocates them, dramatizes this conundrum. Empire intrudes on existence by eschewing familiar appearances. It becomes an ontological problem when it gets spectral.

The ontological dimension of sovereignty has been rigorously examined in critical theory. "Sovereignty," Michel Foucault reminds us, infringes on the existence of "the subjects who inhabit it," and as such, it begs a kind of scrutiny that is not limited to "empirical"

interrogations of its material conditions; it calls for a scrutiny of the "ontology of power" (*Power* 208; 337). Giorgio Agamben echoes Foucault as he questions what constitutes power beneath its visible juridical-political exercises while he ponders "the ontological structure of sovereignty" (32). To think of sovereignty in ontological terms, therefore, amounts to being cognizant of the entwinement between politics and various modes of being in the world.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whom Agamben credits for prompting political theory to pursue the question of ontology rather consistently, offer the first extended analysis of the ontological undercurrents of sovereignty in relation to empire.[5] They assert that "political theory must deal with ontology" because "politics cannot be constructed from the outside"; "politics," they maintain, "is a field of pure immanence" where "Empire forms" and "where our bodies and minds are embedded" (*Empire* 354). Empire —given that it is a globally-oriented system of governance that lays claim to the world figuratively or literally by naming, ruling, dividing and expanding it— could indeed not be more relevant to this ontologically-minded articulation of sovereignty. In the scope of this dissertation the terms "ontology" and "ontological" are understood and used in this spirit, as indicators of the materially elusive yet consequential realm of politics. The terms, hence, give language to the ways in which empire actively yet imperceptibly forces itself upon the subject's existence. Derrida's notion of hauntology blends well with this critically nuanced look at empire's ontological influence, enabling the detection of imperial sovereignty through its silhouettes when and where it may not be physically evident.

Hardt and Negri's elaborations on "the ontological constitution of empire" are helpful in spelling out the epistemological excess posed by imperial sovereignty in its dematerializations (*Multitudes* 137). And yet, as Christian Thorne points out in his scathing critique of the ontological turn in political thought, Hardt and Negri seem to overemphasize the existential

pervasiveness of empire, which might mistakenly lead to the conclusion that "no humanly arrangement…could dislodge it from its primacy" (Thorne 97). Although Hardt and Negri does not remove human agency from the realm of political ontology, they end up leaving some space for dangerous equations (as the one underlined by Thorne) in their theses by treating Empire as a hegemonic force incommensurate with the oppressive power structures that preceded it historically. The fraught distinction they draw between the capital E empire, which they take to be a byproduct of the modern global capitalism, and imperialisms of the preceding ages, does not hold in my close readings. The process of empire dematerializing itself, recorded by Galib and Keats alongside many other British and Ottoman writers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, does not indicate a phenomenon that is peculiar to a specific present. Rather, the obscuration of imperial power diagnosed in its Anglo-Ottoman poetics pertains to the future as much as the past and the present of empire, heralding its comeback even before it departs. Hence, mindful of its multifaceted temporality, *Spectral Empire* navigates the ontological dimension of sovereignty without divorcing it from the *longue durée* of imperialism, contending that the specter of empire is part and parcel of its history. The realms of the immaterial and the historical, insofar as they pertain to empire, converge and co-constitute each other, requiring a dialectical perspective that refuses to place a false dichotomy between them. Partha Chatterjee warns against such dehistoricization of imperial sovereignty on the grounds of its material and official indeterminacy when he states calmly "just as we continue to live in the age of nation-states, so have we not transcended the age of empire" (*The Black Hole of Empire* 345). Embracing a critical vigilance that resists pigeonholing empire in ahistorical theoretical formulations, this dissertation exposes the hidden constituents of the historicity of imperial

sovereignty, namely, the historically-materially evasive attachments to empire that make up its very history.

Empire's capacity to cast itself over social existence as a ubiquitous force is not in contradiction with its globally felt dominance in the case of the British state. The gradual expansion of the empire in Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries makes it somewhat easy to comprehend how British imperial sovereignty came to fuse its power with a sense of omnipresence. The ghostly omnipresence of empire pronounced in the British literature of these periods cannot be thought apart from the fact that the British Empire extended its hegemony (militarily or economically) across the globe back then, recreating the world in its own image (in a manner of speaking). The British Empire did so not necessarily by Anglicizing the world evenly, but by making existence itself comprehensible as an imperial configuration. In its literary imaginary, therefore, the British Empire can be said to finally manage to be coextensive with the world, and signify something wider than a geopolitical entity operating strictly within the realm of the state politics, policies and diplomacies. Such ontologically charged aestheticization of empire in British literature mirrors the historically grounded perception vocalized by the British statesman Lord Curzon at the end of the nineteenth century: "imperialism was increasingly the 'faith of a nation' and not merely 'the creed of a political party'" (Qtd in Mehta, 194). When conceived in light of the poetics of sovereignty that renders discernible existentially suggestive identifications with power, history seems to verify the ontological reach of the British Empire.

This correlation between the historical ascendancy and spectral ubiquity of empire may not, accordingly, put a strain on logic and reason in the context of Britain. However, it does seem much less pertinent to a case like the Ottoman Empire, which was undergoing geographic

contraction rather than expansion at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire was becoming a ghost in a different, and most literal, sense of the word as its sovereign body started to fall apart and lose its imperial vitality. Unlike Britain, it was exhibiting clear signs of exhaustion with a debilitating economy and hegemony from the eighteenth century onward. The Ottoman state's geopolitical conundrums, which had been palpable since the Treaty of Karlowitcz (1699) that sealed the end of its presence as a hegemonic power in Central Europe, were exacerbated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on multiple fronts. Territorial contraction caused by wars with Russia from 1768 to 1792, and sociopolitical unrest ignited by the Janissaries traumatized the empire, ultimately resulting in treaties such as the Treaty of Jassy (1792) that "provided foreign powers with new and effective means of interfering with the internal and external policies of the Ottoman state" (Kasaba 33). The only trajectory available to the Ottoman Empire after that point was that of a descent. And such would be the conventional depiction of the late Ottoman Empire in what Fatma Müge Göçek calls the "decline thesis," the still prevalent narrative in which the Ottoman Empire is conjured up disproportionately as an example of imperial collapse (563). The spectralization of empire in the Ottoman case, hence, was not as metaphorical as it was in the case of Britain. Nonetheless, while they stood at the opposite ends of the spectrum of sovereignty, these two empires became similarly imaginable as specters, albeit for different reasons. And it is this difference established by historical facts what makes the literary-comparative study of the British and Ottoman empires compelling, since this difference is contested by their shared poetics of sovereignty.

The presumed incomparability of the British and Ottoman empires justified through geopolitical hierarchies is contradicted by poetic similitudes. It goes without saying that the tension between the facts and poetics of sovereignty does not vanish, nor do the British and

Ottoman empires suddenly become comparable as rivals; still, testing the comparability of these two empires, which is what this dissertation does, reveals that this tension is central to the making of power in contrasting imperial contexts. Studying the British and Ottoman empires comparatively, more precisely, activates a critical recognition of the contradiction integral to the imaginary of sovereignty in itself, which is that empire absorbs the idea of its absence (its spectrality) as its *sine qua non*. For it was because empire has the potential to self-servingly negate its own presence in its so distinct historical and geographical trajectories as those epitomized by the British and Ottoman states that Galib and Keats, and many of their contemporaries, could conjure similar specters of sovereignty while inhabiting starkly dissimilar bodies of governance.

Interventions

Spectral Empire delves into the shadowy dimension of power in order to unearth the layers of imperialism that are yet to be excavated in literary studies at large. The entwinement between imperialist visions and literary imagination has been duly scrutinized in literary criticism. Edward W. Said voiced the critical imperative that many scholars took to heart when he stated, "imperialism governs an entire field of study, imagination and scholarly institutions— in such a way as to make its avoidance an intellectual and historical impossibility" (*Orientalism* 14). Whether it is directly cited or not, Said's groundbreaking account of the infiltration of imperial mindsets into literature conditioned many critics to adopt historicism to discern how literary productions reproduced, or relied on the logic and resources of imperialism. In the field of Romanticism in particular, the works of Debbie Lee, Tim Fulford, Timothy Morton, and Saree Makdisi, to name only a few of them, have shifted the focus from textual interiority to the

imperial contexts that shaped the contours of the literary imagination.[6] Lee demonstrated that aesthetic preoccupations with notions such as liberty originated at a historical juncture when the slave trade and plantation slavery "led to the interpretation in Western culture of slavery as the polar opposite of freedom" (18). Morton, likewise, disclosed the historical-political referents of the trope of "blood sugar," as a way of "testing connections between colonialism, materialism, and representation" (87). Fulford claimed in a similar vein that "colonialist poetry" of authors like Robert Southey "made renewed attempts to construct an ideology of imperialism" (36). While it has been acknowledged often enough that literary imagination is, as Makdisi concluded, "inextricably bound up with the circumstances of imperial rule," the relationship between empire and literature has been confined to a historical determinism that ended up impoverishing the very critique of empire ("Romanticism and Empire" 44). Literary representations have been too eagerly treated as carbon copies of imperial designs reflective of exactly how empire behaved in its historical-materiality. *Spectral Empire* breaks away from these conventional one-way interpretations of the interlacement between imperialism and literary aesthetics by bringing to the fore what happens to empire when it is a figural yet affective construct. The consideration of the metaphors, similes, allegories, and personifications of empire compels scholars to recast the relationship between empire and literature in a new light that illuminates how the former not only shapes, but also assumes new shapes in the vocabulary of the latter. In its figurative afterlives, empire's solid, literally political and geopolitical functionality is not utterly abandoned but radically modified with an effectiveness that is intangibly pressing, with an operative presence that is not measurable in its materiality. My intervention in the literary critique of imperialism, in other words, concerns the very positioning and definition of empire in tandem with its poetics. This dissertation redefines empire in literary studies by attending to how it

changes in and through literature rather than the other way around. In sharp contrast to Said's assertion that "imperialism's culture was not invisible," I argue that literature can actually be the vessel for empire to "conceal its worldly affiliations and interests," which, for Said, was inconceivable (*Culture and Imperialism* xxi). Empire does not simply influence and inform the literary imagination, but also gets altered therein into abstract forms and shapes that evade definability in its commonly embraced historicist hermeneutics. *Spectral Empire* foregrounds in its analyses the mutual impact empire and literature have on each other as constitutive forces in the molding of their horizons, and thereby traverses the ontological terrains of imperialism.

In romantic studies, the Ottoman Empire has been treated as an absent-presence that matters only in its symbolic value when probing British aesthetics and politics from cosmopolitan vantage points. A volatile signifier for a site of "sexual slavery" (Cavaliero 39) and simultaneously a space of "freedom from the constraints of the western marriage" (Ballaster 65), the Ottoman Empire emblematized for scholars at times "the antithesis of the British" (Turhan 27), and at others a cause of "imperial envy" for Britain (Maclean 20).[7] As such, notwithstanding its slipperiness, the meaning of the Ottoman Empire has been constructed and deconstructed univocally in denial of Ottoman agency to represent itself. What scholars of romanticism have talked about when they talked about the Ottoman and the British empires together is merely the former's representational function for the latter. Needless to say, this inequality in the distribution of critical attention derives from the Eurocentricism still plaguing the field of romanticism. That the Ottoman sources have been removed from literary analyses of Anglo-Ottoman encounters, in this sense, is not surprising despite its obvious absurdity. This dissertation counters this sanctioned overshadowing of Ottoman narratives in the unquestioned reliance on British texts by of the Ottoman Empire as it shifts the focus to Ottoman imperiality

indexed in Ottoman sources by giving equal weight to British and Ottoman literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the first time. Access to Ottoman literature, which reminds scholars of the long-neglected imperial status of the Ottoman state, makes possible a reevaluation of British romantic reflections on the Ottoman Empire. Re-reading British romantic literature with emphasis on Ottoman imperiality brings to light how empire's existence was always predicated on a consciously comparative look at imperialism that served not to dismantle but justify sovereignty. The comparative critique of empire formulated by romantics, therefore, served to legitimate the British imperial sovereignty in its literature. This conflicted criticism of imperialism in romantic literature, I contend, emanates from the pressures placed on the vision of liberty by multi-imperially determined conditions. Recognizing and accentuating the contingencies set by the interactions between empires, however, does not neutralize the asymmetries embedded in the strategic anti-imperialism of romantics; rather, it extends the scrutiny of the limitations of the romantic vision of liberation beyond the empire-colony dynamics, rendering visible its hidden roots rather in the dynamics between empires.

Consulting the Ottoman sources for the first time in literary considerations of Anglo-Ottoman relations, *Spectral Empire* sets out to fill in a major lacuna in postcolonial scholarship wherein the Ottoman Empire has been reduced to a ghost, continually misrepresented from Said onward. Said's *Orientalism* failed to discern the imperiality of the Ottoman Empire as it reminded its readers recurrently, "the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient" (60). The collapse of the distinction between colonized "orientals" and imperial Ottomans curtailed the postcolonial readability of Ottoman literature as an archive of imperialist and colonialist impetuses. That is, the Ottoman Empire and its residual legacies in and outside of contemporary Turkey have eschewed

interrogations as a result of the enduring amnesia in postcolonial literary criticism regarding the imperiality of the Ottoman Empire. This study creates a paradigm shift in postcolonial studies not only by opening Ottoman literature up to interrogation as an unexplored archive of imperial and colonial narrative, but also by expanding the vocabulary of the critique of imperialism as it compels critics to reckon with projects and enterprises of hegemony that did not materialize but left behind residual urges, frustrations, and grievances. For dealing with the Ottoman Empire urges postcolonial scholars to peruse closely what is at stake in 'failed expansionisms' where imperial desires may indeed outlive the material demise of the imperial regime and keep summoning empire back to life.

Given the magnitude of this misprision in terms of its political repercussions (e.g. the foreclosure of the possibility of holding the Ottoman Empire accountable for the past and present occurrences of imperial violence), returning to Ottoman sources, in which Ottoman imperiality registers loudly and abundantly, is not just a gesture that provides aesthetic relief from Eurocentric models of literary comparison. Retrieving the forgotten imperial character of the Ottoman Empire fosters in Ottoman studies an already much belated development of critical discourses that undo the nostalgia and apologia for mythologized Ottoman heritages. While — given the currently available historical information— Ottoman imperialism is a historically irrefutable phenomenon, the relevance and significance of this subject has been consistently undermined in Ottoman Studies with a misplaced emphasis on the failures of Ottoman imperial and colonial efforts. Whereas global Anglophone literary studies have left it completely unexamined, mainstream historical and literary studies have acknowledged Ottoman expansionism only as an unrealized, inconsequential endeavor, unworthy of a comparison with its Western counterparts in terms of its legacies and afterlives. Therefore, in order to read texts

from the Ottoman Empire with a focus on the material-historical coordinates of imperialist narratives, a robust epistemological account, whereby the imperiality of the Ottoman Empire becomes knowable as a fact, is a vital necessity. This account has been in the making, slowly but decidedly, thanks to the groundbreaking works of a group of postcolonial historians, including Eve Troutt Powell, Madeline C. Zilfi, and Mostafa Minawi. My readings of Ottoman Turkish texts in this work are animated by this nascent postcolonial historiography of the Ottoman Empire in Ottoman studies, and complement it by using literature itself as an archive for a broader historical investigation of Ottoman imperialism in its varying contexts, shapes, and forms.

Critiquing Ottoman imperialism means in this study being unequivocally critical of British imperialism as well. On the one hand, insofar as thinking of empire requires thinking of a constellation of powers —a network of competitions and negotiations that pull imperial sovereignties into and out of existence-— there is nothing extraordinary about approaching the British and Ottoman empires comparatively. On the other, this comparison becomes extraordinary when its direction shifts, meaning, when one stops comparing these two empires through conventional Anglocentric frameworks. What happens when British literature is re-read in conjunction with Ottoman texts, instead of the other way around? Motivated by this curiosity, this dissertation not only revises the British depictions of the Ottoman Empire by juxtaposing them with Ottoman self-representations. It also reconsiders how empire itself is defined in the British literary imagination when the Ottoman Empire figures in the picture as a contender. As it delves into the macrocosm of imperial sovereignty and traces its multi-imperial configuration, this dissertation follows an itinerary where the British and Ottoman imaginaries overlap to inflect how empire appears on both sides.

Whereas comparisons between empires are fraught with questions of incommensurability resting on epistemological, cultural and historical idiosyncrasies that divide them, imperial sovereignty itself is well known to hinge on comparative evaluations of power. What this means is that empire is at its core a comparative construct, containing references to multiple hegemonic actors to construe its legitimization. This insight, borrowed from the works of Jane Burbank, Laura Doyle, and Barbara Fuchs, Ann Laura Stoler, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam inspires my comparative readings of Anglo-Ottoman poetics of sovereignty and undergirds my contribution to the interdisciplinary field of empire studies. If empire lives, as Stoler aptly puts it, on a "competitive politics of comparison," and as such is unthinkable in its singularity, then we are in need of a language for imperial comparisons that enables non-apologetic, and un-redeeming approaches to empire ("Considerations" 38). How to compare empires without falling into false equations or differentiations that might compromise the critique of imperialism? Grappling with this question, and working to form an uncompromising language for comparative criticism of empire, my dissertation enriches and strengthens the analytical discourses available to empire studies. For the sake of clarity, comparing empires —in the way it is done in this study— does not amount to determining the lesser evil, and redeeming one imperial agent at the expense of the other. On the contrary, in the comparative interrogations of *Spectral Empire* the critique of imperial sovereignty does not change its target depending on its scale and locus. What is sought after here is a critical alertness to the mutual answerability of empires that promises the formation of global solidarities through a shared willingness to put the sovereign on trial. With its balanced comparative and transdisciplinary approach to the Anglo-Ottoman representations of empire, this dissertation seeks to envisage a horizontal disenchantment with imperial sovereignty.

Itinerary

Spectral Empire is divided into two parts. The first half of the dissertation examines reflections on the sovereign statuses of the British and Ottoman empires, establishing parallels between the two literary traditions by locating a shared investment in the abstraction of power. Comprising the first two chapters, this part showcases how British and Ottoman literatures mirror each other in their mutual tendency to summon empire in immaterial terms, indexing emotional, spiritual, and eroticized engagements with imperial sovereignty. Both chapters in this part zoom in on instances in writings across genres wherein empire assumes meanings and forms that are not identical to those registered in historical narratives; they illustrate the defamiliarization of empire that facilitates its movement across the interlocked spaces of aesthetics and politics, history and fantasy, and the personal and the ideological.

In Chapter One, "Metaphors and Ruins of Empire in British Romanticism," I propose that empire was not simply inflecting literary vision in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but was also mutating therein into an unlikely dynamic whose political strength lies in its capacity to elude the gaze of historicist critique. Departing from John Keats's poem "To My Brothers," (1816) the first section of the chapter considers this mutation by focusing on the metaphorical articulations of empire through a conversation between Keats, de Man, Hardt and Negri. While de Man, Hardt and Negri provide a critical vocabulary that is useful in unpacking the implications of what Keats's calls "gentle empire," I suggest that Keats's poem offers a corrective to these thinkers' understanding of the charged relationship between metaphor and sovereignty. Keats's metaphor operates as a warning from history as to how empire can mystify itself politically. Whereas my discussion centers on "To My Brothers," it is not restricted to this poem or Keats's poetry in general. Keats's metaphorical take on empire is not an isolated one,

but an illustrative case in which metaphors do not ideologically contradict imperial sovereignty , but on the contrary, nourish both its imaginary and actuality. I show that Keats's poem symptomatizes a wider obfuscation of empire that registers also in the works of Percy B. Shelley and Anna Laetitia Barbauld wherein metaphor plays its political tricks. Reading these authors together with an eye on the metaphors of empire makes visible a continuum of representation that shows similar engagements with power despite positional dissimilarities.

Insofar as its metaphor attests to the transfiguration of empire, its metaphorization can be taken as an indicator of the end of imperial sovereignty as is, and its return in an abstract form. This de-literalization of power, the chapter claims, is both a metaphorical and historical phenomenon, crystalizing as a literal concern in eighteenth and nineteenth century historiographies of the fall of empires. The growing number of historical reflections on the end of empires that were centered on the imagery of ruins strangely included the British Empire in the narrative of imperial decline. Whether they aimed at affirming a classical imperial lineage or providing cautionary tales, the chronicles of imperial ruination made it consciously (or collaterally) possible to envision the end of the British Empire at the height of its global hegemony. The second section of the chapter contrasts this peculiar historiography of ruins with its romantic interpretations. It studies the writings of Felicia Hemans, Lord Byron, Barbauld, Mary Shelley and Robert Southey in conjunction with their common source of inspiration on the topic of imperial ruination, Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. I contend that these authors experiment with the narrative of decline subversively in their literary depictions, and record empire's capacity to outlive its material existence. This section concludes that romantic representations of imperial ruins capture the spectralization of

empire that allows it to transcend its historically familiar forms and turn into an existentially pervasive dynamic.

Chapter Two, "Imperial Ruination and Love of the Sovereign," continues with the scrutiny of the obscure grounds of sovereignty by retracing it in a site where it is arguably much less self-evident: the Ottoman Empire. It is the contention of the chapter that despite the contrasting geopolitical positions of the British and Ottoman empires, uncannily comparable articulations of attachment to sovereignty are registered in their literatures from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Ottoman writing of these periods reveals how empire maintains its authoritative and regulative influence on the subject, not simply because it holds factually verifiable power (which it did), but because it seeks to mystify that power through its discursive negation. Centering on the works of Galib, the first section of the chapter discusses such mystification of imperial sovereignty in tandem with the Ottoman discourse of mysticism that informed it. The key rhetorical device that enables the abstraction of the politics of empire is the spiritually loaded metaphor of the beloved sovereign. In the mystical writing of Galib and his contemporaries this metaphor gives a spiritual edge to the authority of the sultan and expands the reach of his power beyond his physical limits. Similar to Keats's "gentle empire," the metaphor of the beloved sovereign naturalizes sovereignty as it turns submission into an act of love, a voluntary abandonment of being free and politically able. To elucidate this unexposed dimension of power in Galib's mysticism, I draw on Agamben's notion of "potentiality." As he proposes that one must pay heed to potentiality in order to dig into "the ontological root of every political power," Agamben considers "love" the proper medium of a potential resistance to sovereignty (*Homo Sacer* 26). Galib's poetry, on the other hand, illuminates that which is not accounted for in this analogy: love can occasion a commitment to sovereignty which forces itself upon the

subject as an "ontological" condition, in the way Agamben phrases it. I suggest that the metaphor of the beloved sovereign in Galib's and other authors' mystical writing cautions against the sovereign's own "potential" to posit itself as a powerless being and exploit love to consolidate its power.

Such devotion to imperial sovereignty in the case of Ottoman Empire, however, begs the question: how could it justify itself at a time when empire was conspicuously lacking in power? While the fall of the Ottoman Empire is a historical fact, it cannot be the paradigm that dictates how the Ottoman Empire is historicized. This simple caveat underscores what is problematic about the decline thesis wherein the shortsighted fixation on imperial demise fostered a historiographical defeatism that has until recently disabled the critique of Ottoman imperial sovereignty. An earlier formulation of this defeatist historiography, the second section of the chapter suggests, is found in Constantin François Volney's *Les ruines, ou Méditation sur les révolutions des empires*. Volney's portrayal of the Ottoman Empire as an emblem of imperial ruination cultivated a romantic representation that dehistoricized the Ottoman imperial agency that was actually still in place. The historical and aesthetic fallacy originating from Volney's narrative has remained unquestioned in literary studies where Ottoman archives have been ironically excluded from the very debates that concerned the Ottoman Empire. Returning to the Ottoman writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as its site of primary sources, the second section of the chapter reaches beyond the Volneyesque perception of the Ottoman Empire. Contrasting the Ottoman mystical concept of ruins, "harabat," which signifies an absolute resignation to being ruined with a melancholic desire to achieve transcendental oneness with existence, with that of Volney's, I investigate the ways in which imperial decline was conceived by the Ottoman authors. The section's discussion of İzzet Molla's poetry in

conjunction with other literary texts and demonstrates that in the imageries of "harabat" sovereignty rises again from its ruins.

The first part of the dissertation thus unearths a persistent investment in a spectral presence of power in British and Ottoman reflections on empire, regardless of that empire's geopolitical trajectory. After establishing their comparability on the basis of their poetics of sovereignty, I then begin to investigate how British and Ottoman authors themselves compared their empires. This is the central question of the second part of the dissertation, featuring the third and fourth chapters, where I amplify the overlaps between the historical and aesthetic dimensions of the spectral empire. My intention in this part of the study is to illustrate how spectral empire, as a literary construct, was already a historical phenomenon that registered in the comparative reflections of the British and Ottoman writers on imperialism. Considering how the British and Ottoman intellectuals situated their empires in comparison to others as they commented on inter-imperial encounters in conflict zones such as Greece and India, the third and fourth chapters reveal that empire is historically a comparative construct and its validity and appeal may precede its materialization. The history of imperialism recorded in the British and Ottoman literatures suggests that empire can indeed first haunt the places where it has not established itself physically yet so that it can materialize there in the future. In other words, the spectrality of empire may indeed be understood as a condition for its materiality insofar as its future is concerned.

Chapter Three, "The Orient Becomes Empire: Ottoman Imperialism in the British Imagination," revises the conventional readings (or readability) of the Ottoman Empire as a disempowered oriental figure in romantic depictions. With the insight gathered earlier from Ottoman sources regarding Ottoman imperial agency, I discover that British romantics actually

conceived of and responded to the Ottoman Empire not only as an aggressor, but also as a rival of the British Empire. In the first section of the chapter, I return to Percy B. Shelley's writing to elaborate on the impact of Ottoman imperial dominance on the racially and culturally charged idealizations of Greece. Shelley's prose and poetry capture vividly the ideological ambivalences and contradictions of the romantic endorsement of the Greek struggle. The Ottoman "yoke" in Greece was described and condemned in the poetry, fiction, and travelogues of the period in a language that is distinctly anti-imperial and orientalist. The pro-Greek rhetoric of romantics catapulted itself through the very ethno-cultural and racial discriminations reified by British imperialism while at the same time communicating an anti-imperial vision. At the heart of this paradox was the imagined dichotomy between the British and Ottoman empires in terms of their role in the predicament of Greece. If the Ottoman Empire was the abject oppressor of Greeks, Britain was their chosen savior.

In the second section of the chapter I study the wider geopolitical landscape in which a peculiar discourse of emancipation characterized the Ottoman Empire as enslaver, and the British as emancipator, as exemplified in the reactions of Byron, Shelley and Landor to the Greek uprising. Deploying the tropes of emancipation and slavery in their fictional and non-fictional works, these authors reference the recent abolition of the slave trade to compel Britain to intervene in Ottoman invasion of Greece, that is, to live up to its self-proclaimed reputation as the global arbiter of liberty. The discourse of emancipation thus became, in a strikingly problematic way, applicable to the situation of Greeks as it also sharpened the contrast between the two empires. As such, the Greek revolution occasioned a comparison between empires that was imbricated by a racial and cultural hierarchy. British Romantic comparisons between the British and Ottoman empires, grounded on a concurrently orientalist and counter-imperial logic,

show how spectral empire is solidified in history, for they evidence in quite material ways the irony that sovereignty is justified by the vocabulary that propagates its material collapse.

Paralleling the third chapter's excavation of the historical grounds of spectral attachments to empire in British sources, Chapter Four, "Defeating the British Empire: Poetics and Politics of Ottoman Supremacy," considers the Ottoman poetics of sovereignty with an eye on its geopolitical conditions and resonances. The first section examines the poetry and letters of Abdülhak Hâmid Tarhan with a focus on his writings in and on India. Hâmid's reflections on India are often undergirded by explicit or implicit comparisons between empires. It is my contention that the apparent material impossibility of transplanting Ottoman rule to India did not render it unimaginable for Ottoman intellectuals like Hâmid: it was the comparison between the British Empire as a violent presence of authority in India and the Ottoman Empire as an absent alternative that consolidated Ottoman imperialism in spirit and deeds. In a striking resemblance to Byron, Landor, and Percy B. Shelley, Hâmid deploys comparison to simultaneously critique imperialism and vindicate empire. The spectral visualization of the Ottoman Empire as a benign alternative to the brutal physical existence of Britain fosters for him and others the imaginary of the Ottoman colonization of India. In Hâmid's vision, the Ottoman Empire is potent enough to compete with Britain over India by forming intimate alliances through the weaponization of multilingual and multicultural connections. Persian in particular comes to the aid of Hâmid in literary as well as non-fictional iterations of his imperial agenda. Contrary to the celebratory interpretations of Ottoman multilingualism as a marker of a heterogeneous social belonging, I reveal the discomforting functionality of plurilingual agency in the actual and imagined imperial enterprises of the Ottoman state. In other words, I claim that Ottoman multicultural and

multilingual consciousness was conducive to a colonial imaginary that relied on the mobilization provided by such sophisticated worldliness.

The trope of a multilingual charmer helps eroticize imperial masculinity and redefine domination and conquest in the form of an intimacy, which is visibly at work in Ottoman colonial narratives. In the second section, I elaborate on this argument by drawing attention to how linguistic mastery is entwined with a performance of masculinity, the combination of which contributes to the homosocial imagination of an idealized Ottoman imperial identity. Looking at the novels of Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem and Ahmet Midhat Efendi, I show that Ottoman anxiety over multilingual potency is explicitly a gendered phenomenon, communicating imperially suggestive sexual frustrations and ambitions of Ottoman male protagonists. These fictions encapsulate perfectly the fact that masculine command over multiple languages was anticipated to repair the collapsing Ottoman imperial character, serving as an imaginary antidote to the reality of a weakening Ottoman Empire. Idealized, morally superior male characters (capable of seducing others, and saving and accumulating wealth, by speaking several tongues) promise aesthetic remedies to the ailments of an empire emasculated by foreign cultural and economic forces.

The end of the fourth chapter marks the conclusion of the second part, by which point the dissertation makes clear that Anglo-Ottoman spectralizations of empire occasion a comparative imaginary of imperial sovereignty characterized by a historicizable immateriality. *Spectral Empire* gestures forward in its coda, "The Passing of Empire," to a moment in history when the British and Ottoman Empires came closest to their official death: the First World War period. In this conclusion, I ponder the implications of the spectral force of empire in the twentieth century, investigating the enduring presence of empire through the novels and essays of Virginia Woolf

and Halide Edib Adıvar. Contemporaneous with each other, these authors occupy a crucial threshold between seemingly irreconcilable national and imperial regimes. Trespassing the aesthetic and political boundaries between imperial and national sovereignties, the fictional and non-fictional works of Woolf and Edib record the very same afterlife of empire in the twentieth century that was predicted in the prose and poetry of their predecessors. Their writings showcase a striking continuity in Anglo-Ottoman conjurations of imperial sovereignty throughout the centuries. At a moment in history that saw a global struggle "to put national unity at the center of political imagination," Woolf and Edib stared at a specter that refused to be entirely absent (Burbank and Cooper 2). They knew, and cautioned their future readers, us, that empire would survive its material death.

Part I

Specters of Empire

Chapter One: Metaphors and Ruins of Empire in British Romanticism

"Gentle Empire"

> Small, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,
> And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
> Like whispers of the household gods that keep
> A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls.
>
> Keats, "To My Brothers" 53.

> Whenever there is metaphor, the literal denomination of a particular entity is inevitable.
>
> de Man, *Allegories of Reading* 148.

> This is where the idea of Empire reappears, not as a territory, not in the determinate dimensions of its time and space, and not from the standpoint of a people and its history, but rather simply as the fabric of an ontological human dimension that tends to become universal.
>
> Hardt and Negri, *Empire* 385.

A strange intimacy between the literal and the figurative manifests in metaphor, and opens up a larger space of inquiry for the politics of representation, according to de Man. De Man's discussion of metaphor's privilege to deactivate the distinction between the factual and the imaginary points to the shortfalls of historical-material reasoning. In Keats's "To My Brothers," one of his least discussed poems, metaphor bends the mind with the curious introduction of empire to the emotional structure of the text. Empire's metaphorical presence defies logic as it shape-shifts into a dynamic unlike what it was before, and yet markedly reminiscent of it.

Given de Man's well-known scholarly investment in Keats, and Keats's famous tendency to dismiss "any irritable reaching after fact and reason," the link between the poet and the critic is already self-evident ("Letter to George and Tom Keats" 109). However, their shared critical "negative capability" is not how and why I bring them together here. Instead, thinking of de Man and Keats together proves worthwhile because of the questions it raises: What happens to empire when it becomes "gentle," metaphorically speaking? Where is it transferred to, or carried over? How does its mutation in its metaphorical economy differ from and pertain to its "literal denomination"?

At stake in every metaphor, as de Man underscores, is the differentiation between experiential accuracy and literary invention as well as the historicity and aesthetic registers of an event or an entity, since metaphor "changes a referential situation suspended between fiction and fact…into a literal fact" (*Allegories of Reading* 151). Metaphor, in other words, occasions a conflation, not a rupture, between competing versions of representation, and as such it enables the consideration of that which is concrete and real as amorphous and abstract, or vice versa. De Man approaches this representational confusion positively on the grounds of its potential to contest absolutism. However, his argument sidelines the fact that the resistance metaphor grants against one-way interpretations can take a problematic turn when it serves sovereignty.[11] More precisely, contradictions engendered by metaphor can perversely advantage the politics of sovereignty as they might enact discursive neutralizations of power relations. Metaphor, hence, may not always destabilize the exercise of power but may help consolidate it by veiling it and generating in return veiled complicities.

Discerning the metaphorical enactments of sovereignty amounts to the exposure of its uneven yet pervasive circulation. Doing so corresponds, in Foucault's words, to a perceptiveness

toward "a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others" (*Ethics* 262). Keats's metaphorization of empire amplifies this caveat. His poem, I argue, presents a case in which the metaphorical and ontological correlates of imperial sovereignty become detectable, displaying empire's capacity to permeate the most unlikely sites of human habitation.

No study has delved into empire's ontological dimension so vigorously as Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000). In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri strategically remove the concept of empire from its historicized understandings, and rearticulate it (with capital E) as the unseen but universally experienced presence of global capitalism. This presence emanates neither from the politics of contemporary states, nor from the political structures inherited from the bygone empires. Empire "is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (*Empire* xii). An invisible yet palpable force, Empire not only acts upon all but is also simultaneously, horizontally internalized: it is the name of an ontological architecture attached to the very being of the subject.[12] "Ontology," Hardt and Negri remind us, "is not an abstract science" but a critical site of exploration that enables the "recognition of the production and reproduction of being and…political reality" (*Empire* 362). They insist that the "imperial domain is political" because empire leaves its mark on the regulation and imagination of existence even where it is not meant to be (*Empire* 354).

Although its thinkers do not phrase it so, Empire is a metaphorical construct, uncannily akin to Keats's "gentle empire," rejecting, likewise, literalization in its much controversial aversion to being historicized.[13] Keats's empire inscribes itself gently in seemingly politics-free domains, and collapses any presumed separation between the existential and the political,

transcending, as Hardt and Negri put it, "the determinate dimensions of its time and space." In this sense, Keats's poem can be said to prefigure Hardt and Negri's formulation not because it portends the spectrality that defines their Empire, but because it records the ontologization of empire. Keats's "gentle empire," however, differs radically from Hardt and Negri's Empire since it does not necessarily stand in for a purely ahistorical configuration. What I locate in "gentle empire" is a warning that does not distract from the material legacies of empire; on the contrary, it brings to focus the abstraction that helps foster and protect them. Empire, contrary to Hardt and Negri's conviction, can never be analyzed "outside of history or at the end of history" (*Empire* xv). Hardt and Negri's reluctance to grapple with the historical underpinnings of the ontology of empire, and de Man's oversight regarding metaphor's role in the perpetuation of sovereignty become pronounced when thought alongside Keats's poem. Keats's "gentle empire" articulates that which is left muted in these thinkers' accounts, namely, the simultaneously historical and immaterial constitution of sovereignty.

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By demonstrating the possible metaphorizations of empire, "To My Brothers" illuminates the travels of this political entity beyond its literal and material itineraries: the poem therefore does not uproot empire from its history while it captures how empire ontologizes itself, meaning, how empire renders its sovereignty intrinsic to human existence:

> Small, busy flames play through the fresh laid coals,
> And their faint cracklings o'er our silence creep
> Like whispers of the household gods that keep
> A gentle empire o'er fraternal souls
> And while, for rhymes, I search around the poles,
> Your eyes are fix'd, as in poetic sleep,
> Upon the lore so voluble and deep,
> That aye at fall of night our care condoles.

> This is your birth-day Tom, and I rejoice
> That thus it passes smoothly, quietly.
> Many such eves of gently whis'pring noise
> May we together pass, and calmly try
> What are this world's true joys, -ere the great voice,
> From its fair face, shall bid our spirits fly. (53)

First, a soothing fire accompanies familial closeness in the poem, inviting readers to visualize a small, cozy place. Then appears the "gentle empire," for which Keats cautiously builds a home by imparting no concrete frame on what otherwise looks like a domestic space. The sedate residence of the Keats brothers is enclosed by no boundaries, unhindered by walls or doors. As such, without any fixture, the house escapes spatial fixedness, and could be characterized accurately as an ever-expanding realm in itself, one that is most suitable for an empire. Its inside and outside are not strictly demarcated, but instead absorbed (or could be potentially absorbed) within its boundlessness. Keats's house, therefore, has an imperial design: therein empire is domesticized. In her study of the link between British domesticity and imperialism, Jane Lydon argues that "sentimental investment in the home and family was the basis for colonial project of assimilation" (16). The metaphor of empire as a safe and peaceful house was therefore at work historically in the imperial imagination of the self and the other. In Keats's poem, however, the representational economy of empire is not simply held together through metaphor. The very imperiality of empire is eclipsed in its metaphorical gentleness, allowing imperial sovereignty to be accommodated as an existential necessity. Empire transfigures into an individually felt and socially needed element that is summoned to guard the intimate and isolated existence of brothers.

Empire turns ontological as it delicately enters the house in the poem. The enjambment between the second and the third lines marks a threshold where two spatial imageries meet. The physical merges with the metaphysical in the watch of "the household gods" over brothers.

Keats's allusions to Roman gods of family (Penates and Lares) may verify, for critics like Marjorie Levinson, his longing for the "cultural mode of being" of the middle class whose "idols" he depicts as "as reified social relations" (*Keats's Life of Allegory* 293). However, instead of a mere "fetishistic imitation of diverse bourgeois styles," the inclusion of gods can also be taken as an imperializing gesture of an out of the ordinary kind (293). Gods are envisaged in the poem as imperial actors who protect their dominions affectively, immaterially. Their power extends beyond physical limitations, belonging to an empire that spans across regions of utmost privacy, and arches over people with a promise of secure openness. Empire posits itself as an indispensable condition for the preservation of so private a relationship as the one between family members. It stitches itself ontologically to the human desire for safety, peace and community in instances that cannot be labeled instantly (geo)political.

By trying to make sense of the immateriality of empire signaled in "To My Brothers," I am not pushing aside the concrete realities of imperialism. Needless to say, empire remains not merely spectrally, but quite materially in its legacies that are acutely felt especially in post-colonial worlds. Its realness always rests on geopolitical and historical exigencies. What Keats's poem reminds us, I suggest, is that empire is a political formation that aspires to be coextensive with the world as it cultivates an image of an entity whose presence cannot be measured solely in maps. The poem showcases how empire exceeds physical demarcations and thrusts itself upon interpersonal spaces as an undetectable yet governing force.

Hardt and Negri similarly observe that "empire constitutes the ontological fabric in which all the relations of power are woven together —political and economic relations as well as social and personal relations" (*Empire* 354). They maintain, "imperial politics articulates being in its global extension," forming its own metaphysics that cannot be confined narrowly to the state

politics, policies and diplomacies (*Empire* 354). However, Hardt and Negri seek to counter this politically consequential ontologization of empire by means of another metaphorical construct called "multitude." Like de Man, they are too quick to trust metaphor as an antidote to the politics of representation. An imagined anti-imperial collective, "multitude" also is a metaphor that misleads Hardt and Negri to conceive opposition as an ontological given.[14] While de Man, Hardt and Negri rush to utilize metaphor as an ideologically subversive tool, and ignore not only its contingencies but also, more importantly, its possible reversals, Keats's poem conveys the discomforting reminder that embracing metaphor as solution can be part of the problem: for doing so enables the endurance of empire in its abstraction. "To My Brothers" discourages from indulging in unfounded projections of empire's self-termination that may counter-intuitively mystify the conditions of both domination and resistance.

Empire enhances its literal effectiveness when it eludes instantaneous recognition, and metaphor optimizes the circumstances of such mystification. "The metaphor," de Man states, "is blind, not because it distorts objective data, but because it presents as certain what is, in fact, a mere possibility" (*Allegories of Reading* 151). With a slight modification, metaphor can be said to nurture blindness that paves the way for the unseen yet persistent interferences of empire into socio-cultural existence. De Man acknowledges that this does not correspond to a "distortion of objective data." Nor does this imply that metaphor could necessarily help invalidate the literal meanings and workings of empire. The impossible becomes thinkable as "a mere possibility" in the metaphorical self-assertions of empire displayed in Keats's poem, which is to say, imperial sovereignty sustains its presence even in places and at moments where it is virtually absent. In what follows I delve further into the critical and political implications of "gentle empire" by

exploring the metaphorical economy of empire that was available to Keats, and explicate why this exploration matters for the broader critique of imperialism in romantic studies.

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In its nineteenth century use, the word "empire" circulated routinely as a metaphor in diverse settings. According to the OED, empire signified "a territory or group of territories with a single ruler or shared source of authority" as well as "rule or government" and "supreme command; complete or paramount influence, absolute sway; dominance, control." Needless to say, neither the state nor official government was always the primary referent in these somewhat loose senses of empire. The non-literal circulations of the word, nevertheless, cannot be said to have abandoned entirely its political connotations. As a matter of fact, they frequently proved conducive to the manufacturing of imperial attachments by clouding the literal executions of empire. In her study of the discursive grounds of the British rule in India, Zohreh T. Sullivan brings to light to the deployment of metaphor to imperial ends. She holds that "the metaphor of empire as 'family' was part of a colonial construct of British imperialism in India that saw Queen Victoria as 'ma-baap' (mother/father), the native as untrained child, and the empire as drawing room – a refined and civilized space where appropriate rules of conduct would ensure permanent occupancy" (3). From a similar critical angle, Tony Ballantyne shows that "the metaphor of the empire as a web of connections was also frequently used in discussions of imperial policy and colonial connection in Britain, the Australian colonies, and New Zealand, especially in the later years of Victoria's empire" (17). Sullivan and Ballantyne provide compelling analyses of metaphor's contributions to empire's legislative capacity, exposing how imperially produced and conditioned worldviews can sneak into environments where they would supposedly be least

welcome. Yet, both scholars take metaphor a little too literally. That is to say, Sullivan and Ballantyne do not spend enough time pondering how metaphor does not only help justify imperial sovereignty rhetorically, but does so by transforming empire, by stripping it of its corporality. Metaphor supplements empire by changing its form, by putting on it cloaks that hide its materiality. Empire multiplies in effect through metaphor, through the proliferation of its simulacra in disparate yet not altogether disconnected contexts. Metaphors of empire, therefore, mobilize imperial power dynamics via mutation beyond their familiar political habitus, generating narratives of personal and social relations modeled on them.

Whereas metaphorical legitimations of imperial sovereignty have been predominantly investigated in *fin-de-siècle* literature of the British Empire, empire's metaphorical emergences can be traced back to much earlier points in literary history.[15] Take, for instance, Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" where the famously speaker asserts, "My vegetable love should grow / Vaster than empires, and more slow" (1703). Or, recall how the beloved in Aphra Behn's *Ooronoko* is entitled to "her eternal Empire," that is, her sovereign influence over her lover (2189). Love translates in both texts into emotional conquest, described overtly in the language of empire. The metaphor of empire analogizes romance to imperial domination, prescribing a form of affection that is entrenched in a desire of power. In a way, then, these examples presage the Keatsian (and the wider romantic) personalization of imperial power relations through metaphor.

Although the overlap between empire and metaphor is markedly present in romantic writing, it still awaits sustained critical attention.[16] On the one hand, to the extent that it derives from a Saidian effort to counter the formalism of the earlier romanticists, this oversight has a strong rationale.[17] The hermeneutic preoccupation with the internal components of romantic

texts, or as Alan Richardson puts it, "a longstanding (and itself 'Romantic') emphasis within Romantic studies on the individual mind, and on the creative, questing, interiorizing imagination" indeed overshadowed the ways in which romantic literary works reproduce or rely on the logic and resources of imperialism (2). To undo such concealments, scholars have diligently documented the various romantic appropriations of "the forms of knowledge and discourse made available by empire" (Makdisi, "Romanticism and Empire" 37). These crucial endeavors to excavate the political and historical determinants of romantic vision, on the other hand, have too readily disregarded the fact that empire was not merely influencing the romantic vocabulary. By a reciprocal influence, empire was also being reshaped therein, assuming meanings that defy literalization, and evade the analytical gaze of rigid historicism. This dimension of empire's control, namely the unexplored sites of relating to sovereignty, needs to be reckoned with so that a comprehensive evaluation of the constituents of its material reality can become accessible. The critique of imperialism in romantic studies remains incomplete for this very reason: it has not accounted for the not-so-literal articulations of empire and their political implications. However, this does not mean that the dichotomy between the textual and the historical needs to be reversed yet one more time. Rather, the dichotomy itself is unsettled in the renewed attention to metaphor that renders traceable what is materially elusive but nonetheless constitutive of history, as illustrated in Keats's poem.

Keats himself, it must be recalled, was often not considered a usual suspect in the interrogations of romantic imperialism until recently. Expanding on the earlier attempts of Susan J. Wolfson, Nicholas Roe and others to spotlight the politics of Keats's poetics, scholars have magnified his "limited presence in a political discourse of empire" (Wassil 419).[18] Although it is now widely acknowledged that "contemporary politics of empire and gender" molded Keats's

poetics, critics have scrutinized only a small portion of his work along these lines, and have done so mostly without considering how the political gets altered therein while still being present (Kucich 187). For instance, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (1816) has been repeatedly studied in tandem with Keats's adoption "at the individual level" of "the core impulses of a competitive and expansionist" worldview (Newey 185).[19] So, too, has it been amply demonstrated that Keats contributes to the creation of "the consumers' taste for the exotic goods of the Orient" in his verse, particularly in "Lamia," and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (Mellor 151).[20] Of course, these analyses of the presence of empire in Keats's canonized texts are fundamental to the overall explication of romantic imperialism. While it builds on these premises, my reading of "To my Brothers" (and other texts that will follow) points to that which is not included in this familiar critical paradigm, namely, the mutations of empire itself in romantic writing.

Written in celebration of Tom Keats's birthday, "To My Brothers" presents an innocuous picture of filial affection on the surface level, dramatizing a "deep need for human connection that the fraternal bond fulfilled" (Gigante 14). Behind the veil of the poem's plain sentimentalism lies a subtle comparison of the writing process to an imperial operation. Poetic creation is described as a virtual "search" across the globe for new resources: the poet's expedition to "poles" "for rhymes" reads like an aesthetic simulation of a colonial mission whereby novel supplies for production and consumption are discovered. And such would be a conventional reading of Keats's affinity with imperialism in the case of this text. Yet, "To My Brothers" demands a shift in perspective as it teases the reader with its metaphorical relocation of empire. "Gentle empire" does not simply serve as a rhetorical device to embellish Keats's heartwarming portrayal of brotherly love. It infiltrates the emotional structure of the poem,

offering a striking glimpse into the alterations of empire when it is a metaphor. We encounter in the poem a disorienting politicization of what Shklovsky considered strictly in artistic terms as *ostranenie* [estrangement/defamiliarization]. Empire, estranged in its metaphorical representation, becomes something so dear to life, dear enough "to give back the sensation of life…to make us feel things" (Shklovsky 80). In plain terms, empire makes it possible for Keats and his brother to contemplate "world's true joys" in the comfort and protection it promises to yield.

"To My Brothers" is not an exception where Keats's socio-poetic imagination focuses on his relationship with his brothers. The "social thought" of his siblings, as he confesses in another sonnet, conditions his appreciation of "the wonders of the sky and sea" ("To My Brother George, Sonnet" 49). Elsewhere, in a verse letter addressed to George Keats, he stresses again his wish to be "dearer to society" ("To My Brother George" 45). Keats's literary exchanges with his family members communicate an ontological restlessness (perceived conventionally as anxiety of finitude, or yearning for literary immortality) that he strives to alleviate through a voluntary replacement of the materially demarcated present with an alternative, spatiotemporally unaccountable version of reality. In a way, Keats is arguably drawn to a "poetics of unaccountability."[21] This, however, cannot be reduced to a symptom of either socioeconomic vulnerability, or what Jerome McGann would diagnose as "escapism" from the ideological inconveniences of history (*The Romantic Ideology* 91). Rather, ambiguity is not the end but the means of Keats's "chameleon poet" —that is, his ambition to have "no self" and "no character"— for gaining an authority that decides on what is "dearer to society" without the burden of responsibility ("Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818" 295). It is hardly a coincidence that the poet aspires to be nothing more, or better, nothing less than a metaphor (i.e.

chameleon) since only metaphor can entitle Keats to morph into an "unpoetical" mode of being, as it allows empire to grow into an 'unpolitical' entity ("Letter to Richard Woodhouse, October 27, 1818" 295). Just as metaphor promises to immunize the poet against critique through the gift of anonymity as in chameleon's ability to camouflage itself, it nullifies notions of fallibility and culpability, the ideological repercussions of which manifest in the politics of deflection and evasion that undergirds the "gentle" representation of empire. The delicateness embodied by Keats and the "gentle" character of his empire mirror one another in their illustrations of power's subtle, and sometimes blatant refusal to be accountable.

The "gentleness" of Keats's empire may evoke the praise of cultural imperialism that was rampant in nineteenth century British literary productions where empire was being aesthetically gentrified through often competing inventions of Greco-Roman genealogies.[22] Fueled by his admiration for the Hellenic past, for instance, Walter Savage Landor surmises in his *Imaginary Conversations* (1829), "the strength of England lies not in armaments and invasions: it lies in the omnipresence of her industry, and in the vivifying energies of her high civilisation [sic.]" (262). Such negations of brute force in the romantic reflections on imperial sovereignty, triggered in part by the self-redeeming British disavowal of Napoleonic violence, shift emphasis from the atrocities of colonialism to the cultural legacies of imperialism.[23] Certainly, imperial culture did not justify the ways of empire for all romantics, but it did facilitate for Landor, and Robert Southey as well, the idea of benign imperialism. In his "Ode, Written in December 1814" (later retitled, "Ode Written During the War with America"), Southey looks back at the British defeat in the American Revolutionary War, and attempts to console imperial pride: "Wherever thy language lives, / By whatsoever name the land be called / That land is English still…" (204).[24] The appropriate and most fruitful means of conquest and expansion, Southey and Landor

conclude, is no longer territorial invasion. Championing what Uday S. Mehta refers to as "liberal imperialism," these romantics soften the image of empire by diverting attention from its destructiveness to its "gentle" influences on culture (111). However, their excuse of empire on the basis of its cultural 'merits'—a position that continues to enjoy currency—is only a symptom of a larger ontological trouble pronounced in Keats's "gentle empire."

Scanning imperialism's shadows in culture underline the unsurprising fact that sovereignty socializes itself. Saidian diagnoses of romantic imperialism buttress this point without telling us much about the changes that occur in this process, and what changes enable such migrations of empire. If, as Said remarks, "imperialism…was absolutely constitutive of the whole nature of the English political social order," it could not have been so without empire becoming integral to the ontological realm of politics, without it masking its repulsive presences for its rather sensitive liberal apologists (*Culture and Imperialism* 77). More precisely, just as power does not stay the same but works to reconstitute itself as it travels, so, too, does empire retain its efficiency by foregoing its identifiability. "Gentle empire" illuminates that which underpins and exceeds the premises of cultural imperialism, that is, the very concealment of power as empire's *modus operandi*. However, this concealment of power, namely, the ontologically charged movement of empire in and through metaphor is by no means particular to Keats. Empire frequently sheds its material discernibility in romantic writing, as evidenced in the poetry of Percy B. Shelley and Barbauld.

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In Percy B. Shelley's 1821 sonnet "Political Greatness" readers encounter a peculiar metamorphosis of empire. One of Shelley's most "excited" tributes to "the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples," the poem dictates,[25]

> Man who man would be,
> Must rule the empire of himself; in it
> Must be supreme, establishing his throne
> On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
> Of hopes and fears, being himself alone. (Political Greatness" 716)

Encouraged by "Europe-wide tendency towards political liberty," Shelley preaches a vision of autonomy that covers many facets of human agency, which neatly dovetails the intellectual, moral, and political tiers of subjectivity, making clear that independence is not merely a matter of politics but a cornerstone of the subject's existence (Rossington 620). Shelley's unmistakably gendered, ostensibly radical conceptualization treats self-governance as an ontological prerequisite: to "be" one must be able to self-rule. The poem visualizes a male-centered embodiment of "political greatness" in the image of empire. If the reader were to follow the advice of "the legislator poet," human autonomy must be asserted as if what were at stake would be the maintenance of an empire. The ontological imperative of becoming autonomous thus emulates empire-building in the poem, sumoning imperial sovereignty thus in what Emily Apter calls the "'small p' politics" of everyday existence (34).[26] Empire's encroachment on the micropolitics of being human registers in Shelley's metaphorical identification of subjective autonomy with imperial legislation.[27]

Empire can be actively willed, against all odds, by the subject who may appear to have no business with it at first glance, as exhibited in Shelley's poem. And yet, just as this will to power cannot be assessed as a universal proneness to complicity, it does not make tenable the promise of a collective anti-hegemonic consciousness seeking a "counter-imperial ontology" (Hardt and

Negri, *Empire* 363). Its ontological basis does not suffice to neutralize the unevenness of the subject's engagement with empire, the unevenness stemming from the subject's social-political position. In the cases of Keats and Shelley, for instance, gender features pointedly as a factor in metaphorically produced ontological effectiveness of empire. However, nor does this mean that the impulse to identify with imperial power is within the purview of biological maleness. While identities and positionalities inflect the subject's relationship with empire, metaphor may help it cross those divides, absorbing and compromising counterhegemonic desires. This happens to be the case in the poetry of Barbauld, whose career was under constant attack by misogynist critics, and who as an author —as Jeffrey N. Cox writes— had to resist "the expectations that a woman writer would not take up large political issues" (104). In her poem "The Rights of Woman" (1792), Barbauld proclaims,

> Thy rights are empire: urge no meaner claim, -
> Felt, not defined, and if debated, lost;
> Like sacred mysteries, which withheld from fame,
> Shunning discussion, are revered the most. (185-86)

Reading "The Rights of Woman" in connection with Wolstoncraftian feminism, Penny Bradshaw proposes that the poem displays Barbauld's "awareness of the legal, political and ideological obstacles which impeded women's battle for recognition as the intellectual equals of men" (34). Whereas Barbauld commands women to own their rights, she does so in a discernibly ambivalent fashion. In conflict with her aggressive tone is her mystifying attitude. Valorizing indefinability, Barbauld sees the claiming of rights as an intuitive act, not a political exercise. Estranged from their material conditions, women's rights can be internally "felt" "like sacred mysteries," but not socially "debated."

Such ambiguation, nonetheless, does not automatically lead to depoliticization; contrarily, it can also be said to accentuate the biopolitical parameters of social rights. The

concept of rights, as Foucault explains, is historically organized around "the problem of sovereignty" and "the legitimacy of power" ("Society Must Be Defended" 26). To elaborate on Foucault's claim, rights and bans do not take full effect solely by being granted or imposed from an outside mechanism. Their optimum efficiency is predicated on their capacity to be internalized and thereby become inalienable from the subject's sense of being. The notion of rights, then, further approximates politics to ontology as it risks the replication or reproduction of the sovereign's politics while promising subjective authority and autonomy. "Biopolitical production is a matter of ontology," assert Hardt and Negri (*Multitude* 348). Indeed empire's capacity to refashion itself as an ontological element can be seen at its core as nothing but a biopolitical performance of imperial sovereignty. Notwithstanding their political and gendered differences, Barbauld and Shelley both make this unsavory conjunction explicit in their poetry. Shelley's advice to his readers to "rule the empire of [oneself]" reverberates in Barbauld's call to "Resume thy native empire o'er the breast" and then to "…bid proud Man his boasted rule resign" ("The Rights of Woman" 186). The latter, however, flags vividly the discursive hold of biopolitics over bodies, since it illustrates how biological womanhood can be reduced to a means of consolidating the will to power in the style of (not contra) sovereignty. The metaphor of empire concomitantly imperializes womanhood and feminizes empire to the detriment of the female body that is relegated to an empire-like organism. While reproductive potentiality is upheld in the poem as a figurative counterpart of imperial potency, metaphor inserts empire ontologically in the relation of the subject to their bodily presence.

Barbauld and Shelley's metaphorical portrayals of empire mirror that of Keats's poem in that they similarly demonstrate how imperial sovereignty ontologizes itself through its ability to saturate the subject's being in and with the world. In these poems, the ontology of the subject is

revealed to be, in much the way Gayatri C. Spivak puts it in her brief commentary on Heidegger, a breeding ground for an "imperialist project" that naturalizes power (*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 212). These romantic metaphorizations of imperial authority display and warn against the acclimatization to the power relations and dynamics fomented by empire. They record how empire's physical existence is tied to the ontological relationship it forms between itself and its subjects, a relationship that feeds the craving for sovereignty not only via the illusion of safe community depicted by Keats but also in the guise of an uncompromising subjective will voiced by Barbauld and Shelley.

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It is axiomatic that empire impacted the literary vision of the nineteenth century. Instead of rehearsing this familiar formulation, here I have demonstrated that the relationship between romanticism and imperialism is a two-way stream. In romantic writing, empire announces an imaginary of itself that is not outlined in its available epistemologies, and understanding these intricacies is vital to the critique of imperialism. For empire deconstructs itself in its metaphorical-ontological flourishes not by renouncing its political meaning but by obfuscating it; or, as Hardt and Negri would say, empire's "development… becomes its own critique and its process of construction becomes the process of its overturning" (*Empire* 47). While empire's invisibility works to exempt it from criticism by making it undefinable in literal terms, its metaphorical-ontological emergences reinforce the concretely existent agendas and acts of imperial sovereignty. This ontological mystification cements power not only in its present moment but also in a future where it privileges empire to be present in its official absence. In other words, empire is guaranteed in and through metaphor a future existence where it may claim

to expire officially and literally, but nonetheless keeps haunting the subject's already politicized being in "gentle" ways by slinking into emotional and existential considerations.

Insofar as "metaphor…depends on a certain degree of correspondence between 'inside' and 'outside' properties," as de Man states, empire's figurativeness then stays in touch with and in the service of its literal implementations of sovereignty (*Allegories of Reading*, 150). This is what is witnessed in Keats's "gentle empire." The more estranged it is, the more easily mobilized empire is. The sovereign's consolidation of power hinges on an amnesia regarding its influence on the subject's relation to the world. Keats himself describes this state of forgetfulness inflicted by empire in another poem as an inclination to "half forget what world or worlding meant" ("Happy Is England! I Could Be Content," 58).[28] The obliviousness Keats speaks of is not synonymous with political naiveté or disinterestedness. Rather, it concerns even vocal advocates of subjective autonomy such as Barbauld and Shelley, since empire's gentle impingements on social lives of the subject are made possible on a scale that is small enough to escape interrogation.

Reaching a conclusion like this through Keats's poetry would be quite disagreeable to de Man who would instead assure us, "the pattern of Keats's work is prospective rather than retrospective; it consists of hopeful preparations, anticipations of future power…" ("The Negative Path" 537). If Keats's anticipatory poetics enables "hopeful preparations," I suggest, it is not necessarily so because it comforts the reader with the optimism celebrated by de Man. If anything, Keats's poetics provides hope for an ontologically aware politics as it alerts readers to the unlikely endurance of imperial sovereignty, of a "future power."

As it becomes metaphorical, empire announces its own material end and the arrival of a ghostly power. This figurative de-corporalization of empire was so commonplace a phenomenon

in the literary-cultural landscape of nineteenth century Britain that Keats could not help commenting (passingly but sardonically) in "Endymion," that there was no other topic that his contemporaries would "brood on with more ardency" than "the death-day of empires" (172). The end of empire is visualized in the fictional and historical narratives of the period as a process of ruination that often foregrounded the historical continuity between the Roman antiquity and Britain. Imperial ruins, however, also provided a shelter for the emerging romantic consciousness of the fallibility of empire. In empire's ruins romantics detect the return of imperial sovereignty in an abstract yet all the more powerful form, unhindered by physical limitations. Imperial ruins, as I will argue in the next section, enable empire to be spectrally present in its posthumous life, pointing more to a future than a past, analogous to what is suggested in Keats's poetics of sovereignty.

"Supreme in ruin"

Thy cheek is sunk, and faded as thy fame
O lost, devoted Roman! yet thy brow
To that ascendant and undying name,
Pleads with stern loftiness thy right e'en now.
Thy glory is departed, but hath left
A lingering light around thee – in decay
Not less than kingly, though of all bereft,
Thou seem'st as empire had not pass'd away.
Supreme in ruin! teaching hearts elate,
A deep, prophetic dread of still mysterious fate!
Felicia Hemans, "The Last Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra" (497)

Thus in her 1819 poem "The Last Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra" Felicia Hemans imagines the approaching elimination of Antony from the Roman political structure. When Antony was part of the ruling oligarchy, Rome was nominally a republic, not yet claiming the status of

empire in official terms despite its ongoing aggressive expansionism. Undiscouraged by this categorical distinction, Hemans summons Rome as an "empire" embodied by Antony, the "devoted Roman." The poem dramatizes Antony's fall before it actually happens, and describes the end of his rule as a "prophetic dread of still mysterious fate!" Antony's death is foreshadowed, as is that of "empire" although it did not exist literally in official terms.

While conflating Antony and empire in their demise, Hemans does not simply mourn the passing of each pre-emptively. Her attention is centred on what they leave behind, rather than their mutual collapse. Although Antony's "glory is departed" it "hath left a lingering light around," a radiant trace of what it once was, and empire stays, "though of all bereft," as if it "had not pass'd away." The poem, therefore, not only prophesies the establishment of empire that followed Antony's death but also the survival of imperial legacy in its ruins. Empire's future form is announced in a distinctly immaterial presence: its disintegration can be predicted, but still it will remain "supreme in ruin."

When empire becomes "supreme in ruin," as Hemans depicts it, it mutates into something that is intangible but nonetheless durable. It resembles a spectral dynamic. A spectre, Derrida proposes in his reading of *The Communist Manifesto*, is a power which "looks at us" in such a way that "we feel ourselves being looked at by it" (6). Later, he maintains that a spectre "haunts, for example, it causes, it inhabits without residing," turning into a figure of "hauntology" (21). While Derrida's playful coinage draws on Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's anticipation of an anti-capitalist resistance that springs forth out of nowhere like a ghost, it also speaks to the ways in which sovereignty can be constituted spectrally —that is, without being always physically present. Indeed, as Stoler states, "haunting occupies the space between what we cannot see and what we know," and as such, it designates an "elusive, nontransparent power" ("Preface" xiii).

Led by this insight, I suggest that romantic depictions of imperial ruins bring to light the hauntology of empire, that is, the ontological potency of imperial sovereignty that persists even after its annulment as a concrete political entity.

Romantic literature on imperial ruins indexes the ontological aspect of imperial sovereignty that undergirds and helps preserve the presence of empire by obfuscating its materiality. Imperial ruins designate a space where empire's physically evasive impingements on the subject's relation to the world become traceable: they accommodate the transformation of empire into an abstract yet more powerful form, a form of sovereignty that is no longer institutionally and officially definable. As romantic imageries of imperial ruins render discernible this curious afterlife of empire, they also disclose the limits of the critique of imperialism in romantic studies. If ruins "demarcate a void that is never to have material representation," they may also be seen to delineate empire in its imminent dematerialization in perversely positive terms (Merewether 37). For in romantic depictions of its ruins, empire is witnessed to appropriate the very notion of its material end, and undermine its criticism by thus negating its actual presence. Presenting itself as an existentially indispensable force rather than a materially recognizable mechanism of power, imperial sovereignty haunts the subject's relationship with the world, eluding accountability thanks to its obscuration.

Insofar as they reveal empire to be present in its physical absence, romantic representations of imperial ruins point more to a future than a past. The abstract power that figures in romantic imageries of imperial ruins redeems empire by dissociating it from its own materiality, that is, from the histories of assimilation, expansion and colonization that reified empire. Such abstraction allows empire to operate in materially unrecognizable ways, consolidating its spectral future existence.

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The aesthetic intimacy between ruins and romanticism has been studied exhaustively. In earlier as well as more recent romantic scholarship, critics have probed romanticism's stylistic appropriations of the fragmentary structure of ruins.[29] My readings in this chapter, however, are not concerned with the broad relationship between romantic aesthetics and ruins. I am interested particularly in instances wherein empire and ruins are conspicuously inseparable from one another.

Romanticists have almost always considered imperial ruins in the context of the Roman Empire —understandably so, because a large number of publications from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries revisited the residues of ancient Rome from archaeological, historiographical, and philological as well as aesthetic standpoints.[30] The study of the relics of the Roman Empire nourished the engineering of the British imperial identity in the romantic period.[31] Unsurprisingly, just as they helped justify diverse "claims to political authority" in Britain, "competing interpretations of the matter of Rome" operated also as shaping forces in the literary landscape of the era (Manning 275). Romantic affinities with Roman ruins have been often studied through this narrow literary-historiographical frame in which it seems to present itself. "Romanticism has a particular relation to history," Stephen Cheeke claims, that "is exposed in Rome" whereby romantics contemplate "the 'moral' of historical events" (538). Most recently Jonathan Sachs has explored "how contests over the meaning of the ancient Roman past structure Romantic poetics and theories of the imagination" (*Romantic Antiquity* 20). That the ruins of the Roman Empire mediated multifarious aesthetic and political engagements with the past is likewise amply noted in the 2012 essay collection, *Romans and Romantics*, where Ralph Pite states (in a romantic tone himself), "thanks to those who meditate among decay, the majesty

of ancient power and the wisdom of the ancients may survive the collapse of empires" (13). Such prioritization of the historical identity of imperial ruins and their genealogical functionalities has eclipsed the paradigmatic significance of "Roman" imperial ruins for the emerging romantic awareness of the fallibility of empire and its conflation with human mortality. What still needs explanation, I contend, is the function of imperial ruins as ontologically charged sites in their romantic portrayals.

The influence of ruins exceeds their material signification. Bruce Haley notes that romantic appreciation of ancient structural art, including monuments and ruins, attributes to its object "a spiritual or aesthetic existence and presence apart from the purely material existence and presence" (6). In her study of the artificial ruins of the nineteenth century England, Sophie Thomas points to the immaterial value of the ruin "as a signifier that can be emptied and filled at will" (185). Referring to this subjective engagement with ruins as a form of "affective relation," William Keach holds that "ruins survive insofar as people to whom they have meaning invest them, nostalgically or resistingly, with their sense of living on" (5).[32] That there is more to ruins than their physical setting is thus commonly established, and yet we still lack an understanding of what this might entail in relation to empire. In other words, I ask, what shapes and meanings does empire assume when ruins constitute imperial topographies? Stoler raises a similar question when she ponders "how empire's ruins contour and carve through the psychic and material space in which people live and what compounded layers of imperial debris do to them" ("The Rot Remains" 2). Stoler's interest lies in the actual ruination of imperial structures, that is, their complex articulation of the colonial past in the present. In contrast, my analysis is that of a different temporality in which the corrosion of empire is deemed imminent rather than actually

happening. The ruination discussed here is a process that is more indicative of a future for imperial sovereignty than a past.

Markers of empire's ever-lingering presence, imperial ruins showcase the ontological invasiveness of empire. An ardent ruin-gazer, Gibbon testifies to this in his *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, where he opines, "The art of man is able to construct monuments far more permanent than the narrow span of his own existence; yet these monuments, like himself, are perishable and frail; and, in the boundless annals of time, his life and his labours must equally be measured as a fleeting moment" (412). Gibbon projects the transitory nature of human life onto architectural and sculptural crumbling. In and through the ruins of the Roman Empire is revealed to him the disturbing connection between them human mortality and material decomposition. As he emphasizes the fact that ruins are nothing but the distorted products of human "labor," Gibbon pinpoints not only the ephemerality of human-built structures but also human life itself. Observing the limits of both the durability of the artefacts built by human beings and the human capacity to build, Gibbon confronts the finitude both of the object and the subject in the site of ruins. When he underlines the intimacy between living and building as acts mutually destined to come to an end, Gibbon prefigures in a sense Martin Heidegger's call for bringing "building back into that domain to which everything that *is* belongs" (143). What Gibbon recounts reappears in Heidegger's thinking in the form of an inquiry,

> What, then, does *Bauen*, building, *mean*? The Old English and High German word for building, *buan*, means to dwell. This signifies: to remain, to stay in a place… *Bauen* originally means to dwell. Where the word bauen still speaks in its original sense it also says *how far* the nature of dwelling reaches. That is, *bauen*, *buan*, *bhu*, *beo* are our word bin in the versions: *ich bin*, I am, *du bist*, you are, the imperative form *bis*, *be*. What then does *ich bin* mean? The old word bauen, to which the bin belongs, answers: *ich bin*, *du bist* mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are*

> on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell. (144-45)

In imperial ruins Gibbon detects the same correlation Heidegger draws between building and being. As such Gibbon treats ruins as ontologically consequential structures as well as historically constructed ones. Imperial ruins exhibit to him the limits of what the human beings can build and how far their existence can reach. Roman ruins, that is to say, fuel an ontological reckoning as reminders of both human and imperial extinction, making empire and the human appear identically "perishable and frail" to Gibbon.

This is not to say that attentiveness to their ontological grounds erases the Romanness of the imperial ruins. Undoubtedly their Roman origins mattered to Gibbon and romantics as a component of the imperial heritage of Britain (among other things). Nevertheless, the value of imperial ruins was not measured exclusively on the basis of their historical-cultural roots. To recall, romantic imageries of imperial ruination did not concern solely the Roman Empire. Consider Volney's *Les ruines* [translated by James Marshall in 1796 as *The Ruins: or A survey of the Revolutions of Empires*], which Volney wrote when he "was travelling in the empire of the Ottomans" (21). Volney's image of a fading Ottoman Empire informed Percy B. Shelley's anticipations of imperial collapse in *Laon and Cythna* (republished later as *The Revolt of Islam*) and *Hellas*, as well as Mary Shelley's reflections on the end of empire in *Frankenstein*. As Filiz Turhan has shown, the Ottoman Empire served as a counterexample of imperial livelihood just like the Roman Empire (minus the sympathy the latter garnered) (162). Nor was Britain itself completely exempt from the romantic imaginary of imperial demise. Among the most striking examples of the literary imaginings of Britain's ruination are poems "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" by Barbauld and "Ode, Written in December 1814" by Southey. Both poems shocked

their contemporary audiences with their foretelling of the material end of the British Empire. I will take a close look at these poems later in my discussion. The purpose of this quick overview is to remember that the hauntology of empire is traceable in romantic fixation on imperial ruins, whether they belong to Roman, Ottoman or British empires. Although these categories have their own contextual differences regarding the historicization and aestheticization of imperial decline (e.g. the fetishization of Roman antiquity versus the orientalization of the Ottoman present), the ontologically loaded nature of imperial ruins can be taken as their common denominator. In the same manner as Gibbon and his romantic readers, my close readings attend to the imperial and ontological implications of Roman ruins beyond the confines of their Romanness.

An avid reader of Gibbon, Hemans is attuned to the ontological resonances of imperial ruins, and like the historian she confuses the human and empire, referring to Antony and the Roman Empire in "The Last Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra" almost interchangeably, as highlighted earlier. However, her poem strangely treasures imperial ruins for their potential to cure the existential angst they induce. More precisely, Hemans inverts Gibbon's narrative of decline by celebrating the capacity of imperial ruins to transform the absence of empire into a spectral power. Her 1816 poem "The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy" also contains a subtle response to Gibbon in this regard. Hemans echoes Gibbon, "Vain dream! degraded Rome! thy noon is o'er / Once lost, thy spirit shall revive no more," only to contradict him shortly after, "Still, still to thee shall nations bend their way /Revered in ruin, sovereign in decay!" (663). Noah Comet suggests that Hemans praises "organic decay conquering manmade monuments" while she "consistently maintains the universality of nature —impartial both in benevolence and voracity" (109). And yet, paradoxical exclamations such as "supreme in ruin," "revered in ruin" and "sovereign in decay" seem to point to something more unusual than the sublimity of nature

or art that is habitually referenced when analysing romantic literature. What Hemans's poetry communicates in this context is that "decay" or what Gibbon names "decline" marks but another beginning, not an end for empire in its ruins. If, as Sachs argues, the experience of decline associated with ruins may be "complementary" to "progress" and activate "new ways to imagine the future," one has to wonder what such "newness" and "progress" has to do with empire itself in terms of its own material conditions in cases where ruins themselves are imperial remnants (*The Poetics of Decline* 10). Hemans's poetry shows that imperial ruins can stage decline as a process of mutation that enables empire to assume a spectral authority that haunts the world and the being of the subject.

Hemans articulates her obsession with ghostly presence frequently with references to Byron's writing.[33] Both writers cling to the same impulse to delve deeper into the idea of imperial ruination popularized by Gibbon and others, and explore its ontological dimension.[34] The third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," which Hemans fittingly cites in her poem "Haunted Ground," invites readers to join an existential journey through the ruins of empire with the narrative voice begging Harold to "Stop! for thy tread is on an empire's dust!" "An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!" exclaims the poet; he then continues, "Is the spot marked with no colossal bust? / Nor column trophied for triumphal show? / None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so / As the ground was before, thus let it be" (82). Passing through imperial ruins, Harold comes across the disconcerting inevitability of disappearance not only of empires but also of himself. The ground eventually devours all human-made splendor, not excluding the humans. Harold gazes upon the end of empire and his own being in what Svetlana Boym has called "existential topographies" of ruins, collapsing them into one another

ontologically: both are alike, "perishable and frail" as Gibbon would say, likely to cease to be one day (*Architecture of the Off-Modern* 36).

McGann notices this overlap but unpacks it with a different conclusion, regarding the Roman ruins "a private and interiorized locale," where "Byron comes to incarnate himself" (324-25). Byron's morose identification with imperial ruins, on the other hand, seems to culminate in something more radical than a narcissistic absorption of his surroundings, something rather akin to what Mark Phillipson calls "spectral disenchantment" (304). Byron indulges in self-spectralization vicariously through Harold, staring at his own ghostliness while navigating his persona through the "purgatory of specters" (304). To his horror, imperial ruins suspend any cognitive differentiation between now and then, and here and there, inflicting on him an ontological turbulence within such collision of time and space. For Harold and (by extension) Byron, time is spatialized in imperial ruins, and finitude becomes terrifyingly conceivable.

Walter Benjamin argues that owing to ruins, "the word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience" (178). Benjamin's accentuation of "transience" is noteworthy since ruins do not narrativize history as "the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay" (178). "Irresistible decay," however, concerns not only historical but also individual and social markings in space. According to Max Pensky, the ruin is "a cipher or mark whose very enigmatic character qualifies it both for occult significance and as a sign of the constant threat of an insignificant social world threatened at all moments with the omnipresence of guaranteed oblivion" (68). Put differently, the ruin stages the void of history and human existence at the same time as it gestures toward the (albeit fading) presence of both. If, as Boym argues, "the romantics looked for 'memorative signs' and correspondences between their inner landscape and the shape of the world" in imperial ruins, then they also experienced in

the environment of dereliction an ontological crisis, which shows itself in "Childe Harold" as uneasiness with the inevitability of death (*The Future of Nostalgia* 26).

The fact that extinction is ineluctable does not preclude the will to fathom it in the poem. Byron's vocabulary, particularly the words "spot" and "mark," attribute purposefulness to Harold's meanderings, evoking a conscious act of measurement. Indeed, since they are essentially reminders of "an empire's dust," ruins appear to constitute in this case an imperial system of measuring which Byron applies indiscriminately to the life of humans and duration of empires indiscriminately. It is as though time and space —insofar as they relate to the expiration of human constructs, and human mortality in general— became measurable for Harold in and through ruins. For a poetics like Byron's "decay," in Brian Dillon's words, is "a concrete reminder of the passage of time" (10). In the way Byron relates to them, ruins operate as chronometric devices via which the spatiotemporal limits of human potential and existence could be probed in identification with imperial decline. Hence, when ruins are imperial vestiges, they integrate empire into grave ontological reckonings with their amplification of human mortality. "Man," Byron adds in the fourth canto of "Childe Harold," "marks the earth with ruin," saluting Roman ruins as the insignia of both empires and human beings (184). Only through them does human existence seem to be imprinted in the world. In quite a disorienting way, the ends of being in and with the world become, in Byron's lines, decipherable only in imperial ruins and only in identification with empires.

In their poetic encounters with imperial ruins Byron and Hemans make visible how attachment to sovereignty narrates itself as an ontological necessity and thereby conceals its political-material conditions and ramifications. The inability to distinguish one's existence from that of empire's illustrates imperial sovereignty's capacity to transform itself into a presence of

power that is no longer concrete but is nonetheless influential. Empire emerges anew as a formless form in these narratives of imperial ruination, maintaining its legacies by mystifying them. As such romantic literature does not only mimic the logic of "capitalism and imperialism," but more importantly, in the cases of Hemans and Byron, it indexes the representations of empire that are not identified in historicist accounts (Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism* 22). The process of obfuscation that nourishes imperial power in its absent-presence is exposed in the writings of Hemans and Byron. Their romantic vision casts light on the ontological grounds of sovereignty where empire matters in its immateriality. In this vision, the abstracted empire claims and neutralizes even the imaginary end of imperial sovereignty that is extracted from the very idea of its own ruination. These romantic reflections then inscribe the future continuity of imperial sovereignty announced in the negation of its present physicality.

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Like Byron and Hemans, Mary Shelley was well versed in the historiography and aesthetics of imperial ruination, and she was particularly familiar with Gibbon's *Decline* and other works, as she relays in her journals (*The Journals of Mary Shelley* 63). Shelley was acquainted with Hemans's poetry as well, which critics have deemed a major influence on *The Last Man*.[35] It is not unusual to find in *The Last Man* an "apocalyptic vision without determinacy," a "limit-phenomenon disclosing nothing more than the tenuousness of man's ability to reason," or "a rigidly apocalyptic view of history" which "ultimately renders entirely vain all human efforts to generate positive historical change" (Bennett 147; Snyder 145; Hutchings 236). What is unusual about the apocalypse of *The Last Man* is its imperial horizon. The protagonist of the novel, Lionel Verney, is the sole survivor of a plague-ridden world. He is the last of his kind, —as far

as he knows— the last human dweller of the earth. The narrative closes with Lionel's unrealized plans to embark on a journey around the world with the hope of finding a human companion. In the meantime, he decides to "domesticate myself at Rome:" "Having determined to make Rome my abode, at least for some months, I made arrangements for my accommodation —I selected my home. The Colonna Palace was well adapted for my purpose. Its grandeur —its treasure of paintings, its magnificent halls were objects soothing and even exhilarating" (399).

It is indeed peculiar that Lionel decides on such a lofty lodging as the Colonna Palace to make himself at home in a depopulated world. Shelley, it seems, mocks Lionel —as she arguably does with Victor Frankenstein— for being so proud an intellectual imperialist, or, for his imperial intellectualism. Her hyperbolic description of Lionel's absurd preference for his one-person accommodation suggests that she may not be aligning herself entirely with her protagonist after all, contrary to the biographical interpretations of *The Last Man*. Instead, like other authors studied here, Shelley exposes in her novel how empire works ontologically in its afterlife without necessarily committing to it herself.

Shelley performs such ideological distancing from her male protagonists also in her short story "Valerius: The Reanimated Roman" (circa 1819) in which a once-dead Roman knight revisits the ruins of his empire in "the eternal city" of Rome, and like Lionel, claims another grand imperial structure as his "second residence on earth": "The Coliseum was to me henceforth the world, my eternal habitation" (336). Valerius, a ghostly wanderer reminiscent of Volney's genius phantom, emblematizes imperial wisdom in its familiar male form, entrenched in a self-aggrandizing melancholy. Shelley undercuts the self-serious narrative of Valerius with a radical shift in register, by introducing Isabell Harley not only as his interlocutor but also as the narrator of the remainder of the story. In her own words, Isabell is "a Scotch girl…married to an

Englishman…who takes a pleasure in cultivating [her] mind." (338) The simplicity of Isabell's character is such that she appears as a caricature of innocence and optimism, of "sweet smiles and soft eloquence," in contrast to her complex, troubled friend (338). This juxtaposition, nevertheless, does not simply infantilize Isabell. Instead, it magnifies the caricaturesqe characterization of Valerius himself. Isabell's exaggerated plainness serves to undermine the glorified complicatedness of the distressed admirer of empire. While they seem to be sympathetic on the surface, her interactions with the imperial figure carry some critical undertones: "You dwell," Isabell tells Valerius in her affectionate yet patronizing disapproval, "on the most mournful ideas" (341). Not in spite but because of her ostensible innocuousness, then, Isabell, the subsequent narrator of the story, satirizes (if very tacitly) Valerius's grand narrative.

The fact that Valerius and Lionel choose Rome as their "abode" is telling in terms of what they long and search for: the possibility of inhabiting empire again when it is substantially not there. Lionel in particular, thrown into a solitary existence, goes through an ontological crisis, knowing not how to ground himself in the world. With the hope of alleviating his predicament, he resorts to dwelling in imperial ruins. Bringing to mind Heidegger's highlight on the overlap between being and dwelling, in Lionel's conundrum inhabiting imperial ruins seems to be an ontological necessity. Imperial ruins mediate Lionel's being in the world, that is, accommodate him ontologically by allowing him to reunite with empire in its absent-presence:

> Triumphal arches, the falling walls of many temples, strewed the ground at my feet…reflected how the Enchantress Spirit of Rome held sovereign sway over the minds of the imaginative, until it rested on me —sole remaining spectator of its wonders… I, who just now could almost hear the shouts of the Roman throng, and was hustled by countless multitudes, now beheld the desart ruins of Rome sleeping under its own blue sky… (400).

Empire, now the "Enchantress Spirit of Rome" that "held sovereign sway over the minds of the

imaginative," outlives its own death in its ruins where it and the subject coalesce into a ghostly presence. When Lionel beholds "the desart ruins of Rome" he immediately thinks of "the Roman throng" and "countless multitudes."[36] In congruence with the poems of Hemans and Byron, Shelley's novel conflates the human existence and the duration of empire when she refers to the dead Romans as "the generations I had conjured up," thus as apparitions, while simultaneously spectralizing empire.[37] Ontological unrest dominates the narrative in this confusion, and the Romanness of the imperial decay —despite being repeatedly alluded to— becomes only a detail. If, as Thomas suggests, in romantic literature "the fragmentary logic of the ruin plays as decisive a part as Rome itself," Shelley's text likewise instrumentalizes Roman ruins beyond their Romanness, pointing instead to their paradigmatic significance for the fallibility of empire in a broader cultural-historical continuum that does not exclude Britain itself (69).

By virtue of their historical ties with Britain, imperial ruins signalled an end for the British Empire similar to that of its Roman predecessor. Treading upon the ruins of the Roman Empire triggered an inspection not only of what could destroy this majestic polity but also of how its successor, Britain, could escape such gloomy fate. It was not so unlikely for a Roman historian of the period to surmise that "there is some reason that the degradation… may be averted," the likelihood of which "is of importance…to England; a nation that has risen, both in commerce and power, so high above the natural level assigned to it by its population and extent" (Playfair 5-6). Similar worries, one may argue, are present in *The Last Man*. As Young-Ok An observes, "the political unconscious of racialized British-Eurocentricism persists" in Shelley's novel in the very idea of an English man roaming imperial ruins and conjuring empire through them (581-82). *The Last Man*, in this sense, saves empire even when the world is nearing its end, amplifying empire's ontological endurance in and through its ruins with a hint of British

exceptionalism. Imperial sovereignty secures itself in the novel a future existence that does not hinge on a material presence. Empire's physical absence announced in the imagery of its ruins signifies not an actual termination but an operative obscuration of power. It is through such veiling that imperial sovereignty survives its dematerialization.

Whereas the British Empire is implicated subtly through Lionel —its one and only surviving progeny— in Shelley's portrayal of ruins, its ruination is rather overtly depicted in Barbauld's poem "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven" (1812). The poem deploys the imagery of ruins to pronounce the extinction of Britain in an eerily celebratory tone: "Thou who hast shared the guilt must share the woe / Nor distant is the hour; low murmurs spread, / And whispered fears, creating what they dread; / Ruin, as with an earthquake shock, is here" (333). In light of the economic and political ramifications of the continuing Napoleonic Wars, Barbauld provokes her audience with the unsavoury omen that Britain will soon be no more. Having first read Gibbon in early 1777, approximately three decades before she published "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven," Barbauld utilizes the trope of the (Roman) imperial fall in her visualization of the future of the British Empire. Her version of decline, however, has its own distinct features, which crystallize in the following lines:

> Thine are the laws surrounding states revere,
> Thine the full harvest of the mental year,
> Thine the bright stars in Glory's sky that shine,
> And arts that make it life to live are thine.
> If westward streams the light that leaves thy shores,
> Still from thy lamp the streaming radiance pours.
> Wide spreads thy race from Ganges to the pole,
> O'er half the western world thy accents roll:
> Nations beyond the Apalachian hills
> Thy hand has planted and thy spirit fills (334)

According to Sachs, "Barbauld's account of decline is distinctive because while she imagines

national and imperial ruin instigated by the negative economic impact of war, her sense of decline does not extend to culture and literature. Rather in the face of national and imperial decline, culture and literature are what will persist" (*The Poetics of Decline* 105). Sachs is right to claim that Barbauld assigns value independently to "culture and literature" when she pays tribute to "laws" and "arts" for their long-lasting social impacts. Still, the repeated emphasis on the British ownership over these values (through the anaphora "Thine") suggests that they are not easily separable from their "imperial" and "national" roots. The conceit of cultivation also reinforces this Anglo-centric possessiveness, as in the "harvest" of cultural seeds "planted" by Britain. British culture "spreads" across the world, fertilizing both hemispheres with its benign intervention. By consistently naturalizing, and therefore neutralizing cultural-imperial expansionism —even as it issues its dire warning— Barbauld's poem "espouses the civilizing mission of cultural imperialism" (Crocco 91).

Similar to Shelley and Hemans, Barbauld stresses the fact that empire may press itself on human existence ontologically. *The Last Man*'s homage to "the Enchantress Spirit of Rome" reverberates in Barbauld's poem's compliment on the reigning "spirit" of Britain; the "streaming radiance" of the British Empire parallels the "lingering light" of the Roman Empire Hemans describes. Thus spectralized in its past and present states, empire attains an immaterially established legacy, thanks to which it continues to infiltrate the relationship between the world and the subject.[38] Even in its absence empire is conjured and continues to insert itself aggressively into the structure of being in and with the world. Consequently, the Anglicization of imperial ruins in Barbauld's poem buttresses, not contests, the hegemony of the British Empire in its future anteriority. In it imperial decline implies that Britain will have dominated the world

in an altered shape. Hauntology of empire figures in her poem in the body of the British Empire, spotlighting the paradox that the material end of empire could also be a new beginning for it.

This contradiction is a productive one for empire itself. Immaterial affirmations of imperial sovereignty immunize it against criticism as they hide its actual exercise of power. In the works of Shelley and Barbauld, readers encounter an unusual reconciliation with the possibility of the end of empire. These representations of imperial ruins record the departure of empire followed by its being conjured back to life in a different and more effective form. Southey too, another eager reader of Gibbon, bears witness to this transformation of empire in his writing.[39] In his "Ode, Written in December 1814" the speaker of the poem anticipates that Britain will eventually melt into thin air like other empires: "Thrones fall, and Dynasties are changed / Empires decay and sink / Dominion passeth like a cloud away" (204). Southey shared the same fate with Barbauld as the publication of his poem was delayed for a year due to its controversial content. It might be that, as underlined by Leask, elsewhere in his writing "glimpses of enlightenment anti-imperialist discourse are discernible in the tangle of Southey's moral and political irresolution" ("Southey's *Madoc*" 149). In the retrospective look his ode offers at the British defeat in the American Revolutionary War, however, there is no intimation of such potentially counterhegemonic ambivalence. The poem openly applauds the imperial legacy through which empire is expected to live on: "Wherever thy language lives, / By whatsoever name the land be called / That land is English still, and there / Thy influential spirit dwells and reigns" (204). Very much like Barbauld's poem, Southey's text portends that Britain will continue to exert its imperial dominance like a ghost even in places where it is no longer physically existent. The poem heralds the extinction of empire only to celebrate the ensuing arrival of an empire-to-be from its ruins, a spectralized ruling force, "an influential spirit."

Despite their dissimilar and sometimes conflicting political affiliations, these authors capture in their writings the endurance of empire in its afterlife as an immaterial power. The ontologically charged return of empire hence appears to be prevalent in the broad spectrum of romantic poetics and politics. In the poems of Southey, Hemans and Barbauld imperial decline enunciates the coming of an empire that supersedes its corporality. For the heroes of Byron and Mary Shelley, the ruination of empire is experienced as an existential crisis in which the subject struggles with assigning meaning and structure to their own being and the world. Empire registers in these romantic reflections on its ruins as an absent yet pervasive force that impinges upon human existence. As it illustrates how imperial sovereignty exerts itself in its afterlife as an existentially indispensable dynamic, romantic writing articulates a hauntology of empire that points to a future marked by imperialism in materially unobvious ways. As such romantic imagery of imperial ruins reveals the disturbing possibility that empire was already appropriating its own critique through the incorporation of the idea of its end, to envision a future for itself where imperially constructed structures of power remain spectrally but strongly in place.

Chapter Two: Imperial Ruination and Mysticism in Ottoman Literature

Loving Sovereignty

Emrine dil-bestedir her dilber-i fettan senin
Şehr-i hüsnün şehriyarısın bugün ferman senin
Devreder vefk-ı muradınca bütün devran senin
Şehr-i hüsnün şehriyarısın bugün ferman senin
("Şarkı" 56)

All cunning beloveds are lovingly at your service
You are the sultan of the city of beauty, yours is the edict
The whole world rotates according to your wishes
You are the sultan of the city of beauty, yours is the edict[40]

The quatrain above derives from a "Şarkı"[41] [song] written by the prominent Ottoman poet, Şeyh Galib, who served as the "şeyh" [sheik] of Galata Mevlevi Lodge in Istanbul.[42] His involvement in the Mevlevi order, which gave special prominence to the spiritual teachings of the thirteenth century poet Rumi, was a lifetime labor for Galib. As Victoria Rowe Holbrook notes, "he had been steeped in its [mevlevi] literature and life-style from childhood" and "was appointed central director of this office" in 1794 (*The Unreadable Shores* 36). Thus a concurrently literary and institutional practice for him, mysticism grounded Galib's poetics, presenting itself in this şarkı through the trope of the spiritually binding love. As Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı highlight, this spiritual form of love —prevalent in the centuries-old Ottoman tradition of mystical writing— communicates a "desire for return to the primal unity of all existence" which "is not accessible to humans except via the bridge of metaphoric (mecazi) love" (290). According with this description, Galib's poem depicts love not as an emotional state of the individual, but as an all-encompassing form of intimacy, inclusive of "bütün devran" [the whole world]. However, while love is at the center of everything, in the poem, the beloved is nowhere

to be found. Although repeatedly addressed and summoned, the beloved does not make a physical appearance in Galib's lines. Indeed, in the entire poem the metaphor "şehriyar" [ruler, sultan] is the only word that designates the beloved. It is the "metaphoric" love of the sovereign, a spiritually-shared love, that unites all in its rule. As it cancels the literal distinction between the beloved and the sultan, this metaphor renders love and submission indistinguishable, carrying the sovereign over from one line to the next, from one realm to the other. Such expansion of the power of love becomes rather delineated in the next quatrain of the poem,

> Gel keremkarım dil-i uşşakı mahzun eyleme
> Gonca-veş perverdegan-ı vaslı dil-hun eyleme
> Fürkat adet olmasın kan eyle kanun eyleme
> Şehr-i hüsnün şehriyarısın bugün ferman senin (56)
>
> [Come, the forgiving one, do not upset the hearts of lovers
> Do not wound the heart of these decent ones who seek the rose that is the unity of yours
> Let not separation be a custom, do not make it a law, be generous
> You are the sultan of the city of beauty, yours is the edict][43]

The repeating line of the poem, "You are the sultan of the city of beauty, yours is the edict," where the languages of empire and love distinctly overlap, establishes that the beloved has the ultimate authority as the owner of the "ferman" [imperial edict]. There is virtually no limit to the influence of the beloved, which extends itself beyond the zone of personal privacy, toward "the hearts of lovers." The subject multiplies in the poem with the plural "uşşak" [lovers] instead of the singular "aşık" [lover], getting immersed in the sameness that is demanded by the love for the sovereign. As uşşak, "kanun" [law, decree] and "adet" [custom, norm] get entwined in the mystical impulse to merge with being, it becomes difficult to determine whether the metaphorical love of the sovereign is spiritual or totalitarian. Galib's complex fusion of the language of mysticism with imperial vocabulary hints at the possibility that it can be both. The collapse of meaning triggered by the metaphor of the beloved sultan mystifies sovereignty,

enabling the attachment to power to narrate itself as an act of love in a wider sphere. The bond between the beloved and the lover moves through metaphor to a bigger world where sovereignty charms the subject thoroughly, making social existence unthinkable without abiding by power.

It is in such a thinning of the line between life and politics that sovereignty is constituted, according to Giorgio Agamben. "Sovereignty," as he notes, "borders… on the sphere of life and becomes indistinguishable from it" (*Homo Sacer* 7). This intrusion of politics into life translates sovereignty into an ontological problem since it actively works to deactivate the imagination of a politics-free existence. To imagine the possibility of resisting sovereignty, for Agamben, entails a consideration of what he calls *de potentia absoluta* [absolute potentiality], a mode of being that "exceeds will" and "destroys all possibility of constructing a relation between being able and willing" (*Potentialities* 255). Agamben sees it essential to embrace the "ontological primacy of love as access to truth" to activate counter-hegemonic potentiality, asserting that for "human beings," "to fall properly in love with the improper" is a proof of being "capable of their own incapacity" (204). Love, he reiterates, is an ontological attempt at staying beyond the clasp of the sovereign which is achieved only when "love is that of which we are not masters, that which we never reach but which is always happening to us" (204).

Agamben himself derives inspiration from mysticism when he ponders as to how love enters the realm of ontology and politics. He recruits insight from "the great Andalusian Sufi Ibn Arabi," whose mystical teachings concerning "pure Being" illustrate the "passage of creation from potentiality to actuality" (247). Similarly, "in Ottoman times," Holbrook writes, "the ontology was associated with Ibn Arabi and his Turkish school and sometimes referred to by the term *vahdet-i vücut* ('the unity of being')" (Introduction, *Beauty and Love* x). Accordingly, the "ontology of the unity of being" informed by Sufi philosophy turns out to be a common

denominator for Agamben and Galib (x). However, as my discussion will show, Agamben's thinking encounters its limits and challenges in Galib's poetry. His ontological conceptualization of love is revealed to be invested in a pre-given mode of resistance, which he deploys without reckoning with the sovereign's own potential to posit itself as a powerless being, and to use love to secure power in and through an ideological valorization of surrender to "the improper." In contrast, I suggest, the spiritualization of power through the metaphor of the beloved sultan in Galib's verse illuminates how love can occasion a stubborn commitment to sovereignty which, forces itself upon the subject as an ontological inevitability.

Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı examine the metaphor of the beloved sovereign rigorously in their study of the early modern and late renaissance literary preoccupation with the theme of love and its entanglements with power. While their main objective is to map out the social and political web of love in Ottoman texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or in their words, from "the age of beloveds," Andrews and Kalpaklı emphasize the fact that the experience and language of love were molded in tandem with politics of sovereignty in both European and non-European literary imaginations (22). "It does not seem surprising to us," they write, "that love and especially the idea of an overwhelming, self-sacrificing love, should rise to special prominence in the context of absolute monarchs who wielded tremendous worldly power and were associated in the minds of many with eschatological and even incarnationist notions" (27). Andrews and Kalpaklı's observations resonate with what Turkish author and critic Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar claimed in a similarly comparative (if less benign) spirit decades earlier. Acknowledging the long Ottoman literary history of the love of the sovereign, Tanpınar compares it to the Western genre of "amour courtois" in his reflections on "eski şiirimiz" [our old poetry] (28).[44] Concurring with Tanpınar,

Nuran Tezcan holds that "Eastern" love stories about sultans bring to mind the Western genre of chivalric romance, or courtly love, and then she underscores the fact that the former actually had provided resources to the latter (15).[45] Interestingly, Tanpınar —aware of the larger royal nexus of courtly love (including not only a sovereign but nobles too as agents and recipients of amorous attention) — differentiates it from its Ottoman counterpart, buttressing the idiosyncrasy of the servile affection of the subject towards the beloved sultan. In his sharply worded conclusion, the Ottoman concept of "aşk" [love] is nothing other than "a mirroring of social servitude in personal life" (28).[46]

The most radical change in the Ottoman perception of love, according to Tanpınar, took place in conjunction with "the subject's encounter with their own fate" in the nineteenth century (108). What he means by this is that the empire's shaken global hegemony confronted the subject with the finitude of sovereignty itself, that is, with the new terrifying prospect of being without a sovereign, being in charge of one's of destiny. Andrews and Kalpaklı analogously contend that the deteriorating structure and scale of imperial power alters the representational economy of love from the mid-seventeenth century onward: "The language and culture of love is no longer as directly bound to the palace...This beloved at hand no longer, as simultaneously and as automatically, recalls a party, a patron, and a ruler" (324). The historical contextualization sketched out by Tanpınar, Andrews and Kalpaklı presents a helpful diagram for tracing the geopolitical coordinates of the local currency of the metaphor of the beloved sovereign. However, it risks restricting the analysis of the subject's relation to sovereignty to historical determinism by treating the relationship between love and power as a mutually dependent one. With this caveat in mind, I ask: What do we make of the subject's enduring love of the sovereign when Ottoman imperial sovereignty was itself arguably at stake in the nineteenth century? Put

differently, in the face of its historically undeniable decline, how do we account for the continuing devotion to empire that Galib sheds light on through the metaphor of the beloved ruler?

Reading Galib shows that it is not enough to historicize the relationship between love and sovereignty to find answers to these questions. His mystical poetry, I argue, indexes the constituents of the historicality of Ottoman sovereignty that are left unaccounted for in its defeatist historiography, demonstrating that the subject's love of the sovereign may not be coterminous with the material presence of power. What is recorded in Galib's writing then is the ontological dimension of imperial sovereignty that crystallizes in the spiritualization of the beloved sultan. The sovereign, when lovingly obeyed, is attributed the place of "the improper" one who receives willing and conscious obedience in the ideologically suggestive discourse of mysticism that glorifies the state of being incapable.

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Ottoman literary mysticism spans across centuries, and is frequently associated with the long classical period, or as Tanpınar terms it, "old poetry." Starting with the second generation of nineteenth century intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire, the "old poetry" came under a systematic attack for being detached from the realm of the mundane, practical, and political. The stigma of social-historical irrelevance, which continued to shape the critical reception of classical Ottoman writing in decades to come, has not spared mystical poetics either.[47] In spite of the institutional affiliations of the mystical authors such as Galib and his other contemporaries (to name a few, Nahifi, Enis Dede, Sakıp Dede), which accorded them the very title "şeyh," that is, despite their official ties to power, their works are still isolated from the politics of the empire. Scholars

themselves, in this sense, sometimes unwittingly mystify Ottoman mystical literature when they scrutinize its preoccupation with the "affection for the prophet, divine love, and secrets of the realm" outside its historical juncture (Horata 527); sometimes they openly depoliticize it with a firm conviction that "mystical poetry does not relate to the layperson" (Özgül 653).[48] The oddness of this dominant critical attitude is amplified by the fact that mysticism was an officially employed political doctrine in the Ottoman Empire.[49] In his book, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought*, Hüseyin Yılmaz discusses this point at length. Drawing attention to the ideological role of mystical education for the Ottoman imperial governance, Yılmaz reminds us,

> Tutors for princes were mostly renowned Sufis or Sufi-minded scholars whose teaching centered on esoteric, spiritual, and moral interpretations of rulership…The close association between the Ottoman ruling elite and prominent Sufi orders turned Sufism into the principal medium of formulating Ottoman dynastic legitimacy and inculcating a sultanic image as a spiritual leader. The Ottoman court countered the political challenges posed by powerful Sufi orders by adopting mystical visions of authority, and by depicting the Ottoman ruler as a caliph who conforms to Sufistic expectations. (3)

Galib can be regarded as one such "tutor" who bonded over a mystical view of the world and sovereignty with Selim III, whose reign was marked with concerted efforts to "conform to Sufistic expectations," to borrow Yılmaz's phrase. A composer and a poet himself, Selim III actively pursued a reformist agenda. The most radical restructuring he wanted to undertake was the introduction of "Niẓām-ı Cedīd" [New Order], a series of reforms that were meant to professionalize the Ottoman army, and curtail the autonomy of its strongest unit, the Janissaries. Formed in the late fourteenth century during the reign of Murad I (1362-1389), the janissaries were the most powerful segment of the Ottoman army till the turn of the nineteenth century. Having grown into a paid, semi-independent armed force by then, they made successful attempts throughout the history to depose sultans who dared disband them. Selim III's ambitious plans

antagonized the Janissaries who eventually orchestrated a coup and imprisoned him. In his conflict with the Janissaries, Selim III is considered to have attempted to weaponize what Yılmaz refers to as "mystical visions of authority." His endorsement of the Mevlevi order,[50] as pointed out by scholars, appears to be a strategic maneuver to disenfranchise the Janissaries, deflating the cultural and political influence of the other mainstream branch of mysticism, the Bektaşi order that was favored by his enemies.[51] Aware of the spiritual dimension of the contest over the power of the state, Selim III seems to have politicized the differences between these two mystical movements in his own interest. And as his loyal servant and "tutor," as Yılmaz would describe him, Galib expressed his support for the sultan profusely. The sheik of Galata Mevlevi Lodge wrote approximately forty-five poems, eleven of them being "kaside"s that flattered Selim III (Kalkışım 21).[52] Holbrook informs us that his poems "praising Selim's military reforms all date from Galib's tenure as the şeyh of the Kulekapı dervish House, during the last decade of his life" ("The Intellectual and the State Poetry" 241). One of them reads,

> O Padişah ki dünyaya zatı can gibidir
> Dua-yı devletin eyler şeb ü seher tekrar
> …
> Kimin liyakati var şimdi zulme zerre kadar
> Ederken alemi ruşen o mihr-i lem'a-nisar ("Sultan Selim Han-ı Salis" 6)[53]
>
> [He is the sultan who is like the soul of the world
> Day and night ceaselessly pray for his state
> …
> Who could now dare commit even minor atrocities
> When that bright sun radiates the realms][54]

The poem affirms Selim III's supreme status as a mystical figure, portraying him in the image of a celestial body, or the sun itself, a force that is above everything but nonetheless in contact with all. While doing so, it villainizes the janissaries, referenced in the excerpt tacitly through the emphasis on the unjustness of any "minor atrocities" committed against the sultan. It

criminalizes and defames Selim III's contenders, and endorses him as the bearer of justice whose existence is fundamental to life itself. The sultan envisioned in Galib's poem is what animates the world, and inspires awe in all beings who witness his solar sovereignty; and his subject inflexibly holds onto his imperial legitimacy as if it were the element that was keeping everything and being intact. The order, unity and the livelihood of all seem to depend on the sultan, who acts not so much like a political leader as an existential nucleus.

This mystical notion of "a spiritual leader," as Yılmaz puts it, is not something peculiar to Galib, or applicable only to Selim III. It is part of a broader discourse, rehearsed in fictional and non-fictional texts alike, wherein the Ottoman sultan is frequently revered as a quasi-divine figure. In *Üss-i Zafer* [Basis of Victory], a chronicle written by Es'ad Efendi (1789-1848), which narrates the mutiny of the janissaries and their downfall in a celebratory tone, the successor of Selim III, Mahmud II, is invoked as "zıllı-ilah" [shadow of God] (97), and then more elaborately as "hazret-i cihan-giri ebbedallahu" [his excellency, the conqueror of realms, may God bless him with eternity] (107).[55] Alongside the epithets that attributed the sultan a sacred and god-like personality, prayers also vocalized the wish to eternalize his existence in numerous occasions, as seen in another chronicle from the early nineteenth century: "May God let our precious sacred master preserve his sovereignty as long as the world exists" (Abdülhak Molla 89).[56] The spiritualization of the sovereign was a motif circulating not only in chronicles but also in the fictional narratives from the period, one striking example of which is *Muhayyelatı-ı Ledünni-i İlahi* [Imaginations of Divine Consciousness] by Giritli Aziz Efendi (1749-1798) who was known for his mystical erudition.[57] Written in 1796, when Selim III was the sitting sultan, Aziz Efendi's *Muhayyelat* consists of three "hayal"s [fantasies, or dreams], all of which, according to Zeynep Uysal, are interlaced through their centering on "metaphorical love" (162). The third

hayal relates the story of a fictive ruler, Naci Billah, who is dethroned by a rival and at the same time separated from his beloved, Şahide. Exiled from love and sovereignty, Naci Billah plunges into a desperate journey replete with physical and emotional hurdles. After a considerable amount of suffering, and while still lost in his melancholy, Naci Billah is visited by a sheik who instructs him to find solace in the unity of being. What consoles him, however, is not that imperial rule is of no import when perceived in light of such transcendental wisdom. The sheik certainly does not recommend him to abandon his title and power. If anything, coming to the realization that he is spiritually united with all proves for Naci Billah to be a condition for the reclamation of his authority in an unassailable way. The epiphany he attains in his melancholy entitles him to reassert his control over empire as a physically unrestrained, spiritual leader of all beings united in and through him. At the end the sheik announces to Naci Billah the miraculous restoration of his sultanate, and the story happily concludes, "şahlık ve şeyhlik içtimaı" [the togetherness of sultanate and sheikhdom], now personified by Naci Billah, culminates in his reestablished, all-encompassing reign (91).[58]

Even though Selim III is named nowhere in the text, Naci Billah's story reads like a fictionalized depiction of the contemporary political tensions that had spiritual underpinnings. Cornered by antagonism and on the brink of a complete disempowerment, Naci Billah is a perfect doppelgänger of Selim III who spiritualizes his imperial regime to wrest it from the hands of his opponents, becoming at the same time unimpeachable by virtue of his own literally untouchable presence. This unchallengeable and absolutely just(ified) imaginary of sovereignty cherished by Aziz Efendi, Galib and other writers in various genres, was something Selim III himself aspired to not only in his political instrumentalization of mysticism, but also in his own poetry. In one of his gazels Selim III writes,

Bağ-ı âlem içre zâhirde safâdır saltanat
Dikkat etsen mânevî kavgaya cardır saltanat
Bu zamânın devletiyle kimse mağrûr olmasın
Kâm alırsa adl ile ol dem becâdır saltanat
Kesbeder mi vuslatın bin yılda bir âşık ânın
Meyleder kim görse ammâ bîvefadır saltanat
Kıl tefekkür ey gönül çarhın hele devrânını
Ki safâ ise velev ekser cefâdır saltanat
Bu cihânın devletine eyleme hırs-ü tama'
Pek sakın İlhâmî zîrâ bî-bekâdır saltanat (22)[60]

(Midst the orchard of the world though empire may appear delight,
Still, if thou wouldst view it closely, empire is but ceaseless fight.
Vain let no one be who ruleth kingdoms in these woeful days;
If in justice lie thy pleasure – then is empire truly right.
Reacheth e'en one lover union in the space of a thousand years?
Let whoever sees it envy – empire is of faithless plight.
Think, O heart, alas! the revolutions of the rolling Sphere!
If at times 'tis joy, far oftener empire bringeth dire affright.
Do not envy, do not covet, then, the Kingship of the world;
O! take heed, İlhami, empire bides not, swift indeed its flight.)[61]

There are numerous sultan-poets in the history of the Ottoman Empire who wrote under pseudonyms, including Murad II (Muradi), Suleiman the Magnificent (Muhibbi), and Bayezid (Adli) (Kut 161). Selim III is one of them. He wrote a volume of poems under the penname İlhami, by which he addresses himself in this gazel.[62] As the melancholic tone of the poem suggests, the sultan had been staring at the bitter end of his reign before it arrived with his assassination by the janissaries. Accordingly, at first glance, this gazel reads like a note of resignation. It is remarkable that the poem delegitimizes the current imperial rule (i.e. Selim III's own sultanate): the existent empire lacks 'the proper' of imperial sovereignty for it fails to be fair. The speaker does complain about the lack of justice, and therefore, the sultan's own inability to secure it, but nonetheless does not go far enough to negate imperial sovereignty on the grounds of its moral and political corruption. On the contrary, the poem saves empire by idealizing it, by refashioning the sovereign as a mystical figure and thus distinguishing him from his enemies on this basis.

Employing the rhetorical tools of mysticism (i.e. disenchantment with earthly possessions, peaceful hearkening to humility, and so on), the speaker declares, “Meyleder kim görse ammâ bîvefadır saltanat” [Whoever sees it is drawn to it and yet sovereignty/empire is not faithful]. The speaker puts faith first, and elevates the rightful sovereign and his authority above his rivals. Redefining imperial power in terms of faithfulness, evoking both loyalty and spiritual observance, the poem visualizes a sovereign who should transcend all restraints and challenges with semi-divineness and thereby achieve uncontestable political authority.

Defined by modesty and faith in the poem, Selim III’s empire appears like an apolitical body of government. In fact, it appears to have no body at all, no substance that can be confiscated. His ideal empire becomes a spiritual construct, an intangible object to be meditated and even perhaps actualized through transcendence. In the meantime the poem multiplies the personalities of Selim III, making it impossible to differentiate him from the speaker. On the one hand, Selim III is apparently identified with the spiritual guide who warns the reader —or himself— not to be “mağrûr” [haughty] under the spell of “Bu zamânın devleti” [the empire of this age], and somehow intuits that “saltanat” [sovereignty] will be “ol dem becâ” [then properly established] when “Kâm alırsa adl ile” [it is willed with justice]. On the other, he is not completely identical to this wise person, as evidenced in the externalization of the latter in the last line’s address to the sultan-poet. A strange process of self-duplication, reminiscent of what Ernst H. Kantorowicz phrases as the king’s two bodies, is thus at work in the text, eliminating the “discrimination” between “body politic” and “mystical body” (15). If, as Kantorowicz argues, *corpus mysticum* [mystical body] underwrites the principle that *imperium semper est* [absolute power is eternal], decorporalization of Selim III can be said to facilitate in the poem an eternalized vision of Ottoman sovereignty (192). Such mystification of sovereignty is not an

exclusively religious or ceremonial phenomenon, Kantorowicz adds; rather, it is "ontological" for it accepts no separation between what is and what must be as it sets out to regulate existence through *personae mixtae* [spiritual and secular] and *personae geminatae* [human by nature and divine by grace] (59). To the degree it exemplifies the oneness of these dichotomized forces (i.e. natural versus divine, and spiritual versus secular), the mystical sovereignty envisaged in Selim III's verse poses an ontological problem as well: it inserts itself, to use Agamben's phrase, into a "zone of indiscernability between *nomos* and *physis*" licensing the sultan to be an authority in juridical and existential terms (*Homo Sacer* 54).

Agamben contends that sovereignty ontologizes itself by forming a "zone of indistinction (or, at least, the point of intersection) at which techniques of individualization and totalizing procedures converge" (5). In a contrasting optimism, elsewhere he conjectures that the ubiquitous dominance of the sovereign clashes with "potentiality" that "creates its own ontology" (*Potentialities* 259). Potentiality, he explains, is neither about action, nor ability. "To be potential means: to be one's own lack, to be in relation to one's own incapacity" (182). For Agamben, therefore, "impotentiality" licenses subjects to deny the sovereign the very appropriation of their capabilities, their livelihoods (181). In other words, it confronts biopolitics with an impasse generated by the subject ontologically through nothing other than being impotent.

This reliance on incapacity to de-ontologize the concept of sovereignty proves problematic given that the sovereign's power may actually reconstitute itself by capitalizing on the discourse of disempowerment, as witnessed in the Ottoman mystical writing. In Selim III's poem, the sultan's symbolic attainment of absolute and eternal power —meaning, his right to represent it— rests on his capacity to strip himself of power, thus, to incapacitate himself. The

poem makes clear that unconditional sovereignty is vested in the sultan only on the condition that he divests himself of the active exercise of power. Hence, the sovereign is obliged to master the rhetoric and appearance of a powerless figure to gain it all, which is the case for Naci Bilah too. His sheik advises Naci Billah, "Aciz bir kimse iken padişahlık cihetiyle olan iktidarından kıyas eyle ki ra sehh ilim hüda…" [Contemplate your power while you were a helpless sultan, and compare it to that which is infused with the divine knowledge and divine splendor] (90).[63] Like the speaker in Selim III's poem, Aziz Efendi's protagonist has to incorporate into the narrative of his sovereignty the spiritually rewarding phase of utter powerlessness.

Even the affirmations of the sultan's semi-divine status in chronicles and Galib's poetry attest in their hyperbolic nature to this inactive state of the sovereign. Therein, notwithstanding his indisputable authority, the sultan is not depicted in action, not expected to show his potency at all. His mystically established sovereignty dissociates itself from activeness, promoting his power through its performative negation.

Insofar as the discursive negation of power in Ottoman mysticism paves the road for a transcendental unity with all, it also becomes the foundation for a mass-identification with the sovereign. The spiritualization of sovereignty, more precisely, generates an illusion of political collectivity as it renders the sultan identifiable to the subject through a shared familiarity with incapableness. Since it entitles the sovereign to claim the position of the disempowered by means of his spiritually earned humbleness and vulnerability, such mystification obscures the power differential between the ruled and the ruler, bringing to light the ontological dimension of this political relationship. The subject's submission to the sultan is redefined as a relational experience, a way of being in the world where power becomes dangerously relatable, rather than

dreaded or avoided. As such, sovereignty infiltrates the structure of existence by charming the subject, making itself loved.

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Ontological attachment to imperial sovereignty in Ottoman literary mysticism becomes further pronounced in the trope of unrequited or unconsumed love. The sultan is compared, almost in a normative fashion, to an unresponsive beloved (or, vice versa), which can be said to encode the inextinguishable craving of the subject for becoming one with empire itself. Like many others speaking of love, for instance, Galib moans in a Terci-i Bend, "Aşk gelüp mülk-i dile oldu şah / Derd-ü gam-u mihneti kıldı sipah" [Love arrived and became the sultan of the heart / S/he gathered troubles, grief, ailments, and formed an army out of them] ("Terci-i Bend-i Beyt" 42).[64] "Terci-i Bend" is a poetic form in which couplets are woven into one another through a repetitive rhyme scheme (as in the pattern, AA-BA-CA-DA). It literally means a recurring knot, or a returning sorrow ("terci" meaning return, and "bend" suggesting both knot and sorrow in Ottoman Turkish).[65] Which is to say, not only the formal definition but also the structure of the poem mirrors its theme, namely, the prolonged and cyclical state of mourning. The melancholy of the lover, reflects the ontological crisis of the subject detached from sovereignty in the form of emotional incapacitation. Galib's beloved resembles an imperial commander whose most lethal weapon is nothing but love that leads to a romanticization of unquestioned obedience.

It is not accidental that the speaker of Selim III's gazel too contemplates spiritual sovereignty by imploring his heart to think [kil tefekkur ey dil], as if to ease his separation from his beloved (which arguably implies an autoerotic exercise in Selim III's case since his empire, and consequently his own imperial persona, is the object of his love). His rhetorical question,

"Kesbeder mi vuslatın bin yılda bir âşık ânın" [Does a lover reunite with him/her in a thousand years?], expresses the longing for mystical oneness with power through this metaphor of the beloved sovereign who is expected not to reciprocate. It is this very unfulfilment of the desire of the subject that is supposed turn the love of the beloved into a metaphorical substitute or vessel for the ultimate communion with the divine. As Andrews remarks, "the coquettish rejection by the beloved can be seen as the ultimate kindness for they encourage estrangement from this-worldly goals" (*Poetry's Voice* 72).

In many instances, however, metaphorical love does not necessarily contain the beloved exclusively as a mediator. Andrews and Kalpaklı stress the fact that "physical love is justifiable, even laudable, when its metaphoric character is recognized" in Ottoman mystical literature (290). Even without the recognition of "its metaphoric character," my readings suggest, the love of the beloved sovereign justifies itself as an end in itself, disguising its material force as a spiritual movement of the subject. Analogous to Galib and Selim III, many other Ottoman writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrate this point regardless of the starkly differing degrees in which they could relate to sovereignty. One of them is Şeref Hanım (1809-1861), another mystical author who documents in her poetry the financial struggles she suffered while trying to access both cultural and economic capital in the male-dominated literary landscape of the empire.[66] She laments in a poem, "Dil-i mahzunumu şartınca şad ettin mi bir kerre / Neden yok böyle kadr u kıymetim indinde sultanım" [Have you ever pleased my grieving heart / Why, my sultan, my worth is nothing in your eyes] (46).[67] The relentless passivity and detachedness of the beloved throws the lover into an irremediable sadness, into a void of self-abjection in Şeref Hanım's lines. Self-effacement, and absolute surrender to the singularity of the sultan beloved,

thus complete forgetfulness of one's autonomy appears to be the lot of the lover in the picture she draws.

This familiar picture appears also in Vasıf Enderuni's poetry. Unlike Şeref Hanım, Vasıf (1786-1824) enjoyed the privileges of having a rather immediate relationship with the sovereign, as he served in various capacities in palaces and wrote kasides for Selim III and his successor, Mahmud II (Karahan 189-90). And yet, he too routinely begged his beloved ruler: "Hiç kar eylemedi hazret-i sultanıma ah / Eylerim eylediğim ah-ı fıravanıma ah" [My mourning made no difference for my sultan, their majesty / I am wailing now over the extent of my mourning] (89).[68] The unfeeling and unaffected beloved is metaphorically a sovereign who undermines the needs and cravings of the lover to such an extent that complaining about this predicament becomes a self-conscious performance in Vasıf's verse. Despite his contrasting position vis-à-vis power, Vasıf echoes Şeref Hanım in his recourse to the metaphor of sultan and his portrayal of mournful, self-consuming love for the sovereign. Like Galib, both Vasıf and Şeref Hanım record in their works how the sovereign's power impresses itself on the subject's being not as a direct force but through a self-directed eroticization of disempowerment, enabled by its metaphor. While they all render visible the spiritual purposefulness that underwrites and justifies the self-effacement of the lover, the love of the sovereign appears more like the end than the means of the spiritual movement of the subject. In these depictions, transcendental freedom becomes synonymous with voluntary subservience to an authority, namely, the sultan.

A prime example from Ottoman literary mysticism in which the mystical love and imperial sovereignty are closely intertwined is Galib's 1783 masterpiece *Hüsn ü Aşk* [Beauty and Love]. *Hüsn ü Aşk* is a narrative poem about two lovers, female Hüsn [beauty] and male Aşk [love]. Galib names the protagonists and all other characters of the story —such as "İsmet"

[purity], "Gayret" [perseverance], "Kimya" [alchemy] etc.— with attention to their functionalities in the mystical teleology of his text. Personifying the key notions of mysticism, characters in *Hüsn ü Aşk* exist and matter for their respective conceptual function in the plot, which is the circular journey of Aşk who goes through so many troubles only to find out that what he hopes to get from his beloved is already present within him. All figures, consequently, partake in his sorrowful adventures, and become a part of his spiritual epiphany in one way or another. According to Holbrook, however, focusing on the purposefulness of character building in *Hüsn ü Aşk* undermines the text's complexities. The subjectivities of Galib's protagonists," she argues, "develop according to the role reversal of the paradigm of love…they are personifications which undergo dynamic transformation according to an ontological model discovered subjectively from the changing points of view offered by the roles they play" (*The Unreadable Shores of Love* 145). Embracing her warning, I narrow my analysis to the consideration of "the ontological model discovered" in Galib's narrative by examining how sovereignty impinges on it through the relationship between Hüsn and Aşk. The text captures the ontological efficacy of imperial power facilitated by the metaphor of the beloved sultan. It does so by suspending the presumed distinguishability of what is metaphorical from what is literal:

> Durma gidelim hisar-ı Kalb'e
> Arzet bunu şehriyar-ı Kalb'e
> …
> Anın adı Hüsn-i bi-nişandır
> Bu nam ile şöhre-i cihandır
> …
> Ol malikidir hisar-ı Kalb'in
> Şahenşehidir diyar-ı Kalb'in
> …
> Za'fın senin eylemişler ihbar
> Gönderdi beni o şah-ı bidar. (94)[69]
>
> [Don't wait, let's go to the Fort of the Heart
> And there petition the Shah of the Heart
> …

Traceless Beauty is that great sovereign's name
By that title all the world knows her fame
…
It's she who commands the Fort of the Heart
She is the queen of the Land of the Heart
…
They brought her news of your infirmity
And so, ever wakeful, that shah sent me]

Aşk manages to arrive at his destination and reunites with Hüsn in the land of Kalb [heart]. The beloved dwells in and rules the country of heart as its sultan. Aşk is told by "Sühan" [poetry, utterance] that the sultan is Hüsn herself, and her fame defies frontiers. Her epithet "bi-nişan" [traceless, not marked, without sign] announces this uncontainable presence of Hüsn by exempting her from any traceability. The personified poetry utters this representational excess. Even though the search for the beloved makes it possible to find meaning in existence for Aşk, no signifier, or inscription is good enough to capture what Hüsn means to her subjects: the sultan's rule has witnesses, but still it is traceless. This indeterminacy of the sultan is not detrimental to her sovereignty. Undetectableness is the signature of her transcendental eminence, and is very much conducive to her sweeping hegemony. It is an *exemple par excellence* of how spiritual love mirrors imperial domination in such steadfast adherence to power whose ambiguity becomes its ontological strength.

As it showcases the ways in which mystical love culminates in the mystification of power, *Hüsn ü Aşk*'s metaphor of the beloved sultan signals a warning as to how sovereignty executes itself ontologically. What inspires the unhesitating devotion of the subject in the poem is not the sovereign's literally exercised authority. It is the subject's voluntary forgetting of being subject to rule that consolidates the power of the ruler. The inherently asymmetrical relationship between the sovereign and the ruled is metaphorically neutralized in its affirmation as a trying but spiritually rewarding experience of love. Loving the sovereign, hence, naturalizes the

political condition of being bound to power as a way of being whereby autonomy of action is willingly renounced and passive agency is exalted in its place.

Coming to terms with "incapacity," as Agamben sees it, is an ontological matter with political repercussions. Agamben is convinced that the passivity denoted in "potentiality without action" activates the imaginary of "a life" that "marks the radical impossibility of establishing hierarchies and separations" (*Potentialities* 233). His confidence in the political-ontological merits of 'preferring not to' fails to persuade, proving indeed unwarranted, when it is tested through Galib's poetry. Galib's metaphorical representations communicate the disquieting possibility that being incapacitated by love, that is, foregoing one's potentiality to act could be a gesture that welcomes, not dispels, the sovereign. In *Hüsn ü Aşk*, immediately preceding the reunion of the lover and the beloved is the confirmation of the latter's "za'f" [infirmity, weakness, incapacity]. This is also the confirmation of how love, when it is directed toward the sovereign, can be tantamount to accepting being incapable. Being incapacitated by love does not expel power from the subject's relation to life but pulls it even nearer as it renders the hierarchy between the sovereign and the subject indiscernible through their ostensibly mutual "infirmity."

The ontological affinity Galib's poetry exposes to be between infirmity and sovereignty bears historical significance as well, since it points to a presence of power in the Ottoman Empire that is not duly historicized. Nothing, it must be remembered, describes the sovereignty of the late Ottoman state in its conventional historiography better than "infirmity." "The sick man of Europe" has been the dominant characterization of the empire that not only peripheralized it historically but also mystified its very sovereign-ness. In other words, the epistemological incapacitation of the late Ottoman Empire helped generate a historiography in which Ottoman imperiality remained an obscured knowledge. Even in Edward Said's work, the

imperial character of the Ottoman Empire is consistently bypassed. In *Orientalism*, Said alludes to the late Ottoman Empire as a "decayed" polity inhabited by "Orientals" constantly threatened by the encroachment of Western "colonial powers" (207). Said's assertions are reasonable in that the power dynamics between the Ottoman and British empires were surely not even. Yet, the contrast he draws between "colonial powers" and "decayed Ottoman Empire" not only neutralizes the imperiality of the Ottoman state. It also repeats the Volneyesque orientalist historiography he is critical of by treating the Ottoman Empire as a still image of collapse that displays no movement or change, that is by orientalizing it. This categorical misallocation of the Ottoman Empire, which is what I mean by 'its epistemological incapacitation,' resulted later in more significant conflations in the interrogations of nineteenth century imperialism. Romantic scholarship in particular inherited Said's benign myopia, overstressing Ottoman "infirmity" in the face of the increasing British hegemony. While the geopolitical asymmetries between the two empires are undeniable, evaluating their relationship as though it were an empire-colony dynamic —thus, disregarding the 'imperial status' of the Ottoman state— has been a vital oversight. Let me modify this statement: overlooking the imperiality of the Ottoman Empire is not a mere oversight. It has been a hermeneutic norm from Said onward to analyze this "Orientalized" sovereign as the incapable one. It is a regularly deployed discursive strategy that has enabled critics of romanticism to interrogate only the British agency in the history of imperialism, and do so by reinforcing the position of the British literature as the legitimate site of 'primary sources.' The Ottoman literature has remained a muted archive in these debates wherein the Ottoman Empire basically appeared exactly as it is thought to have appeared to British romantics themselves: a signifier that pertains more to what Western literature and criticism made of it than its referent, namely, an imperial sovereignty. A nuanced understanding of the

ontology of Ottoman imperial sovereignty inscribed in Ottoman literature equips us with the critical insight necessary to move beyond this epistemological and historiographical defeatism, bringing to light the mystified power structures of the empire, as well as their afterlives. I continue to take up this task in what follows by juxtaposing the romanticized image of Ottoman Empire as a decaying entity with the self-perception of the empire registered in the Ottoman writing of the nineteenth century.

Harabat: An Ottoman View of Ruins

> "The decree is past; the day approaches when this colossus of power shall be crushed and crumbled under its own mass: yes, I swear by the ruins of so many empires destroyed the empire of the crescent shall share the fate of the despotism it imitated" (Volney, *Ruins* 64)

So does Volney prophesy the fall of the Ottoman Empire in *Ruins* (1791). His portrayal of the Ottoman state as the vanishing Islamic empire, "the crescent," was imprinted in the imagination of romantic writers who were drawn to the aesthetic valor of imperial collapse. In "Eighteen Hundred Eleven," Barbauld gives a nod to Volney when she compares Britain to "the dim cold crescent" that was the Ottoman Empire (334). Hemans employs the same imagery in "The Abencerrage," where the end of Islamic rule in Spain presages the fate of the last standing Islamic empire: "Those days are past – the crescent on thy shore, / O realm of evening! sets, to rise no more" (21). In a similar vein, Percy B. Shelley revitalizes Volney's representation in "Hellas" where "the waning crescent" becomes a synonym for the Ottoman reign (322). Indebted to Volney, therefore, is this romantic iconography of the Ottoman Empire in which the imperial sovereignty (that actually constituted this political entity) is eclipsed. In its romanticized ephemerality, the Ottoman Empire emits a faint lunar radiance as nothing more than a contemporary example of imperial ruination.

It was not only romantics, however, who embraced Volney's dramatic account of the Ottoman demise. Volney's assessment can be regarded a philosophical-historical prototype for the decline thesis, the common historiography of the late Ottoman Empire that has fixated disproportionately on its disappearance from the world stage of imperial rivalry. Volney wrote *Ruins* during the ongoing Russo-Turkish war (1787-1792) when, in his own words, "the victorious Russians seized on the Krimea [sic.], and planted their standards on the shore that leads to Constantinople" (*Ruins* 21). He broadcasted his premonitions regarding the Ottoman decline in his earlier publications as well. In his 1788 *Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs* [translated in the same year into English as *Considerations on the War with the Turks*], Volney enthusiastically reported: "Ottoman weakness… appeared in the Russian wars of 1769 and 1774: at this period, when their innumerable armies were dissipated by small corps, their fleets reduced to ashes, their provinces invaded and conquered, and consternation spread even to Constantinople…" (7-8). This narrative is strikingly congruent with the mainstream historiography of the late Ottoman Empire. Stretching the period of regression a little farther back in time, the decline thesis posits that the Ottoman vulnerability was signaled by the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz, which "deprived the Ottoman state of its major economic base" as it opened the Black Sea to Russian trade (Karpat, "Transformation" 246). Ongoing conflicts with Russia, according to this thesis, only exacerbated the empire's territorial contraction thereafter and reached another critical point with the 1792 Treaty of Jassy, which transferred Ottoman lands, Crimea and Ochakov, to Russia's rule, as foretold by Volney.

This defeatist historiography of the Ottoman Empire and its adjacent romantic aestheticization championed by Volney remain unchallenged in literary studies. My discussion in this section takes issue with this fact by returning to the Ottoman literary and historical writings

of the era that were ironically left out of equation till now in the scholarly perceptions of the late Ottoman Empire. How would the cliché image of the ruined empire fare when contrasted with the Ottoman reflections on it? What perceptions of empire would one come across in Ottoman sources that date back to "its last stage of ruin," as Percy B. Shelley puts it in his essay *A Philosophical View of Reform* (26-7)? Did Ottoman intellectuals conceive the ruins the same way Volney did when they contemplated the ruination of the empire? These inquiries, which privilege not the European but Ottoman literature as the primary archive in the study of Ottoman imperial agency, fuel my readings here. I argue that a much belated intervention to the prevalent Volneyesque reception of the Ottoman Empire in literary studies is made available by the Ottoman writing of the period where the imagery of ruins do not necessarily pronounce the decay of Ottoman imperial sovereignty.

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Scholars concur that Volney was translated into Ottoman Turkish between 1860-1870 (along with other French authors, including Voltaire, Racine, and Fénelon).[70] The earliest extant translation of *Ruins*, located in the digital collections of the Süleymaniye Library, is dated 1924, by which time the Ottoman Empire had officially collapsed and already undergone its tumultuous diffusion into nation states (see fig. 1). Regardless of how timely or untimely Volney's arrival was in Ottoman letters, Ottoman authors' fascination with ruins did not owe much to his meditations. In fact, Ottoman iterations of ruins —part of the centuries-old literary tradition of mysticism— long preceded those of Volney's.

The corresponding Ottoman Turkish word for ruins is خرابات (harabat), which served as the title of the 1924 translation of Volney's *Ruins* (with a slight alteration: the Arabic word was

modified with the Turkish plural suffix "–ler," and read خرابهلر). Meaning both "tavern" and "ruins," harabat functions in Ottoman literature more as a notion than a noun: it is rather an

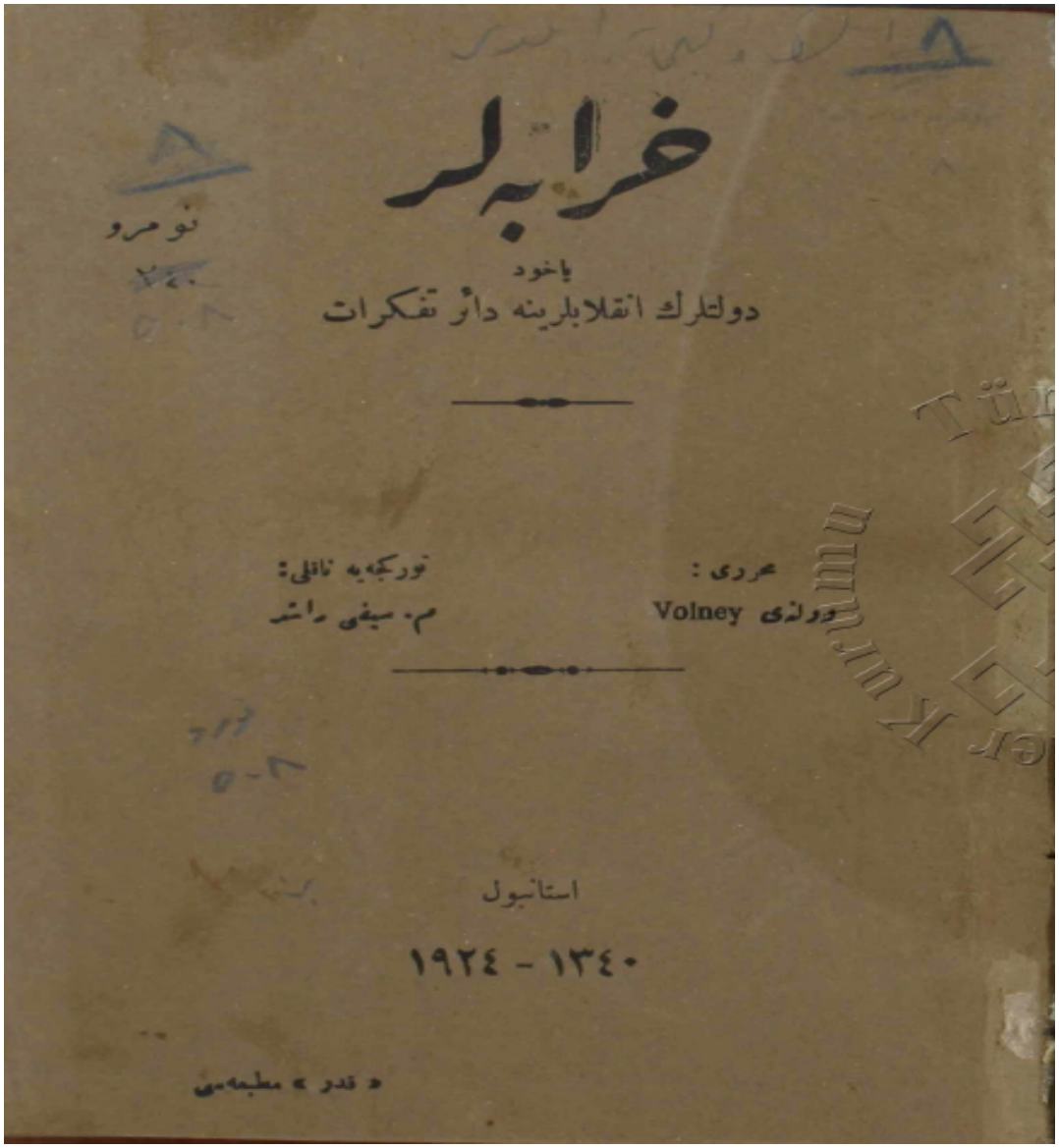

Figure 1. Front page of the 1924 Ottoman Turkish translation of Volney's *Ruins* by Seyfi Raşid. Digital Collections of the Süleymaniye Library, İstanbul.

indicator of a mystical way of being. As Ceyhun Arslan notes, "Ottoman poets have used the imagery of tavern, harabat, which also featured prominently in Hafez's poetry, to refer to a space of intense passion and spiritual intoxication" (739). Inhabiting harabat, therefore, is a

metaphorical state of ruination, a drunkenness in physical and metaphysical terms that mediates the unity of all beings.Such intoxication of the subject, Andrews and Kalpaklı explicate, "entails the abandonment of ordinary rationality and mirrors the ecstasy of the lover-adept, in whom the cruelty of this world's beloved (the impossibility of physical union) has ignited a conflagration of desire that burns away all mundane attachments" (298). Ruination then signifies a process of becoming in Ottoman mysticism that demands relinquishing being in its materiality so as to unite with the beloved. It is an ontologically charged experience whereby being is affirmed in and through the abandonment of its physicality in spiritual love. To illustrate, in *Hüsn ü Aşk*, the spiritual journey toward the beloved involves navigating "Bin yıllık yol Harabe-i Gam / Anın ötesi seray-ı matem" [The Ruin of Heartache, thousand years' ride / The Palace of Mourning on the far side] (62).[71] So as to make it to his beloved, the endpoint of his transcendental progress, Aşk has to traverse ruins, or alternately, yield to a self-consuming intoxication. Notwithstanding its elating finale, namely the euphoric oneness with existence, being ruined is not so pleasant a state of being in Ottoman mysticism, as can be inferred from Galib's lines. Enduring ruination (i.e. the trying love of the beloved) designates an existential rite of passage for the subject who must learn to master the art of suffering. As highlighted earlier in the examples of Şeref Hanım, Vasıf, and Selim III too, such mystical intoxication (with love) is an active processing of grief and sorrow for the lover.

Hence, intense melancholy is integral to the notion of harabat, a prerequisite for the subject to be purified of earthly impulses. While they voice dismay with the fading nature of human existence and the world itself (and the concomitant desire to finally unite with the beloved), Ottoman mystical depictions of ruins thus decidedly uphold melancholy: a form of melancholy induced by the delay in transcendence, by being temporarily stuck in a body and

space that is doomed to expire. For another apt example, consider the poem "Kaside-i Adem" by Akif Paşa (1787-1845), in which the speaker laments, "Öyle bîmâr-ı gamım sahn-ı fenâda gûyâ / Yaptı enkâz-ı elemden beni bennâ-yı adem" [I am sick with sorrow in the void of the fleeting world /As if the architect of nothingness built me out of woeful ruins] ("Kaside-i Adem"158).[72] "Kaside" is a poetic form that delivers homage to a respectable person or notion, as in an ode.[73] The other word in the title, "Adem," denotes nothingness or destitution, which Akif Paşa consciously conflates throughout the poem with human existence by using the homonym "Âdem," the Arabic name of prophet Adam which means human being. The poem confuses "nothing" with "human" and likens the body to an architecture made of clay that is already disintegrating. As such "Kaside-i Adem" is an ode to nothing and being all at once, a recording of the ontological condition of a grieving subject who is suspended between a sense of limited physical reality and the yet unfulfilled yearning for transcendence. Melancholy of the figure of the poem is rooted in the painful epiphany that the matter at the end does not matter, that ruination is inescapable.

Melancholy inheres in Volney's *Ruins* as well. Volney stays "motionless, plunged in profound melancholy" while he ponders the mutability of human lives and imperial regimes through the example of the Ottoman Empire (26). It is, in other words, the ruins of the Ottoman Empire that instigates his melancholy. What was a vicarious experience of imperial fall for Volney, however, was a witnessed reality for the Ottomans. As Tanpınar describes it, the turn of the nineteenth century was saturated with the "feeling of dissolution" in the Ottoman Empire, inflecting the notion of harabat with historical consciousness (79). Being harab [ruined, intoxicated with inconsolable sadness] describes in this sense broadly the spirit of the age. However, for Ottoman authors —the first-hand witnesses of the faltering of the Ottoman

hegemony— empire's harabat had quite unusual implications. Unlike Volney, they point to the rehabilitation, not termination, of imperial authority that was signaled in the melancholy of the Ottoman subject. Their melancholic reflections do not so readily do away with Ottoman sovereignty. On the contrary, as I will argue, they exhibit a persistent confidence in its continuity.

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A predominant concept in critical explorations of the emotional and psychological infrastructure of empire is nostalgia.[74] Nostalgic attachments to empire occasion a backward-looking (and willingly or unconsciously revisionist) relationship that is no longer retrievable, and in this sense are analogous to melancholic attitudes toward imperial sovereignty. While they operate as kin concepts, and are sometimes even used interchangeably, the place of melancholy in the structure of feelings produced by empire has been eclipsed by the rather consistent attention to nostalgia.[75] When scrutinized in depth, albeit rarely, melancholic reflections on empire have been examined also only as remembrances, as past-oriented expressions just like nostalgic ones. Writing specifically on the Turkish context, for example, Kader Konuk discerns in the autobiographical accounts of Orhan Pamuk an "end-of-empire melancholy" triggered by the irrecoverable distance of the imperial past (259). From a similar angle, Ian Almond contends that Tanpınar's melancholy in his novel *Huzur* [*A Mind at Peace*] concerns "the end of Empire… the loss of a certain culture" (107). As it adopts this retrospective focus, the limited scholarship on melancholy of empire loses sight of its articulations in the present. More precisely, what remains to be deciphered is the melancholy projected on empire during its existence. Dealing with the melancholic accounts on the Ottoman Empire from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

mandates this shift in our critical approach to the temporality of melancholy, a seldom-found attunement to its contemporary undercurrents and future ramifications. [76]

"Melancholy," according to Thomas Pfau, is "a reflection on the inadequacy, even futility, of knowledge in a disenchanted world" (310). It constitutes a "stimmung" in Heideggerian sense, or "mood" as Pfau translates it, which is "ontologically anterior to the realm of what may be logically verified and discursively represented as knowledge" (10). For Pfau, then, melancholy's ontological anteriority conditions the historical awareness of the subject. I follow a similar dialectic in my close readings here, and attempt to approach the ontological as the undissected corpus of history. However, unlike Pfau, I examine melancholy not as a subjective mood that precedes historicized existence, but as a symptom of the encroachment of empire upon the subject's being in and with the world. Melancholy in Ottoman mystical writing accommodates an ontological reckoning with the end of empire and its braver beginnings. Put differently, Ottoman melancholy, or the mystical mood of being harab, entails simultaneity of hope and despair, one that is akin to the "symmetric… treatment of happiness and unhappiness in equal measure" Vivasvan Soni locates in Greek tragedies (115). If the tragic, as Soni argues, shelters "the antithetical possibilities of happiness and utter ruin," the melancholic narratives in Ottoman literature sustain hope almost in harmony with resignation.

In an ontological structure that foregrounds empire as its binding force, mourning (or melancholy for) imperial sovereignty does not rest on the possibility or impossibility of coming to terms with loss.[77] Being harab signifies a melancholic mode of existence that turns the ritual of mourning into a positive, even hopeful event. It is a radical affirmation of being resigned to loss with blind assurance that it is what it must be, which is illustrated vividly in the following excerpt from a gazel by İzzet Molla (1786-1829):

Bir mevsim-i bahârına geldik ki âlemin
Bülbül hamûş havz tehi gül-sitân harab
Çıkmaz bahâra değmede bîçâre andelib
Pejmürde-bâl vakt şitâ âşiyân harab
Elbetde bir sütunu olurdu bu kubbenin
İzzet nihâyet olmasa kevn ü mekân harab
Teslim olursa pire medeng-i irâdesi
Olmaz diyâr-ı Rum'da bir hanedân harab ("Bir Mevsim-i" 216)

We have reached a luckless spring
in this sad world
When the nightingale is silent, the pool is empty,
and the rose-garden is in ruins
The helpless nightingale cannot go out to meet
the spring
Its wing is broken, the season is winter,
its nest is all in ruins
Oh 'Izzet, if there were even one pillar
remaining to this dome
This transitory world would not end in ruins
And if the key of rule were given to our wise master,
Not one family in Ottoman lands
would fall in ruins[79]

İzzet Molla, as his title indicates, was a mullah [a person well-versed in Islamic theology and legislation], who served in 1826 as Istanbul's kadı [a judge who observes the principles of sharia]. Like Galib and Selim III, he was a follower of the Mevlevi order, and likewise put his mystical orientation on display in his poetry generously. This gazel showcases İzzet's literary command of mysticism, which was self-admittedly influenced by Galib's poetry, with its mournful look at mundane attractions (Okçu 561). Bahar [spring], bülbül [nightingale], gül-sitan [rose garden], and aşiyan [bird nest], i.e. the charms of earthly life, are all submerged in the gloomy mood of the speaker. Bülbül, a popular symbol borrowed from Persian lore, usually represents the poet, and its singing is likened to poetic production. Conventionally, the male bülbül is expected to sing when it is spring, which is the mating season for nightingales and also the period when roses start to bloom. It is, in other words, supposed to be a time for reproduction. İzzet's bülbül, on the other hand, is utterly quiet. "Mevsim-i bahar" [season of

spring] turns out not to be a call for a happy lovemaking. On the contrary, it is a spring without offspring, a season of falling apart.

İzzet takes the conventional subject matter of the gazel form —i.e. separation from the beloved— to its extreme: unsatisfied love becomes an extended metaphor for social destruction, more precisely, the obliteration of future in heteronormative sense. "Bülbül hamûş" [the mute nightingale] implies sexual impotency, "havz tehi" [empty pool] an unfertilized womb, and "gül-sitân harâb" [ruined rose garden] the resulting unsustainability of human existence. The cycle of life appears as broken as the heart of the lover who exists only to mourn.

The melancholy of the lover looms large in in the recurring use of "harab" as the repeating rhyme. In each repetition the scope of ruination gets enlarged. First it is the rose garden that is in ruins, then the bird nest, later "kevn ü mekân" [the world] and finally "diyâr-ı Rum'da bir hanedân" [any family in the Anatolia, or in Ottoman lands]. This movement from birds' nest to families in Ottoman territories expands the spatial imaginary of harabat in the poem, suggesting that the speaker's melancholy concerns the empire. The nightingale's canceled love —as a strictly ritualized (seasonally determined) and biologically consequential (future-promising) act— parallels the potential dissolution of the Ottoman unity and sovereignty, as implied in the image of a ruined family. Whereas, up until the very last line, being harab flags the lost amatory connection on the part of the nightingale poet, it becomes clear at the end of the poem that the lover's mourning is directed toward the Ottoman Empire.

Despite its destabilized local and global authority, the Ottoman Empire was intact and forceful enough when İzzet was at its service. Accordingly, mourning empire points in the poem not to a presently happening disaster, but to a future-projected experience of loss that seems imminent but not realized yet. This expectation or fear of loss is not meant to be resolved,

however. The suspense caused by the potential departure of the sovereign is indicative of nothing but the subject's own internalization of being watched by an intimate authority figure. It exposes reluctance to forego empire, a strong attachment to authority that resembles in a way the relationship between infants and parents. This comparison is implicated in the poem's allusion to empire in the image of family. Such familial evocation of sovereignty suggests an internalization of being in the presence of power, analyzed by Melanie Klein as follows,

> The baby, having incorporated his parents, feels them to be live people inside his body in the concrete way in which deep unconscious phantasies are experienced—they are, in his mind, 'internal' or 'inner' objects, as I have termed them. Thus an inner world is being built up in the child's unconscious mind, corresponding to his actual experiences and the impressions he gains from people and the external world, and yet altered by his own phantasies and impulses. (127)

The infant's "incorporation" of parents and others, Klein suggests, deactivates the divide between the subject and the perceived object. They are intrinsically entwined, and as such shape the child's sense of being in the world without the awareness of any exteriority. Probably for this very reason, that is, for the ontological resonances of the infant's social-psychological development, Klein does not shy away from describing it as an event of world-making in its own right. Just as child's melancholy precedes the actual loss of parents and the beloved ones, and arises instead from the feared possibility of the destruction of this internally constructed image of the world, the lover's melancholy in İzzet's poem stems from a woeful prediction that empire will be no more. The lover missing his beloved mirrors the melancholy of an Ottoman subject facing a future without an empire. The possible disappearance of the sovereign afflicts the narrator with an ontological angst, reminiscent of the one Childe Harold and Lionel Verney undergo as they meander through imperial ruins. To be harab —ruined and melancholic at the same time—corresponds in İzzet's poem to an identical anxiety of being abandoned by sovereignty.

There is, however, a hint of hope regarding the future of empire that expresses itself in the narrator's mystical celebration of mourning. Ruination can become a regenerative process as long as "Medeng-i idare" [the key to one's will] is be submitted to "pir" [the wise one, leader, or sheikh]. By "pir" the poem, could be alluding to anyone who is qualified to be a spiritual leader, one might say. And yet, since the sultan is the ultimate guide and the poem concludes with the mention of "Ottoman lands," no one but the sovereign can be the referent of this call for willful surrender. The condition for Ottomans to forestall their doom is paradoxically to be harab, to be intoxicated under the influence of the sovereign. This self-forgetful subservience to the transcendental authority of the sultan promises survival, a joyful prospect of continuity for empire.

İzzet's illustration of the forward-looking nature of the melancholy encapsulated in the imagery of harabat is not an exception in itself. It agrees well with Selim III and Aziz Efendi's mournful affirmations of mystical sovereignty. Both Selim III's sultan-poet and Aziz Efendi's Naci Billah try to figure out how to render empire unlosable, while on the surface they submit to the pain of being separated from it. A melancholic craving for an indestructible legacy is what lies beneath the spiritually tamed image they both endeavor to embody. Their melancholy over the possible loss of touch with sovereignty is also their way of communicating an investment in an abstract power that cannot be lost. What makes İzzet stand out among these and other figures, however, is that the spiritual dimension of surrendering to power becomes much less evident in his writing while mystical language stays in place. In other words, his mysticism expresses an urge to be one with the sultan in quite quotidian terms, as exemplified perfectly in his masterwork, *Mihnetkeşan* (1823).

İzzet wrote *Mihnetkeşan* when he was exiled by Mahmud II as a punishment for his

refusal to dissociate himself from his friend and mentor, Halet Efendi, an Ottoman diplomat and politician who was executed because of his alleged sympathy for rebelling Greeks. İzzet was sent to Keşan, a small district in northwestern Turkey within approximately a 143-mile distance from Istanbul, then the capital of the empire, where he endured his "mihnet" [trouble, trial, sorrow]. Prior to his exile, he was employed by the sultan as "nişancı," whose duty was to inscribe "tuğra" [the sultan's official signature] on the highly sensitive documents like decrees. Hence, once so close to the sultan —close enough to author his signature—, İzzet had to suffer the social and psychological toll of being away from the sovereign. Throughout *Mihnetkeşan*, he agonizes over this demotion,

> Saray-ı hümayunu etdim hayal
> Gözümden revan oldu eşk-i melal
>
> Kurup devletin resm-i divanını
> Dizerdim hayalimde erkanını
>
> Gelip fikrime damen-i padişah
> Giribanımı çak edip çekdim ah (105)[80]
>
> [I dreamed about the palace of the sultan
> Tears of sorrow draining out of my eyes
>
> I would picture the council of the state
> Imagining in order its high officials
>
> The skirts of the sultan's robe crossing my mind
> I would tear apart my collars with a deep sigh]

Given its temporal brevity and the actual shortness of the distance to where he was dismissed from, exile was more than a physical ordeal for İzzet. Banned from the sultan's home, he grieves over the current impossibility of dwelling in the sultan's world with the sultan. Exile, cutting him off from the power relations that grounded his status, poses nothing less than an existential crisis for İzzet. Wistful about rubbing his face against the imperial robe, he wishes anxiously to be worthy of the sovereign's approval again, not only to show his deference but also to reclaim his

place in the structure of power. Exclusion from the council of the sultan is what he cannot bear. The inability of going back to where he was once means to him above all else an unbearable estrangement from the sovereign.

Later in the poem İzzet confesses that life itself becomes undesirable in this state of isolation, worsened by the lack of the sovereign's care: "Ben ansız hayat istemem bir nefes" [I would not breath a life without him/her] (209).[81] Such self-oblivious readiness to let go of one's being is testament to the ontological gravity of İzzet's displacement. His exilic condition is depicted in the poem as the plight of a lover who is tormented by his unresponsive beloved without whose love İzzet simply cannot be. His state of intoxication mimics the one witnessed frequently in the mystical literature of the period that usually culminates in spiritual transcendence, as it does in the texts of Selim III and Aziz Efendi, as well as Galib's *Hüsn ü Aşk*. However, İzzet makes it rather explicit that his love for the sovereign is literally for the sovereign, that uniting with the sultan is an end in itself that is essential to his being. As such, he articulates in a mystical tone the distincly profane melancholy of an Ottoman subject who is rendered "harab" with desire to be one with sovereignty.

In a section of *Mihnetkeşan*, titled "Hazret-i Aşka Ba'zı Hitabatımızdır" [Our Address to Love, their Excellency], İzzet mourns: "Yıkıp bunca halkın 'imaratını / Düzeltdin mi dehrin harabatını… / Sorulmaz mı senden bu viraneler / A zalim yakıp yıkdığın haneler" [Wrecking all those built by people / Have you repaired this ruined World... / Are you not to be accounted for these ruins / O cruel one, these houses you burned down] (169).[82] Bringing to mind the lamentations of Şeref Hanım and Vasıf, these lines vocalize the ontological unrest of being in the world without the affection of the beloved sovereign. Just as a lover, rejected by the beloved, recoils in melancholy, İzzet is imperilled by the withdrawal of the imperial authority. He is left

alone with the "harabat," —the insignia of the not-physically-present sultan— and has to mourn so that his being is validated again and he is accepted back into the ontological realm of power.

Welcoming the melancholy that springs from being separated from empire, that is, the state of being ruined and drunk with love promises to restore the relationship between the subject and the sovereign in İzzet's writing. [83] Such hopeful mournfulness, amply found in the larger landscape of the Ottoman mystical writing, assign the imagery of ruins a contradictorily positive meaning. Harabat facilitate the imaginary of a prevailing Ottoman sovereignty that does not lend itself to decipherability when approached through a downwardly curved historiography. The ruination of the Ottoman Empire, as understood through the Ottoman literature, counters Volney's defeatist historicization. In the horizon of future opened up for the Ottoman subject by mourning, by being harab, imperial sovereignty rewires itself ontologically, undermining the historical narrative that declared its end.

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Facts do confirm the defeatist historiography of the Ottoman Empire and its romantic aestheticization popularized by Volney. At the end of the 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish war, the Ottoman state lost Enikale, Kabardia, Kerch and a fraction of Yedisan to Russia, which was followed in the 1806-1812 Russo-Turkish war by the concession of the eastern part of Moldavia to Russian control. It is an uncontestable historical fact that the Ottoman hegemony was dwindling, and its sovereignty was weakening: a fact that was documented not solely by Volney, but also by the chronicles of Ottoman officers themselves.

Ottoman sultans would appoint select individuals, who knew Arabic and Persian alongside European languages (primarily French), to the office of "Vak'a-nüvis" [chronicler].[84]

These state-sponsored historians produced written archives of events happening generally in a short span of time. Despite their small volumes, however, they provide plenty of clues as to the mood of the age. One of them, *Asım Efendi Tarihi* [Asım Efendi's History] (1755-1819), covering merely the period from 1804 to1807, conveys that the news of killed soldiers and lost lands in the war against Russia "filled the hearts of all believers and the temples of Islam with sorrow and grief" (99).[85] Another one written by chronicler Şânîzâde Mehmed Atâ'ullah Efendi (circa 1771-1826) reports the alarming and potentially dangerous resignation to melancholy "in prayer houses, headquarters, harbors and especially among dignitaries and the high-ranking servants of the sultan" (191).[86] In his manuscript *Tarih-i Liva* [History of Flag] written between 1828-1832, Abdülhak Molla (1786-1854) recounts the depression caused by Russia's invasion of multiple Ottoman regions in the Balkans. He recalls that "we visited the barracks in grief and wailed altogether" in the wake of the Russian occupation of the Bulgarian city Varna (12-3).[87] Later, he notes, the sultan himself was not exempt from this shared disquiet at all, exuding an aura of infectious melancholy himself: "The sorrow of our sultan, their excellency, affected all of us, and our hearts shriveled with indescribable gloom" (65).[88]

Considering the circumstances of the period, there is nothing extraordinary about these accounts. It was after all, as Galib puts it in another kaside, "devr-i harab" [a ruined, melancholic age] ("Sultan Selim" 84). And yet, at times of such intense despondency, chroniclers were also asserting their imperial pride and joy. Asım Efendi, for instance, does not hesitate to accentuate the Ottoman state's value as an ally for Britain in the conflict with France following the French Revolution and Bonaparte's advances in North Africa. "Even the British," he adds in his otherwise unhappy anecdotes, "refreshed its peace agreement with the sublime state" to gain support against France (110).[89] Abdülhak echoes Asım's unwavering belief in the Ottoman

Empire's globally recognized authority when he recollects how "the British frigates fired canon balls" in honor of the sultan's ship to greet it (76).[90] He also proudly remembers the British ships "flying the flag of the sublime state" (90)[91] as well as a Russian general visiting Ottoman barracks to "rub his face on the throne at the headquarters" (80).[92] Another chronicler, Es'ad Efendi pays his tribute to Ottoman glory in a more passionate style. In his praise of Selim III's army, Es'ad Efendi prays for Ottoman military dominance in the world: "The state of all Muslims refreshed its glory / God willing, its trained soldiers will conquer the West and the East" (184).[93]

It is true that chroniclers might have felt obliged to insert these details to flatter the sultan who commissioned their work. They were possibly meant to serve the need, as Şerif Mardin claims, to discursively belie the downfall of the empire and keep the sense of Ottoman supremacy and integrity alive (*The Genesis* 133). Nonetheless, regardless of their motives or missions, these self-assuring exclamations of reverence for the sultan and empire suggest an ongoing attachment to sovereignty. If, as Butler holds, "the rituals of mourning are sites of merriment," these chronicles document the stubborn presence of happiness alongside melancholy in Ottoman reflections on the geopolitical conundrums of the empire (472). Registered in the mood swings or conflicting emotions of the writers is an eagerness to envision empire's tomorrow even when its present looked dubious. They operate as the historical evidence of a determined refusal of a world without a sultan and an empire.

The melancholy of the "decline" period reinterprets decline as a restorative phase that is not by any means a harbinger of unpreventable imperial fall. Ottoman obsession with harabat reinforces a spiritual dedication to empire, which contrasts sharply with Volney's presumption that "in vain the sultan leads forth his armies, his ignorant warriors are beaten and dispersed; in

vain he calls his subjects, their hearts are ice." (*Ruins* 64). The fictional and nonfictional sources from the Ottoman Empire contradict Volney as they reveal how the love of the sovereign continued to kindle a fire in the "hearts" of Ottoman subjects. Unacknowledged in the defeatist historiography of Ottoman imperial sovereignty is such persevering devotion to empire, the unextinguished ambition to be always in and with power, as boasted by İzzet:

> Aceb mi askerinin her biri bir mülke şâh olsa
> Görenler olmaz mı Hâkân-ı iltifât zıll-ı Mevlâ'yı
> Kılub asker-i İslâm'ı teshir eyledi ol şâh
> Musahhar eylemek işten mi bundan sonra dünyâyı ("Kaside Bera-yı Şehinşah-ı Alem" 5)[94]
>
> [Would it surprise if each of his soldiers were a sultan of a country
> Who would not see that the shadow of god could do it
> He is a sultan who enchanted the soldiers of Islam
> Is it any wonder that they can take over the world]

Part II

Comparing Empires

Chapter Three: The Orient Becomes Empire: Ottoman Imperialism in British Imagination

Greece and Anti-imperial Orientalism

Written in the early years of the Greek war of independence (1821-1830, Percy B. Shelley's "Hellas" takes aim at the Ottoman Empire as an aggressor, as the primary threat to the imagined purity of "the modern Greek" who is believed to be "the descendant of those glorious beings [i.e. ancient Greeks]" (319). The poem seeks to resuscitate the Hellenic glory of Greece, attempting to fulfill aesthetically the prophecy Shelley voices in his essay, *A Philosophical View of Reform*: "the climate and the scenery which was the birthplace of all that is wise and beautiful will not remain for ever the spoil of wild beasts and unlettered Tartars" (26-7). The presumed civilizational divide between "wild beasts" and "all that is wise" persists in "Hellas," where Ottoman imperial expansionism is addressed in racially and culturally hostile terms. The poem's strategic use of the Ottoman sultan and Mahomet the prophet as mouthpieces of its critique of empire intensifies this discrimination. In the prologue of "Hellas," Mahomet commands Sultan Mahmud to "haste," and

> … fill the waning crescent
> With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow
> Of Christian night rolled back upon the West
> When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph
> From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow (322)

The prophet's imperative for expansion silences the rumors of the Ottoman decline, forecasting instead an Ottoman imperial ascendancy. The Volneyesque description of "the waning crescent"

gains a new meaning in these lines, as it does not proclaim the ruination of the Ottoman Empire. To the contrary, the lunar metaphor accentuates the shifting position of the empire in the global power dynamics, not its disappearance. The wanes and waxes of "the orient moon of Islam" signify fluctuations in the territorial size of the Ottoman Empire, not a consistent weakening. The poem thus begins by underscoring the hegemonic character of the Ottoman Empire.

As Mahomet steers the expansion of the Ottoman Empire towards regions associated predominantly with the Caucasian race, the poem draws a geo-racial map that centers attention on nominally white dominions of the empire. Mahmud proudly declares: "the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph / From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!" (326). Stretching from Tmolus (modern Bozdağ mountain in Azerbaijan) to Acroceraunian (the mountain range between modern Albania and Macedonia), the map of "Hellas" demarcates imperial violence within the confines of whiteness. Whereas the poem dramatizes so vividly the Ottoman encroachment upon whiteness, it dismisses the colonial presence of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and North Africa. The vulnerability of those who are subjected to the Ottoman rule is hence communicated in a racially selective awareness, as evidenced in the animated speech of Hassan the vizier.

> The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
> One God is God —Mahomet is his Prophet.
> Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits
> Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
> Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,
> But not like them to weep their strength in tears;
> They have destroying lightning, and their step
> Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,
> And reign in ruin. ("Hellas" 326)

Thousands of Muslims "from the limits of utmost Asia" are "irresistibly throng" under the command of the sultan, representing nothing but the sovereign's will. Ottoman sovereignty

affects them like a natural disaster ("destroying lightning" and "earthquake"), spreading as though it were a wind blowing from North Africa ("Sirocco"). Peoples of "the orient" are indistinguishable beyond their exploitation, in which they are depicted as complicit. The poem's equation of human action with imperial mobility effaces the exploitation of Middle Eastern and North African subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Portraying submission to empire as *raison d'état* of the orient, "Hellas" consistently places Greece apart from it. While the conspicuous orientalization of the Ottoman army erases any trace of social autonomy in the categorically non-Western territoties of the empire, it also heightens the racial-cultural anxiety instigated by the Ottoman infringement upon Greece.

Hassan assures Mahmud that his reign will continue even if he loses the war against Greeks. His depiction of Ottoman supremacy, however, is noticeably macabre.[95] The Ottoman Empire "consumes" and "overwhelms" life, epitomizing a "necropolitical" force —to borrow Achille Mbembe's term— that governs through destruction, and conquers only to "reign in ruin" (12) The hyperbole embedded in this grotesque glorification of imperial atrocities suggests that the vizier represents something other than himself. Hassan can be said to ventriloquize in quite a subversive way the poem's orientalist critique of the Ottoman brutality.

The orientalist poetics of Shelley's text arbitrates a vehement critique of Ottoman colonialism while simultaneously upholding the racial-cultural inequalities that undergirded Western imperialism. The paradoxical scope of this peculiar orientalism becomes fathomable with the insight drawn from the Ottoman sources in the previous chapter, which has made it possible (at last) to approach the Ottoman Empire as the imperial actor that it was. The attack of "Hellas" on imperial sovereignty and its concomitant revitalization of imperially produced racial-cultural asymmetries lends itself to a nuanced analysis only when the Ottoman Empire is

seen as the imperial aggressor that it was. For the poem, orientalism is rooted in the tension between empires, not in an empire-colony relationship, as it is understood in its conventional Saidian conceptualization. It is true that "Hellas" sanctions the-clash-of-civilization mentality that is part and parcel of Western imperialism. In the poem, similar to what Makdisi observes to be the case in "Alastor," "the Orientals themselves are consigned to their own version, their own space, their own time" (*Romantic Imperialism* 147). Leask agrees with Makdisi in his assessment that Shelley's orientalist poetics ennobles the West by assigning to it "the revolutionary liberation of the long-oppressed East" (108). While Said's critical incisiveness reverberates in Makdisi's and Leask's interpretations, so does his oversight regarding the categorical difference of the orient when it labels the Ottoman Empire. Since Said's scrutiny of orientalism is directed toward "the knowledge collected during colonial occupation," it fails to account for the type of orient exemplified by the Ottoman state, that is, a hegemonic power (*Orientalism* 86). An imperial agent, a sovereign itself, the Ottoman Empire constitutes an orient that is by no means a "colonial" entity. When it is deployed against the Ottoman Empire, therefore, Orientalism gains a double-edged function as a means for both criticizing and ratifying imperialism, as displayed in "Hellas."

By magnifying this blindspot in Said's thinking I do not advocate a hasty overturning of the logic of orientalism, as attempted by critics who have set out to challenge Said's theses in controversial ways.[96] The studies of Ballaster, Einboden, Sharafuddin, Aravamudan, and Gottlieb claimed that orientalist discourse enabled self-critical and liberal engagements with the East that did not serve the politics of the empire all the time.[97] What makes these subversive approaches to orientalism unpalatable is not only that they risk redeeming an imperially sponsored branch of epistemology by overstressing its potentially benign functionalities; it is

rather their apparently unintended perpetuation of the orientalist rationale in their insistence on treating the orient as a model, or counter-model for European self-realization. Whether the knowledge of the orient alters the self-perception of the West does not amount to much as long as the orient is pushed to a secondary position where it receives attention only through its instrumental value. Just because oriental discourse occasioned at times solipsistic interrogations for the Western subject does not mean that it automatically helped advance a sound critique of imperialism. In the context of Greece it certainly did not. The conflicted orientalism of the supporters of the Greek revolution like Shelley shines light on the limits of the romantic scholarship on imperialism wherein the Ottoman Empire has yet to register as an actor. This caveat, namely the Ottoman imperiality (made recognizable in this study through access to Ottoman archives), is seen to figure prominently in the pro-Greek literature of the nineteenth century Britain.

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Ottoman hegemony in Greece starts with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and comes to its official end with the establishment of the independent Greek state in 1829. Within the multicultural and multireligious social structure of the Ottoman Empire, Greeks were one of the numerous non-Muslim "millets" [communities]. Historians tend to concur that millets were not situated in a "bilateral majority-minority relationship," and this allowed them a certain degree of autonomy (Benjamin C. Fortna 3). The Ottoman millet system, however, divided Muslims and non-Muslims through a special tax (*kharatch*) imposed solely on the non-Muslim subjects. Muslim or non-Muslim, on the other hand, no Ottoman subject could claim legal ownership over private property until the Tanzimat Era reforms, which guaranteed all peoples of the empire

protection of life, honor and property by law. Conversion to Islam aided, if not ensured, economic mobility especially for those wishing to obtain positions in the army and government. However, the recruitment of non-Muslims (*devşirme*) by the Ottoman state was abandoned long before the nineteenth century, "because there were already too many candidates for offices by the second half of the sixteenth century" (Kunt 60). Being non-Muslim in some cases was arguably conducive to financial survival, since trade, a profession not favored by many observant Muslims, was largely accessible to Christian and Jewish subjects (Mantran 152). Greeks navigated this complex, uneven socio-economic matrix for four centuries under *Tourkokratia* [Turkish rule] (Clogg, 3). While doing so, they were Ottomanized in the sense that their territorial and cultural existence was entwined with other millets and Ottoman Muslims. Since ethno-religious boundaries were not always neatly drawn in the ways communities were dispersed across the Ottoman lands, Greece was home to both Christians and Muslims, the latter constituting as much as ten per cent of its population prior to its war of independence (Katsikas 48). It was this communal diversity maintained and regulated by the Ottoman imperial sovereignty that threatened the monolithic fabrication of Greco-Western identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

From the renaissance until the early nineteenth century, Greece remained a celebrated socio-cultural reference for Europe, invoked habitually in the form of an idea, i.e. "Hellas." In the second half of the 1700s, the idea of Greece began to assume a rather material shape in the European imagination thanks to the rise of epistemic philhellenism (i.e. knowledge gained through archeological and ethnographical ventures and touristic expeditions such as the Grand Tour) that promised to transfigure Hellas into an empirical possibility.[98] This newly minted experiential reality of Greece became integral to the construction of the European self-image.

Reclamation of a Hellenic past developed systematically into state-endorsed enterprises while aggressive inter-imperial competitions took place over the ownership of antiquity through the plundering of Italy and Greece.[99] "Hellenic and Hellenistic artifacts in European museums," as Wendy M. K. Shaw holds, "underscored the notion of ancient Greece as a proto- and pan European culture" (38). Thus, if the Roman heritage —recollected in and through its ruins— consolidated Western empires' invention of political and historical origins, the material 'acquisition' of Hellenic history served to substantiate an idealized cultural identity for the West.[100]

The manufacturing of Hellenocentric Western identity coincides with what Hannah Arendt calls "race-thinking" which "emerged during the 19th century simultaneously in all Western countries" (36).[101] Westernization of Ancient Greece, or, Hellenization of the West was undergirded by a valorization of whiteness that was being rehearsed in aesthetic, political and scientific reflections on race.[102] Martin Bernal elucidates the link between the white-centric racial consciousness of the period and the historiographical accounts of ancient Greece in his three-volume study, *Black Athena: The Afrosiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. As he demonstrates, the influences of Semitic traditions and African heritages were methodically erased and substituted with an "Aryan Model" that came to define Greece (30-31).[103] Elsewhere Bernal states, "the apparent double achievement of the Greeks in poetry and art associated with youth and wisdom which generally came with the maturity of a 'race' gave the Ancient Greeks a superhuman status as the models of balanced and integrated humanity" ("The Image of Ancient Greece" 122).[104] The myth of Hellas had intricate racial underpinnings that were no less present in the notion of Westernness.[105]

Whereas the ideologically crafted intimacy between ancient Greece and Europe often had ethno-cultural, racial and religious undercurrents, it did not always follow a linear logic. In other words, Greece was not unequivocally depicted or even imagined as a white, and quintessentially Western country in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. [106]In his study of German philhellenic tradition, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe problematizes homogenous reconstructions of Greece. He contends that the idealization performed in both fictional and non-fictional narratives of the era veil the absence of "Greece as such", that "Greece itself does not exist, that it is at least double, divided —even torn" (*Typography* 242). Inasmuch as it is construed and constructed as an emblem of "measure and virtuosity," Greece also embodies, according to Lacoue-Labarthe, "an Oriental Greece, " (244) which he rushes to embrace as a counter-hegemonic formation that showed "the modern West" that it itself "does not yet exist, or is still only what it is not" (242).[107]

Whereas Lacoue-Labarthe assumes that Greekness and Westernness became mutually questionable in encounters with the oriental side of Greece, recognizing the country's cultural and ethnic hybridity was actually not enough to deter Europeans from generating counter-narratives in which Greek exceptionalism (its Westernness) was strongly defended. For instance, a British army officer, William Martin Leake (1777-1860) —who was appointed to assist the Ottomans in their war against the French, and additionally was asked to gather topographic information about Greece— discredits in his 1825 travelogue the observations of those who participated in the Grand Tour for failing to recognize the ethnic distinctions of Greeks.[108] Although he concedes to the difficulty of any ethno-cultural differentiation as a result of the centuries-long cohabitation of Greeks and Turks, Leake insists that there existed a pure Greek character, unaffected by the mixed communal structure of the Ottoman Empire. Likewise, an

Edward Blaquière (1779-1832), who joined the Royal Navy in 1784 and later helped form the London Greek Committee that collected funds to aid the Greek war of independence, makes a fervent case for the contemporary Greeks' 'unsullied identity' by accentuating their kinship with Europe as well as their 'glorious' past. "The Greeks", he exclaims, "never lost sight of their imprescriptible rights, or of their former glory" (7).[109] Therefore, even though philhellenes like Blaquière and Leake were confronted by the reality of Oriental Greece, this confrontation did not necessarily deflate their purist fantasies. Quite the opposite, the demographic diversity of Greece granted them the basis of, or the justification for the combative pursuit of an ideally Western, culturally singular Greece.

Lacoue-Labarthe's formulation prematurely celebrates "Oriental Greece" (e.g. its potential to challenge the Eurocentricism of philhellenes) by also failing to identify it as the byproduct of Ottoman imperialism, which it was and appeared as such to the proponents of what he would call 'occidental Greece.' Insofar as the orientalization of Greece involved the Ottoman Empire as its culprit, awareness of it triggered the counter propaganda of de-orientalization, which presented itself in an anti-imperial language that was nourished by ethnic, cultural and racial antagonism. Indeed, a distinctly orientalist discourse was deployed to find resources for the movement of Greek liberation. Consider, for instance, the following remarks of Alexander Ypsilantis (1792-1828), the leader of the insurgent collective *Filiki Eteria* [Society of Friends]: "Greece will recompense her true children who obey her voice, by the price of glory and honor. But she will reprove as illegitimate, and as Asiatic those who shew [sic.] themselves deaf and disobedient to her will" (208). Ypsilantis's call to arms references Greece as a family that demands unconditional devotion. More than the liberation of Greece, however, it promotes Westernness (in the form of not being "Asiatic") as though it were a transcendental cause:

European material investment in Greek independence, in Ypsilantis's estimation, would be "recompense[d]…by the price of honor and glory." The Greek struggle against Ottoman sovereignty marks in these words a moment of reckoning for the West regarding its own Hellenic self-image. Ypsilantis's propaganda tests the very legitimacy of Western capitalization on Greece as it describes fighting the Ottoman Empire as an imperative for the West to legitimize first and foremost its Westernness (to not be "reprove[d] as illegitimate").[110] While the Ottoman state is invoked in Ypsilantis's statement as the "Asiatic" other, this discrimination encodes a rage (a racially and culturally loaded one) against a hegemonic power. In sharp contrast to its conventional Saidian understanding, the discourse of orientalism does not function in the case of Greek revolution as an imperializing tool, but rather becomes instrumental to what was at its core an anti-imperial resistance.

Orientalism and philhellenism, as Maria Koundura stresses, are almost identical in their epistemological function, meaning, in their production of "self-generated images of otherness" (259). As such, they were concurrently deployed to buttress a so-to-speak civilizational difference that was broadcasted not only in political rhetoric such as the one championed by Ypsilantis, but also in artistic representations. An apt example is the 1826 painting, *La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi* [Greece on the Ruins of Missolonghi] by Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). In his painting, Delacroix depicts the brutal Ottoman invasion of the Greek city Missolonghi in 1825 during the Greek War of Independence (see fig. 2). Ottoman conquest is portrayed as if it were an earthquake. At the center of the painting is a wailing Greek woman who stands —as the only survivor of a disaster— over bodies crushed under stones. Her presence is juxtaposed in terms of color and composition with that of the triumphant Ottoman soldier behind her. Delacroix foregrounds Greek whiteness with well-defined contours, and

portrays the blackened Ottoman soldier almost as an indistinguishable figure in the dark background. Racially charged disparity between the two figures is unsubtly eroticized through

Figure 2. F. Victor Eugène Delacroix, *La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi*. Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EugèneFerdinandVictorDelacroix017.jpg

the contrast between the phallic and passive imageries (note the spear, or the scepter of the Ottoman man versus the vulnerable openness of the Greek woman). Sexualizing the Ottoman assault and the Greek resistance at the same time, Delacroix's painting conflates the patriotic

defense of Greece with patriarchal 'protection' of female body. More importantly, it projects a fear of racial compromise onto the body of the Greek woman whose threatened purity and whiteness become a synecdoche for the ideality of Greece that is on the verge of corruption.

Delacroix and Ypsilantis are part of a larger representational landscape where imperial violence in Greece is spotlighted with furious attestations to the hegemonic status of an oriental power (i.e. the Ottoman Empire). To speak of the orient in this landscape is to speak of a site of resistance to imperial sovereignty, in which an oddly anti-imperial use is made out of orientalist discourse. The Greek struggle against the Ottoman Empire was widely defended in a political and aesthetic attitude that vindicated its counter-hegemonic imaginary by resorting (if sporadically) to racial and cultural discriminations.[111] Notwithstanding their differing political affiliations many other intellectuals and ideologues who were invested in the Greek cause utilized this simultaneously subversive and discriminative orientalist discourse. Blaquière, who belonged to the rather conservative faction of philhellenism that avoided an overt critique of the status quo in Britain, reported that Ottoman Greeks were "a *degraded* caste… without one solitary guarantee either for life, religion, or property" (4 italics mine). At the other end of the political spectrum where philhellenic vision accommodated a scrutiny of the British politics, Byron passionately vocalized his sympathy for Greeks who were "Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand" ("Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" 76). What made orientalist rhetoric adjustable to competing ideological agendas was the common concern that Greece was under the authority of an imperial contender.

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Unlike Byron or Blaquière, Shelley never travelled to Greece, but this did not discourage him from writing two long poetic accounts of the Greek revolution.[112] Prior to the publication of "Hellas" in 1821, Shelley had written another (and much more controversial) poem on the subject: *Laon and Cythna: The Revolution of the Golden City: a Vision of the Nineteenth Century* (1817). [113] *Laon and Cythna*, which was recalled because of its atheistic and incestuous content and republished a year later under a new title, *The Revolt of Islam*, centers on two Greek siblings/lovers who orchestrate a radical non-violent revolution in Ottoman-ruled Greece through their "soul-subduing tongue" (110).[114] Foreshadowing what readers would later find in "Hellas," *Laon and Cythna* levels the same orientalist critique against Ottoman imperial sovereignty, anticipating a monocultural and monoracial revival of Greece.

Laon and Cythna is a poetic undoing of the imperially monitored socio-cultural diversity of Greece. The revolutionary agenda of *Laon and Cythna* is set against the actual discrepancy between the Hellenic myth and the Ottoman present of Greece. In his foreword to the poem, Shelley bemoans that mingling with "a multitude of Syrian captives" filled Greeks with "contempt for virtue," rendering them "unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno" (48). The fractured reality of Greece, as far as Shelley admits to its existence, is taken to be a consequence of the intercultural texture of the Ottoman regime. While the poem keeps Greece outside this orientalist topography, it amplifies the anxiety of a convergence with it, and hence the destruction of the myth of Hellas. The "multitude of moving heartless things" marches in the poem to put a halt to the wave of emancipation; they are lulled by "Indian breezes" and gathered in "Idumea's sand" that is "fertile in prodigies and lies" where "strange natures made a brotherhood of ill" (192). Oman, Ethiopia, India, Idumea (modern southern Israel) signify in the poem interchangeable zones of plague, violence and depravity. [115] The oriental landscape

operates as a catalyst for "savage sympathy", for "those slaves impure" to motivate "each one the other thus from ill to ill" (192). As the Ottoman Empire brings the "impure" inhabitants of the non-Western world closer to Greece, the orient threatens to subsume the revolutionary energy of Laon and Cythna.

Laon and Cythna who are born in "Argolis" with "impulses" to institute justice are never alluded to as Ottoman Greeks (79). Personifying Hellenic idealization, Laon and Cythna strive to enlighten the oriental masses of the Ottoman Empire through what Shelley hails as "doctrines of liberty and justice" (41). Much to their disappointment, however, Laon and Cythna's revolutionary zeal does not resonate with the oppressed thoroughly. One major reason *Laon and Cythna* presents as to why social progress is so antithetical to the orient is Islam. The poem regurgitates the Islamophobia that was rampant in philhellenic narratives of the period. Leigh Hunt, for example, condemns "the enthusiasts of the Mahometan faith" for converting Greeks into a "mixed and degraded race" (Qtd in Wallace 187). Blaquière, whose conservatism contrasts sharply with Hunt's radicalness, laments in his travelogue, "the only hope held out to those [Greeks] who wished to escape from this intolerable [Ottoman] yoke, was in apostatizing from the faith of their fathers" (4). In the same manner Shelley's poem Islamicizes imperial violence as it reduces it to a metaphysical weapon of Ottoman hegemony. Rendered synonymous with Ottoman despotism, Islam functions as an apparatus for social-political discipline, pacifying Greeks with the idea of "refuge after death" whereby "…they learn / To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!" (80-1).[116] As Anahid Nersessian underlines, Shelley's text evokes Islam—especially its promise of afterlife— as the root cause of inurement to Ottoman regime ("Introduction to Laon and Cythna" 61). The subjects of the empire "learn" to surrender habitually to the sultan, internalizing his sovereignty under the spell of religion.

Although Laon and Cythna are supposedly exempt from such inurement to subjugation by virtue of their non-Muslim origins, they are not representative of Christian, or any other religious affiliation either.[117] It is not only this detail that places Laon and Cythna apart from the numbed victims of the Ottoman Empire, though. The Greek heroes' specialness is signaled via an ethno-racial decipherability that is allowed only to them. All the individuals partaking in resistance against Ottoman sovereignty appear to be nothing more than "ceaseless shadows" (101), "shades" (195), or "a ghastly multitude" (197). Submerged in such collective anonymity, they are denied individuality. Laon and Cythna, on the other hand, are repeatedly singled out from the rest thanks to their "white arms" (87) and gleaming "garments white" (149), "fairest form" (89) and "Fairest limbs" (147). The poem blazons the whiteness of the revolutionaries to centralize their representational role, akin to what viewers see in Delacroix's *La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi*. In the third canto of the poem, in which Ottoman soldiers capture Laon and Cythna, their racially charged distinguishability becomes rather pronounced. Cythna is taken to the Sultan's harem, and Laon falls into a state of delirium in his confinement, tortured by grotesque visions:

> Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven
> Who brought me thither, four stuff corpses bare,
> And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven
> Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
> Swarthy were three – the fourth was very fair" (101).

In this dream-narrative, Laon wakes up in a prison amidst lifeless bodies. "The fourth" of the corpses he sees belongs to Cythna, which he recognizes because of its "fairness." Cythna's skin color distinguishes her from the "swarthy" persons next to her in Laon's nightmare. The adjective "swarthy" had been in use to describe dark complexion earlier than the nineteenth century,[118] and functioned occasionally as a geo-racial signifier in romantic diction. In Byron's

catalogue of people in "Childe Harold," for example, "the Moor" is described as "swarthy Nubia's mutilated son" in contradistinction to "the lively, supple Greek" (70-71). Racial differentiation based on color is at play in Byron's darkening of the Middle East as well as his conscious effort to distinguish Greece from it. Whereas Shelley's lines do not foreground geographical attributes, they indicate a racial perceptiveness similar to that of Byron's through an accent on Cythna's fairness. Owing to her whiteness, Cythna does not only become identifiable, but also visible in her singularity as opposed to the dark anonymousness of others near her. Whiteness, therefore, is not only a racial signifier but also a license of visibility in the poem, attached exclusively to Laon and Cythna.[119]

The poem's privileging of the whiteness of Laon and Cythna over the "multitude" interrupts the comparability of these Greek figures to the other actors of the revolution. This aesthetic and political valorization of whiteness results in the concomitant obscuration of the non-white, and forecloses the possibility of a truly egalitarian counter-hegemonic movement. Because the privilege and power of world-making is spared solely for the racially legible and eligible subjects, the radical social reordering organized by Laon and Cythna ends up being an ephemeral top-down change.[120] That is why, the anti-imperial struggle they orchestrate helps reify the imperially instituted racial and cultural hierarchies.

Romantic scholarship has overlooked the ethno-racially uneven nature of Laon and Cythna's revolution. Andrew Warren suggests that the text "attempts to invent a kind of de-Orientalizing, liberating poetics" (133); Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud locates in it an ambition "to represent the current problems of 'life's various story' and to overcome them through an act of textual reform" (91); and Nersessian applauds its dedication to "a philosophical and political principle of evenly distributed suffering" (*Utopia* 107). Such celebratory readings, in which the

Western-rooted romantic imaginary of revolution is more romanticized than scrutinized, ignore the imperialist character of what is supposedly a universally applicable anti-imperial narrative. It is not only that the racially and culturally segmented structure of Laon and Cythna's revolution forbids it from unsettling imperial sovereignty fundamentally. Laon and Cythna themselves actually turn out to be rivals for sovereignty disguised as revolutionaries. Cythna typifies an imperial liberator who vows to free the oppressed by her own means: "It shall be mine, / This task, mine, Laon!" (90). Her sense of entitlement becomes further transparent when she cries out, "All shall relent / Who hear me – tears as mine have flowed, shall flow, / Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent / As renovates the world; a will omnipotent!" (91). Even though she admits that it would take many to "renovate the world," it is only "such intent" and "a will omnipotent" embodied by Cythna that could save the day. With these overstatements, Cythna sounds more like a conqueror than a collaborator whose access to authority (and superiority) is consolidated in and through racial-cultural exceptionalism. The restoration of the Ottoman imperial regime in the poem therefore does not happen despite, but because of Laon and Cythna's revolution. Their revolution imposes itself on the multitudes —under the pretext of liberal ideals— as an imperial enterprise, and as such, it flags not an alternative but a relapse to imperial domination.

After their revolution collapses, Laon and Cythna are arrested, and right before their execution, they are magically transported to "a bank o'ertwined / With strange and star-bright flowers" (12.157-58). The poem dispenses with, or submits to the sovereign's law everyone but Laon and Cythna. The idealized Greek protagonists are rewarded with a "paradise," inhabited only by them (12.194). Their miraculous escape marks a resolution that does not concern itself with resolving the conflict Greece was having with the Ottoman Empire. The fleeing of Laon and

Cythna denotes an irremediable distancing from the orient, a poetic justice that saves not Greeks themselves but the myth of Hellas.

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For Shelley, saving Greece was Britain's moral and political imperative. "We are all Greeks," he famously asserted, "our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece;" adding, the British "might still have been savages, and idolaters", degraded to the "miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess" had it not followed the path of its Hellenic ancestors ("Hellas" 319). What was at stake in Greek liberation for him was nothing less than the British identity itself. With an explicit nod to Ypsilantis's disdainful mention of "Asiatic" others in his reference to "China and Japan" as the counterexample of what Britain supposedly is, Shelley openly put to trial the self-image of Britain on the basis of its response to Greece.

Saving Greece from the Ottoman yoke and thereby salvaging its archetypal purity, however, was easier to imagine than accomplish. The logistics of the rescue-mission Shelley longed for was complicated by the fact that Greece was a locus of what Laura Doyle terms "inter-imperial dialectics" (691). During the nineteenth century, while it was categorically under Ottoman rule, multiple empires were vying over Greece. In 1809, France invaded the Ionian Islands once again, from which it was expelled almost a decade ago by a joint Russian-Ottoman offensive. Following the defeat of the French fleet, the British Empire seized the control over the islands and crowned this victory with the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815), becoming their new protector (Chamberlain 50-4). The geopolitical ramifications of its liberation exposed Greece to further inter-imperial compromises and contests. If Greece, for instance, were to be liberated through the sponsorship and the subsequent expansion of Russia —which appeared to many as

the most likely scenario— the scale of hegemony would no longer tilt toward the Ottoman Empire. This would mean, for Britain, the most powerful actor in this multi-imperial rivalry, having to deal with a turmoil much less manageable than the one between Greeks and Ottoman Turks, for in the event of a southward Russian expansion, Britain would have to wrestle with Russia for a safe access to India, instead of its long term ally, the Ottoman Empire (Hale 12).[121] Although, therefore, the British state witnessed the waves of the revolution by virtue of its presence in the Ionian Islands, it refrained from propelling them since "it was in Turkey that Britain's main efforts to contain Russia were made" (Middleton 36). To the contrary, some would argue, the British Empire actively tried to forestall the Greek resistance: "The High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands, like most of the officials on the spot, was strongly contemptuous of the Greeks; he had already issued proclamations forbidding any interference by Ionians" (Crawley 21).

The diplomatic noninvolvement of Britain in the Greek war "was a sore disappointment to liberal hopes," profoundly agitating those like Shelley who were in favor of a quick relief act (Woodhouse 45). Such neutrality, according to many romantics, was at odds with the very character of Britain that they considered to be modeled after Hellenic ideals.[122]. Byron —a self-proclaimed authority on the Greek question— did not mince words when he called Britain to the task. Consciously positioning himself as an informant, who is distinguished for his unmediated understanding of what Greece 'really' wanted, he reports the following in his appendix to the second canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage."[123]

> The Greeks have never lost their hope, though they are now more divided in opinion on the subject of their probable deliverers. Religion recommends the Russians; but they have twice been deceived and abandoned by that power…The Islanders look to the English for succor, as they have very lately possessed themselves of the Ionian republic… But whoever appear with arms in their hands will be welcome; and when that day arrives, Heaven have mercy on the Ottoman, they

> cannot expect it from the Giaours. (91)

Despite his close contact with the situation, Byron's expertise could only establish that the future of Greece is unpredictable. Nevertheless, that Greece is miserable enough to "welcome" any external support to get rid of Ottomans is a tacit invitation, according to Byron, for Britain's intervention. Byron gestures to the ambiguity of Greece's future therefore as an opportunity the British Empire should seize. His opportunism shows itself rather clearly when he underscores the already established British presence in Ionian Islands: Britain was practically already there; it just needed to act. The shrinking proximity between Britain and Greece translates in Byron's view into a familiarity that may cause Greeks to be favorably disposed to the British 'assistance.'

Another romantic, who was equally well versed in analyzing the inter-imperial parameters of the Greek revolution —despite the lack of such first-hand experience as Byron had— was Landor. Landor puts on display his erudition regarding this matter in his five-volume work *Imaginary Conversations* (1829) where he weighs the arguments for and against British interventionism through a dialogue between the fictionalized versions of two real-life characters: Odysseus Androutsos (1788-1825), a leading figure in Greek revolution, and Edward John Trelawny (1792-1881), an esteemed biographer of British romantics who fought with Greeks alongside Byron against the Ottoman army.[124] The conversation between Androutsos and Trelawny breaks down for readers the complex macropolitics of the era regarding the pros and cons of British neutrality.

> *Odysseus*. The politicians of England seem afraid that Russia may benefit by the separation of Greece from Turkey; and Russia is afraid of the principles which operate the separation. She wishes the exhaustion of both nations; and with or without the absolute conquest of the Ottoman Empire, she may threaten or endanger your dominions in Hindostan.
>
> *Trelawny*. She would not be able in half a century to send an army into India, even if she possessed the dominions of the Turk. Indeed, they would be far from affording her any great

facility. (92)

To make the idea of Greek sovereignty agreeable to his audience, Landor initially tries to assuage concerns over Russian imperial gains. Even if Russia might profit from the success of Greeks in the long run, he predicts, it would not cause disturbance for the overseas British hegemony. Later, however, Landor strategically reorients his speculations, and provokes British sensibilities with a pro-Russian rhetoric. In the same dialogue, Trelawny makes an unusual wish:

> God grant that Russia may invade and conquer Turkey! not that the Russians, or any other people on the Continent, are a better, a braver, an honester race than the Turks, but because the policy of the government is adverse to the progress of civilization, and bears with brutal heaviness on its cradle. God grant that Russia may possess her! not because it will increase her strength, but because it will enable, and perhaps induce her, to liberate from *bondage* more than one brave nation (92-3 italics mine).

Trelawny's ambivalence regarding the Russian takeover is salient. His approval of Russia is utterly circumstantial, warranted by the fact that the "cradle" of "civilization" is not in good hands. "The policy of the government" —a veiled reference to sharia— is alleged to render the Ottoman regime antithetical to Greek "progress." Landor's text paraphrases Byron's assessment that "Religion recommends the Russians." In agreement with Odysseus's approval of Russia's efforts to "protect the ministers of our religion," Trelawny takes Russia to be a lesser evil because of its Christian motives, while remaining unambiguously contemptuous of it on moral grounds (83).

Landor's depiction of Trelawny praying for Russia's invasion —while disparaging the character of this empire— suggests a politically motivated irony whereby the author manages to put the British culpability on the spot without naming it. What the irony communicates is that Russia is not the proper defender of Greece and its intervention is only as good as a last resort. As such, Trelawny's is an obligatory endorsement occasioned by nothing other than Britain's refusal to interfere. No matter how desperate or outrageous it may sound to condone Russian

expansionism, Britain's unresponsiveness makes it the sole viable option as a step toward Greek liberation. Landor's critique of British culpability, however, does not appear to be always so indirect and shy in the text. The conversation between Trelawny and Odysseus represents in a way Landor's failed attempt at striking a balance between moderate and radical interrogations of the state politics. Code-switching proves untenable when Odysseus remarks bitingly, "the first time a while Christian people was ever sold openly to the Mahometan was by England, on the thirteenth of March 1817" (91) when "by a convention signed by the British and Turkish commissioners… the last citadel of Greek independence was handed over to Ali Pasha" (Ward 12).

While Landor uttered such impassioned criticism of the British diplomatic neutrality toward Greek self-determination through fiction, Shelley took it highly personally in his writing. Cognizant, like Landor and Byron, of the global constituents of what might have seemed to others a local matter, he was also of the opinion that Britain had a vital role to play in the predicament of Greece. In "Hellas" he concludes with unwavering confidence that

> "Russia desires to possess not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its *intended slaves*, enfeeble each other until one or both will fall into its net. 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…" (*The Complete Poetical* 319 italics mine).

Shelley knew that nation-formation in the case of Greece demanded more than a collective awakening, or an erupting impulse for "self-determination" on a communal level (Weitz 471); it was a process of nation-building that was entangled in inter-imperial negotiations. In the face of multiple imperial forces policing it, Shelley dreads the grim possibility that Greece could remain stuck in the clasp of rotating imperial hegemonies. Britain's intermediation seemed to him under these circumstances as the best of all available bad options, which he sought to legitimize not

only as a morally correct ("generous") but also a rational ("wise") course of action. Compelled in this sense to adopt the same paradoxical logic as Byron and Landor did, Shelley advocates a kind of independence for Greece —not the independence of it— that is established and maintained by the British Empire. While, like his romantic peers, he solicits support for the Greek cause, Shelley does not even entertain the possibility of doing away with imperial sovereignty for good. Inter-imperial dynamics press him to conceive imperial rule as a must, an unpreventable occurrence. Although he was aware, like Byron and Landor, of the fact that Greek independence occasioned an anti-imperial struggle, Shelley was prepared to embrace the kind of liberation made possible only through imperial dominance.

Undergirding the investment of Byron, Landor and Shelley in the British mediation of Greek liberation is the recognition that empires —not simply one single empire— were haunting Greece. At this moment in time when interactions between empires determined national autonomies, regulated social exchanges, and thus impinged on the world in political and ontological terms, imperial sovereignty appeared to them as though it could not be undone. The historical conjuncture marked by inter-imperial exigencies prompts Landor, Byron and Shelley to bow down to empire as the *sine qua non* of free human existence. Their reflections on the Greek war reveal lucidly that imperial sovereignty —in the presence of multiple hegemonic contenders— not merely substitutes liberation, but asserts itself as a prerequisite to it. The threat and challenge of authority posed by other empires redeems British imperialism, fostering an imaginary of imperial rule that is conducive to, and even a condition for freedom.

Such perverse conflation of imperial sovereignty with an ostensibly anti-imperial vision of liberation accords well with what by Mehta refers to as "liberal imperialism" (111). Mehta's coinage describes the convergence of two seemingly irreconcilable worldviews as a pivotal event

for the validation of empire in the nineteenth century (111). To Mehta's conceptualization it can be added that romantics' complicity in liberalizing empire, or imperializing the concept of liberty was as tightly linked with external factors as it was with internal calculations of empire. Priyamvada Gopal explicates this point in her meticulous study of the ways in which the British "metropolitan language of liberty" was actually "an assimilation, reworking, and re-emphasis of the languages…of anticolonial insurgency" (104). [125] While the romantic imaginary of liberty was indebted to anti-colonial experiences that made imaginable the eventuality of liberty, it was also molded in tandem with contexts where empires clashed with one another as well as their exploited colonies. The boundaries of romantic liberal politics were drawn with a geopolitical consciousness that cautioned against a constellation of imperial powers that was determining by whom, when, and to what extent liberty could be gained. It was therefore this strange comparison between empires posited by figures like Shelley, Byron and Landor that revitalized imperialism in its critique. In these romantic comparisons of hegemonies, the critique of the imperialism of one empire does not only spare the other, but also protects it. The anti-imperial discourse emerging from actual and fictional encounters between empires condemns the hegemony of the foreign sovereign, i.e. the Ottoman Empire, while espousing one's own, i.e. the British Empire. As such, this critical liberal discourse exploits comparison as an excuse for, or as a means of reinstating imperial power in the very struggle against empire.

Imperial and Colonial Comparisons

Comparisons between the British and Ottoman empires as rival sovereignties in the nineteenth century drew heavily on the racial and cultural polarities that underwrote the British perception of the Greek revolution. In these comparisons a strong emphasis was placed on Britain's self-

proclaimed reputation as not only the first hegemonic force to (nominally) end the slave trade, [126] but also one that most aggressively pushed others such as the French, Portuguese, and later Ottoman empires to follow its lead. [127] To challenge the realpolitik concerning the British Empire's inactive role in the Greek war of impendence, philhellenes capitalized on this emerging, self-affirmed image of the British Empire as the universal liberator. It is not a coincidence then that comparisons between the British and Ottoman empires made passionate use of the rhetoric of emancipation, and Greeks were likened so often to slaves by their British sympathizers. Leake, for instance, reported in his travelogue that in the course of their rebellions Greeks avenged "So many thousand Greek women and children whose mildest lot has been that of being sold for slaves" (30). Hunt cursed the Ottoman Empire for "the abject slavery" of Greeks (Qtd in Wallace 187) while Byron grieved over their fate to be "From birth till death enslaved," ("Childe Harold II" 76), and Shelley lamented "the "moral and political slavery" inflicted on Greece ("Hellas" 319). If Britain, as Shelley writes in *Laon and Cythna*, truly "Sate like the Queen of Nations…since high Athens fell" as the chosen protector of free civilization, it would be compelled to liberate Greece (213).[128]

The contrast between the British and Ottoman empires as clashing forces in the cause of emancipation was further amplified by the latter's own involvement in slavery and the slave trade. Indeed, the institution of slavery was intrinsic to the socio-economic structure of the Ottoman Empire from its foundation in the thirteenth century to the last decades of its existence. Slaves served in varying capacities in the military, agricultural, administrative and domestic terrains of the Ottoman state.[129] Because the slave population comprised mainly those who were not the subjects of the empire, Ottoman Greece, being an official Ottoman territory, was not a customary spot to acquire slaves from.[130] Still, regardless of its extent, the enslavement of

Greeks by Ottoman Turks (both in metaphorical and literal terms) preoccupied the imagination of many British authors, including the most educated ones such as Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu. In a correspondence with her husband, Sir Edward Wortley-Montagu, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time, Lady Montagu requests a Greek slave. In his reply Sir Montagu writes, "I heartily beg your ladyship's pardon; but I really could not forbear laughing heartily at your letter, and the commissions you are pleased to honour me with. You desire me to buy you a Greek slave, who is to be mistress of a thousand good qualities. The Greeks are subjects, and not slaves" (Montagu 333).[131] This exchange —in addition to recording the moral complicity of the Montagu couple in widely shared indifference to Ottoman slavery— reminds readers of the marginal presence of Greeks in Ottoman servitude.

Sir Montagu was right. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the majority of slaves in the Ottoman Empire were African women, exploited mostly in domestic services, while "males, white females, and kullharem slaves were only a small minority" (Toledano, *Slavery and Abolition* 6-7).[132] Madelein C. Zilfi too underlines this fact in her study of the women slaves in Istanbul, pointing out that in mid eighteen hundreds "the rising proportion of African slaves relative to 'white' slaves climaxed" (104). Anglo-European perception of the racial demographics of Ottoman slavery, however, was more influenced by the age-old notoriety of the Ottoman Empire for white slavery than these statistics. And this notoriety was not historically unfounded. Up until the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Empire had access to Eastern Europe and the Black Sea steppes, partaking in the enslavement of Slavic, Germanic, and tribal Caucasian peoples (Ágoston and Masters 531). Alongside the imperial expansion in the Caucasus, piracy and human trafficking in Barbary increased the numbers of whites enslaved under (if not directly by) the Ottoman regime. Robert C. Davis notes that "between 1530 and

1780 there were almost certainly a million and quite possibly as many as a million and a quarter white, European Christians" captured in the Barbary coast (23). With "upwards of 3,000 British… enslaved in Algiers alone (and another 1,500 or so in Tunis)," the perils of imprisoned white Christians remained vivid in the British mind for quite a long time through captivity narratives from the Barbary slave trade (3). [133] "It was a truism among virtually all those who wrote of European captivity in Barbary," Davis observes, "that many slaves were forced to convert, if not by the direct demand of their masters, then by their inability to withstand the harshness of their treatment or the despair of their situation" (21). What made slavery particularly deplorable in these narratives was hence the religious-cultural assimilation and violence white British Christians were subjected to. While the numbers of such incidents dropped in the nineteenth century, the fear of Ottoman white slavery continued to busy the British imagination. An ethnographic account of Ottoman Tunis published in London in 1810, for example, alarmed its readers that "The number of slaves in Tunis… amounts to nearly two thousand; and let it be confessed with shame and sorrow, that upwards of one hundred of them have been taken, navigating under the protection of British passports" (Macgill 77-8).

White slavery, within and beyond its associations with the Ottoman Empire, was already a heated topic of debate in England at the time. As Joan Baum states, "white Slavery on the Barbary Coast and enslaved workers in the North and Midlands would excite British ire more than the news of enslaved" blacks "in Africa or the West Indies" (83). Even before the abolition of the slave trade could put an end to colonial slavery, public attention was thus already being channeled to what was considered its equivalent, i.e. the proletariat.[134] While "'White slavery' remained a slogan of protest against exploitation for much of the nineteenth century," as a metaphor it also signaled in some instances racialist hierarchizations (Brian Donovan 19).

William Cobbett illustrates this selective rage in his two-volume essay collection *Rural Rides* (published between 1822 and 1826) where he claims that black slaves "were better off than English Laborers" (Bruce Baum 100).[135] Such comparisons, although they cannot be said to capture an overall sentiment concerning the black slavery and slave trade, had the effect of centralizing white slavery in the British campaigns of emancipation, so much so that the imperative to emancipate whites turned into a state-led enterprise in 1816 when "the Royal Navy bombarded the city of Algiers from the sea in an attempt to put an end to corsairing and white slavery" (Colley 132). [136] These efforts had an appeal in the wider sphere of civic engagement too: an association called "Knights of Different Orders" collected in the same year funds for the liberation of "White Slaves of Africa only" (Joan Baum 83).

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This cursory look at the Anglo-Ottoman history of the discourses and practices encircling slavery and slave trade elucidates the intra- and inter-imperial contexts in which Greeks found themselves entangled. The long-standing notoriety of the Ottoman Empire as the enslaver of whites and the white-centrism that inhered in the debates over slavery in Britain are the hidden correlates, if not the direct references, of the emancipatory role ascribed to the British Empire during the Greek war of independence. In this conjuncture, the tropes of slavery and emancipation were abused to promote British interventionism as though Britain were a counter-imperial alternative to the Ottoman Empire. This misguided comparison was a commonly utilized motif in political arguments many philhellenes were presenting, including Byron:

> The Greeks will never be independent; they will never be sovereigns as heretofore, and God forbid they ever should! but they may be subjects without being slaves. Our colonies are not independent, but they are free and industrious, and such may Greece be hereafter…At present, like Catholics of Ireland and the Jews throughout the world, and such other cudgeled and heterodox people, they suffer all the moral and physical ills that can afflict humanity…The

> English have at least compassionated their negroes, and under a less bigoted government, may probably one day release their Catholic brethren: but interposition of foreigners alone can emancipate the Greeks, who, otherwise, appear to have as small a chance of redemption from the Turks, as the Jews have from mankind in general (90).

In light of the inter-imperially produced curtailments, Byron revises the state of independence as a spectrum, proposing that one is no longer either a slave or a free person when targeted by several empires all at once. Freedom is not synonymous with independence, but it is actualized, he suggests, only in a limited scope, only when its geopolitical constraints are recognized and accepted. Historical circumstantialism pushes Byron far enough to reassess colonial subjection as a state of conditional freedom, the only kind of freedom allowable to Greece under the current circumstances. An absolute freedom for Greeks may not be likely, and yet they could be emancipated, he admits, which is conceivable only if Britain takes the charge. Britain, according to Byron, could be the implementer of a liberating form of colonization, the much longed-for "redemption from the Turks."

Byron panders to imperial pride when he points out that this tempered colonial management, attributed singularly to the British Empire, is anticipated in other British colonies. He specifies that, "The Catholics of Ireland" would be those people "free and industrious" but "not independent." Given the brutalization of the Irish under British colonization, Byron's comparison of the Greek suffering to the Irish may not seem odd. What is odd is that which is mentioned only passingly in his analogies, i.e. "compassionated negroes." In striking contrast to his precision regarding the British culpability in the case of Ireland, Byron favors ambiguity and self-absolving rhetoric of emancipation when alluding to African anti-colonial resistances.

Contemporaneous with the war of Greek independence were the colonized black subjects' revolutions, one of which, for instance, was taking place in South Africa, where the Xhosa tribes had been resisting European settlers for nearly half a century. Deterritorializing the

native populace of the Eastern Cape, the British Empire established "the Albany district" and populated it with thousands of its own white colonists.[137] Whether Byron was apprised of these events or not does not alter the fact that Byron's approach to revolutionary agency is racially stratified: Greeks could be 'aided' in their struggle for liberation whereas Africans would only be 'liberated.' In his half-hearted reference to "compassionated" blacks, Byron compares them to Greeks in their incomparability. Liberty, in his uneven comparison, is not a given but a question of who deserves it, a question saturated with racial hierarchism.

Paralleling the racially charged asymmetry between Greeks and Africans is the incongruity between the British and Ottoman empires in regard to the abolition of slavery. The racial hierarchization of colonial subjects, therefore, is intricately tied to the ordering of empires on the basis of how they are positioned in the geopolitics of emancipation. This ladder of the value of life and revolutionary agency colors (if not explicitly racializes) the imagination of two imperial sovereignties —situating one as an emancipator and the other an abhorred enslaver— and it figures in Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* too:

> "We are zealous in protecting from slavery the remotest nations of Africa, who have always for thousands of years been subject to that dreadful visitation, and who never have expected or even heard tidings of generous interference. We take them away by righteous force from under the proudest flag; we convey them to our own settlement; we give them food, clothing, ground instruction, morals, religion. Humanity cries out, *O tell them they are men!* and we hear her. Is she silent for the Greeks? have their voices no echo in her breast? do we treat them cruelly because they have not the advantage of being barbarous? (94-5)

Landor's homage to Britain's emancipatory politics, to which Trelawny serves as a conduit, amplifies the contradictory nature of the government's indifference to Greece. The British Empire's affirmative response to the outcry against the slave trade in Africa should analogously mean, for Landor, that "generous interference" be granted to Greeks too, since they were seen categorically as slaves as well. The intervention Landor pleads for Greece therefore has an overt

racial scope —very much like the one embraced by Byron— intimating apathy (if not grudge) against the freedom earned by "the remotest nations of Africa." Such discrimination crystallizes in Landor's description of the British settler colonialism as humanitarian aid ("we give them food, clothing, ground instruction, morals, religion"), and even more so in his effacement of the African agency in becoming "free," that is, in his failure to acknowledge the active involvement and leadership of Africans in their anti-imperial struggles. His argument omits, for example, the fact that in May 1815 —approximately a decade before he published *Imaginary Conversations*— a major slave riot took place in Barbados. The exploited subjects of the British colony fought the institution of slavery in the wake of the abolition of the slave trade, and were suppressed ruthlessly by the empire. With "120 blacks killed, 144 executed, 132 deported to Africa, hundreds more forced into hiding" it was "one of the most violent and protracted slave rebellions to date in the Caribbean" (Joan Baum 91). Through crucial omissions like these, Landor's comparative account of slavery levies a racially relativized critique of oppression. Rather than similarities, an irremediable difference looms large in his comparison between Greeks and Africans.

Landor and Byron's comparisons between Greece and Africa perpetuate the inequality that was embedded in the universalist romantic views of liberty. Landor's assumption that Britain's mercy is the sole reason why "nations of Africa" are no longer enslaved exudes not only political historical amnesia but also mockery, as he callously suggests that Africans "who never have expected or even heard tidings" of such possibility were less deserving of it than Greeks who lacked "the advantage of being barbarous." Side by side with this incomparability of colonial subjects is a less transparent comparison between the British and Ottoman empires built on a parallel racial-cultural compartmentalization. As he commiserates with Odysseus, Trelawny

charges the Ottoman Empire (and the complicit European powers) with letting "barbarians from the deserts of Arabia, of Libya, of Nubia…exterminate" Greeks and "inhabit [their] country" (84). 'African' and 'Ottoman' become equivalents of each other in the text in their irreducible foreignness that offends Greece and the British Empire. Just as Africans are not deemed the equals of Greeks, Ottoman sovereignty is regarded incompatible with the civilizational standards set and protected by the British Empire. These interlaced comparisons between colonial subjects and imperial powers highlight their incomparability to validate and motivate British interventionism.

Ottoman Greece represents a colony in Shelley's writing as well. Shelley prophesies in *A Philosophical View of Reform* that "Greece will be colonized by the overflowing populations of countries less enslaved and debased" than "the Turkish Empire" (26). Much like Byron, Shelley approaches freedom as a continuum wherein the severity of its lack varies in degrees. In this terminology, the figurative economy of the concept of slavery becomes rather patent in the sequential use of the words "enslaved" and "degraded." The metaphorical loosening of slavery —its moralization or other "complex metaphorical, allegorical, and analogical meanings"— is a historically enduring trend that Shelley and other romantics recirculate in their writing (David Brion Davis 18).[138] Whether understood in factual or imaginary terms, on the other hand, the enslavement of Greeks upsets Shelley particularly because it represents Ottoman bondage. For he welcomes the scenario of a rather 'civilized' ("less enslaved and debased") sovereign colonizing this country, sidelining the possibility of full Greek autonomy.

Unlike Byron and Landor, Shelley does not compare Greece to Africa overtly, and yet this comparison is at work in "Hellas," for instance, where the Greek struggle of independence is narrated alongside "the Anarchies of Africa" (327). African social unrest registers in the poem

only as a harbinger of a global disarray that will "sweep the pale Aegean, while the/ Queen/ of Ocean, bound upon her island throne, / Far in the West, sits mourning…" (327). The contrast between the romanticized Greek revolution and the dismissed African "anarchy" harbors a racial tension heightened by the emphasis on the "pale Aegean." Between "the pale Aegean" and "island throne" sits the "queen," and this imperial connection is formalized in the poem with the word "queen" standing between two lines as a synecdoche for the British sovereignty positioned right between Greece and England, two countries enjambed through their shared paleness. By virtue of the fact that these statements belong to Hassan the vizier, the Ottoman Empire also features in the geo-racial imaginary of "Hellas." Just as African and Greek mobilizations are compared to one another dicthotomously, so are the British and Ottoman empires. The British Empire is summoned in the poem to forego its so-called neutrality and partake in these anti-colonial struggles as an emancipatory power, and thereby prove its incomparability to the oriental sovereign. Shelley reiterates this elsewhere rather openly when he tasks the British Empire for "the overthrow of a cruel Empire, and the establishment of freedom and happiness in one of the finest provinces of the earth" (Quoted in Wallace 182).

In the comparisons Shelley, Landor and Byron draw between empires, imperialism is fostered by a desire to cling to the British Empire as though it were a counter-hegemonic power, a desire that emanates from and excuses itself on account of the inter-imperial exigencies of the period. In its comparative poetics, imperial sovereignty thus becomes part and parcel of the imaginary of its very absence, that is, of the imaginary of freedom from empire. These romantic comparisons between British and Ottoman regimes reassert the authority of empire in its one-way critique. Acknowledging the force of Ottoman imperialism in and through the Greek war of independence, Shelley, Byron and Landor steep their criticism of empire in an orientalist rhetoric

that upholds racial and cultural segregations. Their comparisons between British and Ottoman empires produces therefore a critical attitude, the radicalness of which lies in its still pertinent ambivalence: it is an attitude that is at once anti-imperial and imperialist, a prefiguration, in a sense, of Spivak calls "imperialist anti-imperialism" (471). It is an attitude that still permeates a large body of romantic scholarship that comfortably sees past racial, cultural, and gendered asymmetries to derive liberal political models from 'benign' orientalist representations.

My repositioning of the Ottoman Empire as an imperial actor (which it was, and was seen already as such) in the political and aesthetic accounts of British romantics has disclosed the inter-imperially generated, racially and culturally charged contingencies and limitations of the romantic visions of liberty. Shining light on these contingencies and limitations cautions critics against reproducing such romantic comparisons in which the partial critique of sovereignties continues to mystify the imperiality of empires. With its consistently bilateral and evenly distributed comparative critique of imperial sovereignty, this chapter has attempted to expose and undo such de-imperializations of empire.

Chapter Four: Defeating the British Empire: Poetics and Politics of Ottoman Supremacy

India and Ottoman Colonialism

Bir yanda yakınlaşırdı manzar
Bir yanda fakat uzaklaşırdı
Keştide idim garib ü muztar
Çarpardı cemada abı sarsar
Eşcar bütün kucaklaşırdı
Her mevcde bir hayal-i ziba
Eylerdi kenare nakl-i sevda
(Hâmid, "Gurbette Vatan" 228)

[The scenery would look close
But it also would seem afar
I was on the ship, a stranger in distress
While the water shook the vessel
Trees would hug each other
A beauteous vision in every sway
Would carry ashore troubles][139]

Born in 1852, Abdülhak Hâmid Tarhan was a wandering poly-lingual intellectual. Being appointed to the Ottoman Foreign Service equipped him with the empire's official resources, according him the opportunity to develop into a worldly writer as he served in numerous cities such as Tehran, Belgrade, Paris, London, and Bombay (Tanpınar 491-93). Hâmid took office in Bombay between the years 1883 and 1885 as the Ottoman Chief Consul, and during his tenure he wrote a volume of poems, titled "Bunlar Odur (mentioned by Gibb in English as "These are She"), and a pile of letters that convey his thoughts about India.[140] In his poems, India is degraded often to a zone of enchantment, stripped of its native inhabitants except for the sporadic appearance of female figures through whose movement Hâmid scans the topography of the country, specifically, its hills with their Anglicized names.[141] The faint visibility of Indians (a form of visibility meant to deliver nothing other than a hazy erotic pleasure) goes hand in hand with the dehistoricization of the setting, and creates a poetic and political myopia towards the colonial past and present of India.[142]

The excerpt above comes from his poem "Gurbette Vatan," where the elimination of the natives functions as a key component of Hâmid's portrait of India. The stanza, the first of the six that constitute the poem, narrates Hâmid's voyage to India. Transformed into an insular paradise, India appears on the horizon as a place out of space and time, undisturbed by any cultural motion, with no trace of its native inhabitants. While arriving in the "gurbet," Hâmid pleads sympathy for his precarious solitude. Depicting himself as "garib," he assumes a non-intrusive, defenseless subject-position for himself. Garib and gurbet, deriving from the Arabic "gharāba " (the state of being away from one's home), complement each other in this experience of alienation, intensifying the fragility of the poet who anticipates, with no apparent reason, a hostile greeting. [143] While Hâmid is approaching the land, the sight of it gets alternately sharper and dimmer. Urging the reader to consider the colonial implications of Freud's notion of *unheimlichkeit*, this passage on/to India reiterates the familiar unfamiliarity of the colonial land for the imperial surveillance (Freud 126-27). The liminal signification of Hâmid's India as an un-home-like home, nonetheless, is a remarkably short-lived one. For the uncanny proximity, namely, the simultaneously shrinking and swelling distance between Hâmid and India soon melts away, and an inviting, innocuous landscape comforts the nervous visitor. This transition from the distressing foreignness to the comforting recognizability of India occurs, again, without any encounter with Indians.

In contrast to his poetry, the (otherwise) abstract spatiality of India earns a concrete representation in Hâmid's prose through references to the British-implemented urban technology.[144] In his 1884 letter to Namık Kemal, his literary mentor, Hâmid delightedly recounts: "The tall buildings, the large roads, and the railroads, and the craft of civilization we saw made it clear that it was a British country. Amongst coconut, betel nut, and pineapple trees

—things peculiar to India that have been on my mind since I left Istanbul— were men and cars from London" ("Namık Kemal'e" 299). As he blends the exotic nature of India with imperial culture, Hâmid pays tribute to the British for their imperial dexterity, that is, their aptitude at setting up the elementary conditions for a successful occupation. However, being a sophisticated diplomat-author, Hâmid was not altogether oblivious to the colonial brutalities of Britian. In his memoirs, for instance, he refers to the British as "imperialists in the mission and habit of capturing both land and the sea, refusing to leave any place they set foot upon" (*Hatıraları* 185).[145] While his contempt for Britain apparently lacked coherence when it concerned India, Hâmid did yearn for a poetic justice, a fatal blow to the British imperialism that would be delivered by the Ottoman Empire in India. In the same letter where he speaks fondly of the British imperial governance, Hâmid wistfully writes, "India gives amplitude to the political ideas I have in mind…We, the unwariest of all in the world…must assume a shape that is more forceful than the British ("Namık Kemal'e" 301).

Although his descriptions of India as *terra nullius*, which mystify the British imperial violence inscribed in its landscape, reinforce the British colonial epistemology, Hâmid is cautious enough not to identify with the British when he utters his envy for their imperial agility in his letters, or even when he denies visibility and agency to Indian subjects in his poetry. Ottomans, more precisely, do not register at all in these hierarchical equations between the colonizer and the colonized: the Ottoman Empire is not designated as yet another superior self in opposition to the colonized other. It is due to this omission that Hâmid offers a counterpoint to what Ussama Makdisi calls "Ottoman Orientalism," which, according to Makdisi, "reflected the rise of a specifically *Turkish* sensibility as the dominant element of a Westernized Islamic Ottoman nationalism" ("Ottoman Orientalism" 787). Rather, Hâmid's orientalism, if it can be

called so, appropriates the Anglocentric master-slave dialectic to the advantage of the Ottoman Empire. By virtue of concentrating on the British supremacy and leaving Ottomans out of the comparison, Hâmid eschews any association between the monarch and the sultan. The very absence of the Ottoman Empire becomes a signifier of the sultan's incommensurability; it distinguishes the Ottoman rule from that of the British, invoking the former as a 'missing' alternative for Indians.

A strange comparison therefore appears between the British and Ottoman empires in Hâmid's strategic avoidance of implicating the Ottoman Empire as yet another (potential) colonizing power in India's ongoing oppression. The absence of the Ottoman Empire fosters an anticipation of an imperial presence that might replace the British occupation of India. In other words, the specter of the Ottoman Empire hovers over India, mobilized by nothing other than the critique of British imperialism that overshadows the inherent coloniality of the Ottoman alternative. Analogous to the ways in which Byron, Landor, and Percy B. Shelley twist the criticism of empire into an imperialist discourse in itself, Hâmid's preoccupation with British hegemony in India spares the Ottoman Empire in and through its partial account of imperialism, rendering empire's abstraction inseparable from its historicality.

Hâmid was well aware that India's complex and multi-layered history of colonialism would help those who wished to do so conjure the Ottoman Empire there. India was a meeting point for cultural divergences with which the Ottoman Empire also had to contend just like the British. This necessity was conspicuous to Hâmid who contemplated manipulating the grievances and cravings that arose from India's colonial history. Although the British Empire suppressed the Indian revolt in 1858, the uprising "inspired broader political considerations of the nature and objectives of liberal empire" (Stubbings 729). Alongside the urgent revision of its

notorious annexation program, the British Raj had to deal with the disillusionment of Indian Muslims with the current regime, meaning, the possible migration of their allegiance to the Ottoman caliph (Baker 539). While the instabilities of the British Empire excited the Ottoman state, the latter still had to be careful not to cause much irritation to its rival-ally, for "England was still the only power that could effectively oppose the French advance into Tripolitania and Central Africa or discourage budding Italian ambitions" (Karpat, *Politicization* 547). All the same, the legitimacy crisis of the British implied leverage for the Ottomans, as long as the sultan had "hilafet" [caliphate] at this disposal, according to Hâmid. In his memoir, Hâmid proudly repeats the following statement from Lord Dufferin (Governor General of India and Viceroy from 1884 to 1888) whom he met in Bombay: "Since England rules over millions of Muslim people, she prefers to stay in good terms with the Ottoman State" (*Hatıraları* 162-63). He goes on to claim in his letters that the Ottoman Empire could achieve what the British could not in India, with the conviction that "Caliphate is the only tool for achieving the goal of unification here" " ("Namık Kemal'e" 301). For Hâmid, it was "the benign implementation of that apparatus" (i.e. hilafet) that differentiated the Ottoman hegemony from the British colonialism on the grounds of its imagined benevolence (301). Downgrading the signification of the British Empire from a superior model to a vulnerable opponent in Hâmid's syntax, hilafet opens the way for reinstating a uniquely 'gentle' Ottoman glory.

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During the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), the Ottoman state mobilized hilafet to consolidate its authority over its Muslim-majority territories so as to recuperate its jeopardized geopolitical standing. As Selim Deringil explicates, "Historical conditions also worked in favor

of the Ottoman claim as more and more Islamic peoples fell under the rule of Western imperialism… Islamic peoples looked to Istanbul for moral and, where possible, material assistance" ("Legitimacy" 350). The path to a Pan-Islamic victory, however, was not altogether smooth. The imperial march of the Ottoman state in the late nineteenth century was being hindered by both Muslim Easterners (its intended proponents) and Western opponents.[146] And yet, while the empire was grappling with turbulences on each side, the Ottoman geopolitical ambitions were barely curbed, as evidenced in the travelogues of the time. Declaration of allegiance to the caliph was a common trope in these narratives, an example of which is Ömer Lütfi's 1868 travelogue where he relates that the Muslims of Cape Town were not only positively disposed towards the caliph but also grateful to see the arrival of the Ottomans as instructors of Islam (87). Similarly, another author, Mehmed Mihri, ruminated over the Ottoman Empire's entitlement —as an Islamic state— to colonize Sudan (Herzog and Motika 153). Hâmid's fantasies of colonizing India were part of this collective investment in the spiritual leadership of the Ottoman Empire, and were synchronous with the historically verified Ottoman interest in India. It was much earlier than the nineteenth century that Indian Muslims allegedly started to weigh the viability of an Ottoman sultan as the caliph, with Portuguese attacks leading them in the sixteenth century to implore help from "the Ottomans as the strongest Muslim power of the age and the guardians of the Holy Places" (Özcan 4). At stake in the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire, the Portuguese Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate was control over maritime trade as well as territorial dominance.[147] While the Portuguese strived to "deprive the Mamluk sultans and later the Ottomans of the Mediterranean spice trade," Ottoman sultans retaliated by forming alliances with Muslim leaders in key geopolitical spots such as Gujarat and Aceh, regarding it "their duty to protect the Muslims of the Indian Ocean from the Portuguese"

(Mizakça 243).[148] An Ottoman sailor named Selman Bey, Salih Özbaran informs us, initiated the Ottoman expansion toward the Indian Ocean, equipped with armaments and ships which he believed would guarantee a victory "against the developed technology of the Christian world" (*The Ottoman Response* 63). Elsewhere Özbaran notes that one of the most serious attempts at 'expanding' the empire toward India took place in 1538, when Sultan Süleyman ordered the Ottoman navy to "set out for India and capture and hold those Indian ports" (*Ottoman Expansion toward the Indian Ocean* 82). Called "the Diu expedition," this Ottoman campaign brought to the shores of India a "naval force of possibly 72 or 74 ships…20,000 men, including 6,500 soldiers, and large cannons" (Özbaran, "Ottoman Expansion in the Red Sea" 179).[149] Although the attack on Portuguese stronghold failed, it fortified "Ottoman control over the Red Sea littoral" (Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia* 84). In the following years, as Giancarlo Casale highlights, the Ottoman Empire furthered its efforts to curb the regional hegemony of Portugal by continuing to construct partnerships along religious lines, with Muslim rulers such as Emir Ahmed Gran al-Mujahid of Zeyla, and sponsoring "a sophisticated intelligence gathering infrastructure" in the Indian Ocean (Casale, "An Ottoman Intelligence Report from the Mid Sixteenth-Century Indian Ocean" 185). Dejanirah Couto underscores that Ottoman encroachment in land as well as the ocean was a serious concern for Portugal who monitored the activities of "people of Turkish appearance" in India as "archers on foot or on horseback" ("Rumi Networks in India" 105).[150] Ottoman colonial investment in India therefore rendered itself unmistakable in such organized, belligerent efforts to establish maritime and territorial presence in the region.[151]

Although "Ottoman incursions into Portugal's possessions on the Indian Ocean" in the sixteenth century were forceful enough to trigger active defense measures by the Portuguese Empire, they ultimately failed to bear the desired results (Couto, "Spying in the Ottoman

Empire" 300). However, failed imperial and colonial missions cannot be dismissed as inconsequential when their enduring presence in the subconscious of the future imperial agents and colonized subjects is reckoned with. Imperialism of this sort, that is, Ottoman imperialism confronts scholars of post-colonial studies with the task of measuring the immeasurable, meaning, accounting for the scars and aspirations left behind by what is considered 'failed expansions.' An unfulfilled manifest destiny became engrained in Ottoman imperial consciousness through these 'attempted' invasions as well as accomplished ones. India —one of such cases in which facts and fantasies converge to give meaning and shape to the imperialist envisioning of the world— would not vanish in centuries to come from the Ottoman colonial imagination as a site of potential dominance.

The Ottoman Empire's interest in India was revitalized in the nineteenth century on the grounds of its unmatched prevalence as a Sunni imperial polity. The Ottoman state attempted to entice Indian Muslims to "the unity of umma" by manipulating the itineraries of Islamic pilgrimage through delicate collaborations with politically and economically influential Indian Muslims (Alavi 1352). The empire also monitored the publication of journals, which "played their part… in organizing anti-British political propaganda… and contributed both materially and spiritually towards the augmentation of links between Ottoman Turkey and Indian Muslims" ("The Political" 710). By 1877, "when over 40,000 Muslims crowded the port of Bombay to catch a glimpse of the Ottoman envoy," the support for the Ottoman caliph in India had become palpable enough, at least to the Ottoman officials and travelers in the region (Zens 3).

Hâmid was thus not alone in his feverish endorsement of Ottoman presence in India. Aside from these historically confirmed incidents, travelogues of the period referred to similar ethno-religious dynamics to justify Ottoman colonialism in India. Şirvanlı Ahmed Hamdi Efendi

(1831-1890) proudly recollects the Muslims of Bombay praying for the wellbeing of the Ottoman Sultan (*Volume 1* 18-9). He goes on to speculate that while Hindus were "following the path of betrayal," Indian Muslims were "prepared to conform to the people of Islam" (*Volume 2* 23). Likewise, in his preface to Mehmed Emin's 1878 travel narrative "İstanbul'dan Asya-yı Vusta'ya Seyahat" [Travels from Istanbul to the Middle Asia], Midhat Efendi links the efficiency of European imperialism to the hands-on excursions of its travellers. The archive compiled via these expeditions, he surmises, could gift the Ottomans with "political gains in distant places of the world…with the glory of our Islam."[152]

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The Ottoman imperial enterprises Hâmid dreamed of during his stay in India foregrounded a religious alliance between Ottoman and Indian Muslims through the binding power of the caliphate, but they also depended on another major resource that Hâmid himself was in possession of: multilingualism. In Bombay, Hâmid was impressed by the fluency of his local Muslim acquaintances in Persian, which aided his communication with the potential sympathizers of the caliph: "Almost all of the Indian Muslims we would meet know Persian" ("Recaizade Ekrem Bey'e 2" 345). A remainder of the Mughal Empire, Persian had a substantial cultural capital amongst Indian Muslims since the late sixteenth century, and –functioning as a medium of communication between the Ottoman Empire and Indian Muslims— endowed Hâmid with the social capital in India that boosted his imperial mobility (Sanjay 83).

Hâmid's embrace of multilingualism in his colonial ventures happened interestingly at a moment in history marked by an increased demand for vernacularization among Ottoman intellectuals. A rising numbers of newspapers in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire

propagated the use of a simple vernacular Ottoman Turkish. Authors of the time such as Ziya Paşa and İbrahim Şinasi furthered this mission —in different degrees and styles— both in their journalistic and literary productions.[153] In convenient forgetfulness of the co-constitution of Turkish, Arabic and Persian in and through their intercultural travels, the zest for vernacularization ascribed the literature of the period a transitional value, promoting it as the cultural repertoire of a modernity that hinged on the separation between the oriental past and an authentically Ottoman-Turkish future.[154] Embarrassment with, and mockery of, the confusion caused by the unchecked hybrid linguistic currency of Ottoman Turkish —a trope associated often with the traditional shadow puppet theatre *Hacivat and Karagöz*— became a hallmark of the fiction and drama of the period.[155] İbrahim Şinasi, for instance, draws upon this tradition in his play *Şair Evlenmesi* [The Poet's Marriage] that revolves around misunderstandings and miscommunications resulting from the linguistic ambiguity Persian and Arabic engender in daily conversations amongst people of different classes. Ekrem's novel *Araba Sevdası* [The Carriage Affair] (1898) dramatizes this sociolinguistic perplexity by dragging its characters and the readers into an exasperating speculation over the possible Turkish, Persian, Arabic, or French origins of the word "bersiye." Likewise, Midhat Efendi captures in his novel *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* [Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi] (1875) the inability of the native speakers of Ottoman Turkish to identify with one another in the language's uneven economy by underscoring its class dimension through the short-circuited communication between Felatun Bey and his servant.[156]

The Occidentalist scope of the vernacularization of the Ottoman Turkish language, according to Andrews, has its roots in Scottish orientalist E. J. W. Gibb's six-volume magnum opus, *History of Ottoman Poetry*. "Gibb's basic premises have never been successfully

critiqued…they continue to be 'the truth' about Ottoman literary culture…to be reproduced in many forms and to ground the dominant modern literary historical tradition as regards the Ottomans" ("Suppressed Renaissance" 21). And Gibb's basic premise was, "salvation for Turkish literature, as for all things Turkish, was to be found in the assimilation, so far as that was practicable, of the spirit of the West" (31). Andrews' claim is supported by the fact that scholars naively perpetuated Gibb's rhetoric when they, for instance, asserted, "Modern Turkish literature began in the mid-nineteenth century when Europeanization became fashionable among men of letters" (Halman, *Rapture* 4). However, on the bright side, Gibb's legacy has been rethought (if still marginally) in the critical turn to his native informants who mediated his orientalist project. "Turkish modernism was implicated" Holbrook stressed, "in a far reaching program termed Westernization articulated by reformers we might call 'The Turkish Occidentalists'" (*The Unreadable* 21). Aamir Mufti delved further into the complicity mentioned by Holbrook, and proposed that "the invention and institution of an authentically indigenous vernacular" as the onset of national literary modernization relied on an admittedly hierarchical cooperation between the European orientalists like Gibb and their local collaborators (148). I concur with Holbrook and Mufti over the fact that Turkish literary modernization was, in Nergis Ertürk's words, "motivated, actuated, and shaped by Orientalism" with the contributions of Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals (*Grammatology* xiii). And yet, any effort to decipher the power relations between Gibb and his interlocutors without taking into account Ottoman imperial agency might falsely conflate the circumstances of their partnership with those of a colonial context. As Doyle warns, "sole attention to European empires (and in particular facile equations between these and modernity) can sometimes serve implicitly to justify European hegemony" ("Inter-Imperiality"

164). In the case of Ottoman letters it went beyond that as such Eurocentricism obscures the imperial subjectivities of the designated architects of literary modernity like Hâmid.

Gibb crowned Hâmid as one of the inaugurators of the modern school of Turkish poetry (11). Hâmid deserved this compliment, Gibb argued, because he played a special role in "the clearing away of useless accretions and false embellishments under which so many centuries of Persianism had well nigh smothered whatever was vital in the written speech" (30). Hâmid met Gibb during his term as the head clerk at the Ottoman embassy in London in 1885, and his perception of Gibb was equally flattering. He thought Gibb was "amongst the most prominent experts of Ottoman literature" (*Hatıraları* 201). In his memoirs Hâmid introduces Gibb as the "Scottish poet and literary scholar," who learned "Turkish where he was born, without leaving Scotland and England" and spoke this language "like a mute that has acquired speech only recently" (*Hatıraları* 201). This short anecdote is a precious detail that sheds a different light on Hâmid's relationship with Gibb which does not fit squarely in the Anglocentric hierarchism that has conventionally defined their interaction in literary scholarship. In his condescending tribute to Gibb's erudition, Hâmid positions himself as the only imperial subject of this intellectual exchange. Unlike his friend, Gibb did not travel extensively, and yet compensated —in Hâmid's view— for the shortage of empire-sponsored acculturation by his own limited means. Hâmid appreciated Gibb's interest in Ottoman Turkish precisely because of the lack of the imperial mobility he himself enjoyed. His sympathy for Gibb, then, lies for the most part in the fact that the orientalist managed well his predicament, that is, being born to a periphery of the British Empire.

To be able to scrutinize the imperial agency of Hâmid and his contemporaries, literary critics must adopt an analytical framework that does not confine the late Ottoman Empire to the

narrow lens of the decline thesis. The recent historical scholarship has lived up to this task, exposing how Ottoman imperialist enterprises resumed even at a point in time when the collapse of the Ottoman state was almost foreseeable. Ussama Makdisi, for instance, interrogated the Ottoman motives for modernization in concert with its hegemony in Syria and Lebanon, and held that the Ottoman modernization itself "was an essentially imperial project to be imposed on a backward periphery" ("After 1860" 601). In a similar vein, Thomas Kühn accentuated how the calculated implementation of Western-inspired reforms by the Ottoman Empire facilitated the making of "a population of loyal Ottoman subjects", and was germane to "the reconquest of large parts of southwest Arabia by Ottoman military forces in 1871-73" ("Shaping and Re-shaping" 315-16).[157] Most recently, Minawi meticulously documented the Ottoman involvement in "the scramble for Africa" and put to its final rest "the narrative of an exclusively defensive and inward-looking empire" (3).[158] This updated historiography of the late Ottoman Empire contradicts the Occidentalist narratives rehearsed in Turkish and Anglophone literary criticisms in which the literature of the period remains detached from its imperial-colonial underpinnings, treated rather as a site of contention for monolingual national identity.

The spirit of the age, which indeed valorized language as the medium of monolingual multitudes, cast its spell on Hâmid as well who could not resist –despite being a polyglot himself— the appeal of a homogenoues Ottoman Turkish literary and national identity. He joined the chorus of vernacularists in his poem, "Nakafi" [Not Enough] where he taunted what he called the "old poetry" for its historical irrelevance.

> Evet, tarz-ı kadim-i şi'ri bozduk, herc ü merc ettik,
> Nedir şi'r-i hakiki sahfa-i irfana dercettik.
> Bu yolda nakd-i vakti cem-i kuvvet birle harcettik,
> Bize gelmişti zira meslek-i ecdad na-kafi. (*Şiirleri* 591)

> [True, we have undone and disarranged the style of old poetry,
> Inscribed on the page of wisdom that which is true poetry.
> To that end we spent all our time, efforts, and money,
> For the work of the ancestors was not enough to us.][159]

As Hâmid makes it clear in his use of the pronoun "we", the revolt against the traditional aesthetics was a collective one, wherein the classical Ottoman poetry (and language in general) proved incompatible with the rising Ottoman Turkish exceptionalism due its archaic vocabulary and imagery influenced heavily by the Persian and Arabic languages and cultures. Just like many of his peers, however, Hâmid was swimming against the tide, since the very language he was hoping to homogenize was betraying him with its inherent heterogeneity. Because Ottoman Turkish was comprised of what Saliha Paker calls "interculture," Hâmid himself could not fully distinguish in his writing between Turkish, Persian and Arabic words (33). Even in his anti-traditionalist manifesto, Hâmid confuses Arabic and Persian in his use of the word *nakafi*, mixing the Persian prefix *na* with the Arabic word *kafi*. Just as this conflation exemplifies the unrealized status of an ethnically compartmentalized linguistic identity, it also amplifies the ambivalent nature of the literary and linguistic change Hâmid and others were embarking upon. Monolingualization reaches its dead-end in Hâmid's linguistic and aesthetic venture, as he could neither discriminate nor disown foreign influences in his poetics, to which he privately admitted in another letter to Kemal: "I am not able to write in pure Turkish in poetry" ("Namık Kemal'e" 35).[160]

Hâmid's dilemma —namely, his inability to let go of linguistic plurality— symptomatizes a bigger tension between the localized literary focus of the period and the expansionist scope of the imperial politics, a tension that reveals strange entanglements between linguistic and imperialist urges and frustrations. Whereas Persian was deemed antithetical to the

linguistic and literary vernacularization Hâmid was openly in favor of, this language was functioning more like a blessing than a stigma in his political and aesthetic agenda in India. This correlation between the failure of linguistic localization and the pursuit of colonialist desires manifests in the final quatrain of his poem "Gurbette Vatan" where the reader witnesses the ultimate taming of the native.

> Ol ahu-yı -nev-şikar-ı Hindi
> Etti beni damına giriftar
> Biz mi güzer eyledik nedir bu
> Baktım ki vatan kesildi her su (229)
>
> [That treasure of the beloved India
> Lured me into her trap
> Have we tracked it down or what
> I beheld and the homeland loomed forth everywhere][161]

Hâmid's entrance to India is completed at the end of the poem, where —borrowing the tropes of hunting and amorous cruelty from classical Persian poetry— he positions himself as a passive figure subdued by the charms of his lover:[162] India the beloved seduces and leads astray her suitor. Yet, the woebegone lover quickly recovers from his trance and awakens to the communal nature of his otherwise seemingly personal infatuation: chasing India becomes an imperial imperative that drags the now multiplied subject (note the change of pronouns in the third line) towards a rewarding enterprise. The prize —even before the contest begins— seems to be taken for granted, since India is deemed by Hâmid already ready to shed its strangeness, and become his, and his kin's homeland abroad.

Together with the rhetorical devices of the traditional Persian verse, Hâmid's poem embraces Persian vocabulary in its portrayal of India. In his reference to India as *şikar*, Hâmid exploits the semantic richness of the Persian word, representing the country both as "prey" and "spoils" —two separate meanings of the word embedded in its Ottoman Turkish use. India, being

hunted down by her imperial lover, connotes a zone of deadly flirtation in Hâmid's double-entendre, which is reiterated in other words such as *dam*. *Dam* ("house" in Turkish) and *dum* ("trap" in Persian) simultaneously domesticizes and foreignizes the 'other' place, serving as yet another signifier of Hâmid's oscillation between security and insecurity in his conception of India. Ultimately, however, Hâmid makes himself at home. He transfigures himself into a host from a guest as he calls India his *Vatan*. Derived from the Arabic word *Watan*, which denotes homeland or nation, *Vatan* absorbs India in Hamid's semantics, operating as a referent for an Ottomanized land.

In its eroticization of Ottoman colonial penetration into India, Hâmid's poem deploys multiple languages to pluralize Ottoman imperial agency (in the image of an androcentric collective). As such, Hâmid relies on the tripod of masculinity, homosociality and multilingualism to construct a narrative of conquest in India. Ottoman colonization, in his depictions, is romanticized as a pursuit of intimacy, the agency of which belongs to those who are able to dominate with a masculine lure that speaks itself (and of itself) with the command of several languages. A sexually charged reliance on plurilingualism proves thus germane to the (otherwise unfulfillable) wish for transcontinental Ottoman hegemony in Hâmid's verse. This multicultural and multilingual competence activates a masculinist poetics of sovereignty that remedies the geopolitical impotence of the Ottoman Empire.

Paying the Debt

It is not only in Hâmid's poetics that the Ottoman Turkish craving for monolingualism (i.e. linguistic localization) suspends itself to accommodate the multilingualism needed for an imperial geocultural hegemony. The 'foreign' elements of the Ottoman Turkish language, such

as French, Arabic and Persian, are deployed in the service of a locally broadcasted, conspicuously gendered Ottoman exceptionalism in the broader literary landscape of the nineteenth century. Fictions from the era fixate on heterosexual intimacies (founded in and through the mastery of multilingualism and multiculturalism) that facilitate the imagination of a global Ottoman imperial sovereignty, an example of which is Ekrem's novel *Araba Sevdası.*

Araba Sevdası illustrates an inter-imperially experienced Western modernity through a satire of the superfluous life and persona of Bihruz Bey. Bihruz Bey, a perfect antithesis to *homo economicus*, is an unemployed upper-middle class individual, living off the wealth of his father, boasting a cultured lifestyle through his indulgence in fancy clothes and routine carriage rides. Removed from the realm of practical and rational concerns, Bihruz Bey typifies pretentious bourgeois sensibilities. His shallow aloofness is further stressed in his ridiculous inclination to intersperse French words in his conversations. However, despite his habit of waxing poetic in French, Bihruz Bey's knowledge of French —the novel reminds the reader more than once— happens to be far from adequate. And just like French, Bihruz Bey's command of Ottoman Turkish also turns out to be strikingly poor. The novel hyperbolizes Bihruz Bey's anxious and imperfect performance of language both in French and Ottoman Turkish in a scene of a romantic encounter:

> Ceketinin bir iliğine sokulmuş olan beyaz jeranium'u, yani kaba Türkçesi "sardalya" çiçeğini yerinden çıkardı ve "Kıymeti İngiltere'yi, Fransa'yı ve belki bütün Avrupa'yı satın alabilecek olan pırlantanıza böyle bir fane çiçekle mukabele etmek caiz değil ise de kabulüne tenezzül buyurmanızı ricaya cesaret etmekle kendimi bahtiyar sayarım. Öyle bir iltifatınız admiratörünüzü ne derecelere kadar örö ettiğini tarif edemem" diyerek çiçeği sarışın hanıma doğru uzattı. (92)
>
> [He drew from the pocket of his jacket the white *géranium*, that is, the "sardalya çiçeği" in its vulgar Turkish name, and handed it over to the blonde lady, saying "although it is not appropriate to greet the pearl that is you, whose worth is such that it would match the value of England, France and perhaps the entire Europe, with so fané a flower as this, I consider myself happy by having merely had the courage to ask you to humbly accept it. I cannot even begin to describe how *heureux* it would make your *admirateur*.][163]

During one of his leisurely outings, Bihruz Bey meets a blonde lady named Periveş. The novel's parody of Western-modernity takes a meta-fictional turn at this moment where the reader is amused by the absurdity of Bihruz Bey's exaggerated European mannerisms. As Bihruz Bey tries too hard to impress Periveş, an excess of representation occurs: Bihruz Bey stops making sense. Ertürk underscores that his linguistic flamboyance confuses both Periveş and the reader (*Grammotology* 64). This two-layered discrediting of the lead character occurs in and through his own narrations, which amplifies the mockery of Bihruz Bey both as a lover and a speaker. While Bihruz Bey's unrequired and ill-performed verbosity paves the ground for his unrequited love, it also undermines his linguistic and sexual appeal for the reader. As such, the novel's parody of failed intimacy extends beyond its fictional world, targeting the intimacy between Bihruz Bey and the reader. Hyperbolic self-representation of Bihruz Bey impoverishes him in literal (socioeconomic) and symbolic (sexual) terms. Just as his wealth gradually wears off while he struggles to meet the financial demands of keeping up the social appearance of a European gentleman, Bihruz Bey's linguistic and sexual ineptitude becomes increasingly acute. His repeated mispronunciations of French and Ottoman Turkish words, his clumsy attempts at courting Periveş, and his ultimate rejection by her are woven together in the text to magnify Bihruz Bey's unfittingness as an Ottoman Turkish speaker and lover. The malperformance of language and masculinity are thus knit together in the tragic fall of the protagonist.

Figurative re-enactments of nervous encounters with Western-coded modernity in intimate, inter-personal spaces are certainly not peculiar to the Ottoman literature. In early twentieth-century Japan, Michiko Suzuki argues, the experience of modernity was allegorized in the "emotional development" of women from platonic affairs between schoolgirls toward a

socially dictated romantic relationship between female and male adults (38). In sharply contrasting geographies too, such as late nineteenth-century Mexico, Héctor Domínguez-Ruvalcaba shows, negotiations with Western modernity took place in homosocial and homoerotic intimacies that surfaced in response to British cultural colonialism (23). The socio-cultural challenge of having to become intimate with a dominating power finds its personalized (and personified) narratives in a wide selection of literary works, such as Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. As all these historical and fictional examples accentuate, Western imperial power structures infringe on various forms of social intimacies, continuing to exert their influence spectrally but so forcefully that even romance models itself on imperially informed enactments of violence, inequality and oppression. The Ottoman fiction of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, is inscribed with a slightly different attitude in its gendered depictions of geopolitical power struggles: the difference being that Ottoman sources dramatize inter-imperial tensions, rather than the hierarchical relations that are discovered between the colonizer and the colonized. With this nuance in mind, it can be said that novels like *Araba Sevdası* exploit romance to sentimentalize imperial dominance with an emphasis on the entwined yearnings for linguistic and masculine authority.

While *Araba Sevdası* cautions against the disempowerment posed by the failure to keep language and culture in check in the experience of Western-coded modernity, the text alienates Bihruz Bey from the sphere of homosocial belonging by consistently foregrounding his inability to perform the acts and speak the words of Ottoman Turkish masculinity. This alienation occurs in the didactic style of the narrative that discourages identification and sympathy with the undoing of Bihruz Bey. Unlike its contemporary examples such as *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*, Ekrem's novel does not offer a contrasting male figure who embodies the 'proper' of

Ottoman Turkish masculinity. Such 'proper,' of course, is not even implied in the text as a given; however, the tensions and problems it engenders are very much in existence in the case of Bihruz Bey. His insistence on the vulgarity of Ottoman Turkish and its poetic insufficiency does not only establish a false hierarchy between French and Ottoman Turkish. More significantly, it creates a rift between Bihruz Bey and Ottoman Turkish speakers, turning him into an emblem of a corrupt individual, distanced from his cultural sources in his self-destructive admiration for that which is deemed foreign. Yet, as the text itself makes clear, it is not so much the foreignness of French that pulls the reader and Bihruz Bey apart, as his incapacity to absorb and master this foreignness. The novel does not refrain from displaying the strangeness of French words semantically and visually; in fact, the printed text makes them overtly appear unintelligible in Ottoman Turkish orthography, as illustrated in "jeranyum" and "faneh" (see fig. 3). What raises concerns, therefore, is not that these French words do not make sense; rather it is Bihruz Bey's inability to exercise authority over foreign linguistic and cultural forces, and his eagerness to allow them to infiltrate and shape his self-representation.

Bihruz Bey becomes a laughing stock as soon as it becomes clear that he cannot assert his will and power. His surrender to the external linguistic-cultural influence, paralleling his hyper-vulnerability to "the blonde lady," represents in the novel de-imperialization in its minutest but most intimate instantiation. This connection is self-evident in the comparison of Periveş to England, France, and "the entire Europe." The linguistic and romantic domination of Bihruz Bey serves as a synecdoche for the Ottoman Empire's much feared submission to Western influence. Through the sexually and linguistically conquered Ottoman Turkish male protagonist, *Araba Sevdası* broadcasts a warning against the pending geopolitical and cultural emasculation of the empire.

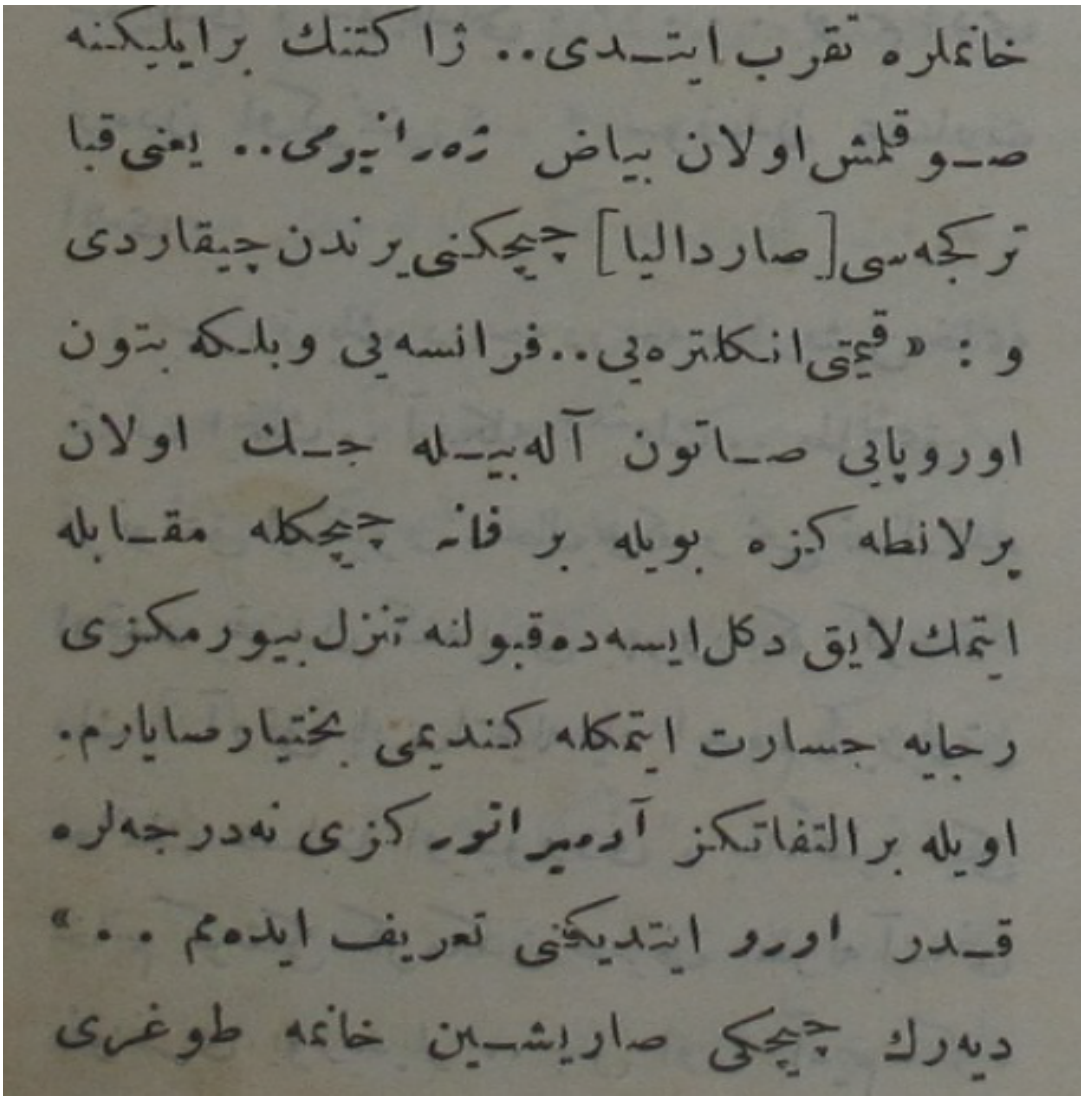
خانملره تقرب ایتدی.. ژاکتنك برایلیکنه
صوقلمش اولان بیاض ره‌رانیرمی.. یعنی قبا
ترکجه‌سی [صاردالیا] چیچکنی یرندن چیقاردی
و: «قیمتی انکلتره‌یی.. فرانسه‌یی وبلکه بتون
اوروپایی صاتون آله‌بیله جك اولان
پرلانطه کزه بویله بر فانه چیچکله مقابله
ایتمك لایق دکل ایسه ده قبولنه تنزل بیورمکزی
رجایه جسارت ایتمکله کندیمی بختیار صایارم.
اویله برالتفاتکز آدمیرانور کزی نه درجه‌لره
قدر اوره ایتدیکنی تعریف ایده‌م..»
دیه‌رك چیچکی صاریشین خانمه طوغری

Figure 3. Recaizade M. *Ekrem's Araba Sevdası* (1896). Atatürk Kitaplığı Digital Archives.

As Ertürk points out, authors of the Tanzimat era, like Ekrem, were sidetracked by the "foreignness inherent in the 'native' language itself" even as they actively strove to homogenize Turkish literature and language (*Grammatology* 43). While concurring with Ertürk's observations, I must add that the inevitable return of the foreign within the local was not always the endpoint of the search for a native origin in Ottoman Turkish writing. Conversely, inspired by Shaden Tageldin, I find it necessary to emphasize the fact that the undoing of the desire for

origin and/or singularity can be imbued with unsavory political implications as well. Tageldin addresses the endurance of the power relations even in the inevitable heterogeneity of the original language found in the colonially mediated process of translation between Arabic and French languages (25); I find in the unrealizable singularization of Ottoman Turkish language the enduring imperial impetus to command and master that re-furnishes itself in a plurilingual form. Such unexpected comeback of hegemonic tendencies in the very process of the dissolution of literary-linguistic sovereignty is not an abstract event happening on its own in the sphere of language, as Ertürk's work treats it sidelining the politics of positionality that inflects the terms and means of linguistic mastery. The determination and/or the indeterminacy of origin in the case of Ottoman Turkish letters requires a careful consideration of the homosocially promoted agency of authors. For, when its sociopolitical and economic conditions (e.g. the establishment and circulation of newspapers, management of print companies, intertextual citations and compilations of anthologies that fomented authorial reputation and shaped literary circles) are taken into account, the linguistic disciplining of the period is seen to be a predominantly male enterprise. The monitoring of the hybrid ethnocultural constitution of the Ottoman Turkish language was a homosocial practice privileging a heterosexual male identity that was not oblivious to the imperial habitus where it evolved. The performance of language, insofar as it displayed a deliberate aggression toward the capturing of an absolute meaning, was thus a gendered performance that took place on a stage where its authenticity was often contested, yet nonetheless perpetually sought after. In fin de siècle Ottoman Turkish letters, language proves, then, to be a space in which masculinity confronts its performative nature only to redeem itself through an ostensibly authentic use and knowledge of multiple linguistic resources. My readings here suggest that the ultimate failure to profess unchallengeable authority over the hybridity of

Ottoman Turkish announces a fear of emasculation, a microcosmic mirroring of what awaits the empire in the event of its own failure to assert its geocultural vigor.

If Bihruz Bey's tragicomic failings read as a cautionary tale, the caution it issues does not concern only language and masculinity, but also the Ottoman economy at large. For it is the financial recklessness of this Ottoman dandy, as Nurdan Gürbilek takes him to be, that brings about his fall (601). Bihruz Bey falls victim to mindless consumerism and loses sight of his limited resources. His continued indulgences in social entertainments hasten his eventual bankruptcy, leaving him at the mercy of his creditors. The diminishment of his wealth reaches a point of no return when his carriage, while awaiting repair after an accident, is confiscated due to his unpaid debts. The accident, and Bihruz Bey's eventual deprivation of the carriage, Gürbilek notes, is symbolic of a crash into modernity that results in a socio-economically suggestive trauma. However, Bihruz Bey seems to be more than a characterization of a troubled, collective negotiation with modernity; he, I would say, emblematizes an alterity that makes possible the imagination of a homogenous community. That is, his loss of mobility, which is not shared but openly judged and condemned in the novel, signifies the dreadful outcome of staying out of the cultural and economic structure of the imagined Ottoman Turkish community. The omniscient narrator of the novel contemptuously reports that "Mirasyedi efendinin kendi sefahatinden başka hiçbir masrafı olmadığı halde her ay eline geçen yüz elli lira kadar bir para o sefahate kifayet etmezdi" [Even though Mister Prodigal had no expenditure other than his debauchery, the money he would be granted every month, around one hundred fifty liras, would not be enough for that] (52).[164] Bihruz Bey only spends and consumes, and remains decidedly un-linkable to any means of production. His preference for foreign commodities (fashion and language being the most pointed ones in the novel) isolates him farther from the local economy. Reduced to an insignia of

wasteful existence, Bihruz Bey functions as the outsider-within whose demise is witnessed as a cathartic event in the community, as Ekrem states in his short preface to the novel: "Araba Sevdası gülünecek hâllerden addolunsa gerektir. Fakat dikkat olunursa bu ondan elbette daha ziyade hazin, elbette daha çok mü'limdir" [Araba Sevdası shall be considered one of those comedic representations. However, it is surely rather sorrowful, and of course, has a more reproachable quality to it] (23).[165]

Whereas Bihruz Bey's proneness to borrow and overspend is presented as a behavior to be frowned upon, it communicates simultaneously (and subtly) a satirical commentary on the contemporary state of the Ottoman economy. Foreign debt, which was embraced as a mandatory measure to stabilize economy in the aftermath of the wars with Russia, turned in time into a *modus operandi* for Ottoman financial management.[166] Spreading its roots institutionally with the establishment of the Ottoman Bank in 1863, which was itself a "Franco-British venture," as Edhem Eldem describes it, the external debt of the empire soon began to spiral out of control (Eldem 85). By 1881 reliance on "French and British capital" had already brought the Ottoman Empire to the verge of bankruptcy (Conte and Sabatini 70). The same year, under the auspices of Britain and France, a Public Debt Administration was put in place to oversee the payment of a £200 million worth of borrowings, exposing the economy of the empire to further European intervention (Arnold-Baker 967). Cognizant of the dire state of the Ottoman economy, writers of the period became preoccupied with debt as a literary and critical discourse. Hâmid, for instance, lamented in his letters that, "without the obviously necessary use of fifteen servants, three carriages, and five draft animals, the Ottoman State (Devlet-i Osmaniyye) would turn into a pedestrian in the public eye. There arises the mischief. We get into debt since we don't have money. That's where the mischief reaches its highest degree." ("Namık Kemal'e" 300). Like

Ekrem, Hâmid conceived of debt as a serious impediment to the Ottoman Empire's claim to its share of the global capital in the inter-imperially framed world economy of the nineteenth century. The indebtedness of the Ottoman state, for him, had far-reaching repercussions, as it would not allow the empire to make ends meet, much less making continents meet as the British Empire could.

Debt was not only a geopolitical condition but also a socio-culturally diagnosable problem for both Hâmid and Ekrem. It is first symptomized in the moral failings of individuals like Bihruz Bey, and then culminates in a financial collapse that affects the whole empire. *Araba Sevdası* buttresses this correlation between the social and imperial dealings with debt in Bihruz Bey's crude praise of Periveş's beauty as an asset in itself that "would buy" [satın alabilecek] "England, France and perhaps the entire Europe" (92). The inter-imperial implications of the novel's preoccupation with debt become pronounced in Bihruz Bey's likening of romantic conquest to an economic hold over the British and French empires. His fantasy of seducing the blond lady allegorizes on a larger terrain the equally unrealizable dream of an Ottoman economic hegemony. Just as Bihruz Bey's tricks to seduce Periveş do not pay off at the end, the empire ends up unable to repay its loans.

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If Bihruz Bey represents a stock character in Ottoman fiction of the late nineteenth century as a self-destructive spendthrift, his prefiguration can be said to exist in Midhat Efendi's novel, *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. Felatun Bey shares identical character traits (or better, flaws) with Bihruz Bey, such as being a beneficiary of unearned wealth and being accustomed to a parasitic

lifestyle. The first chapter of the novel, which introduces the familial and financial background of Felatun Bey, portrays him in a distinctly unflattering fashion:

> "Felatun Beyin kıyafetini sorarsanız, tarif etmekten aciziz. Şu kadarını söyleyelim… Hani Beyoğlu'nda elbiseci veya terzi dükkânlarında modaları göstermek için mukavvalar üzerinde birçok resimler vardır ya, işte bunlardan birkaç yüz tanesi Felatun Bey'de vardır. Elinde resim, endam aynasının karşısına geçer, kendisini o resme benzetinceye kadar uğraşırdı. Hem kendisini iki gün aynı kıyafetle göremezsiniz ki "Felatun Beyin kıyafeti şudur" demek mümkün olsun" (8)
>
> [In case you were wondering about Felatun Bey's clothing, it is indescribable. Let us say this much, you know those latest fashion pictures in front of the clothing stores and tailor shops in Beyoğlu? Felatun Bey would have a few hundred of them and he'd take the picture, get in front of a full-length mirror, and do everything possible to resemble the picture. For this reason, nobody ever saw him in the same clothes twice, so you could never hear anyone say, "That looks like Felatun Bey's coat!"] [167]

The narrative voice in first person plural humbly admits to the difficulty of describing Felatun Bey. Reminiscent of the 'meddah' figure, who introduces plots in Ottoman plays to the audience in an openly partial and didactic style, the narrator of Midhat Efendi's novel discourages the reader from forming a kind opinion of the character. On the one hand, Felatun Bey's story is presented with a metafictional emphasis on his indescribability. On the other, such indescribability, as the narrative unfolds, is proven to have more to do with the multilayered strangeness of Felatun Bey than the speaker's modest disavowal of the position of an omniscient narrator. For the limits of Felatun Bey's representability are drawn with a recurring stress on his extravagance, undergirded with a sense of unusualness that is economic and aesthetic at the same time. The novel does not only announce that Felatun Bey poses a problem of representation when his obsession with fashion exceeds the boundaries of narratablity. It also derides Felatun Bey's attempts to self-fashion on the grounds of their economic unviability. From the very beginning of the novel, then, Felatun Bey is included in the narrative only as the marker of an exteriority, of an unaffordable and unrelatable social existence.

Felatun Bey's indescribablity heightens the aesthetic and economic gap between him and the novel's imagined Ottoman society; and yet, additionally, it presses against him a charge of inauthenticity. The fact that Felatun Bey endeavors to imitate what he comes across in the imported pictures of English and French gentlemen highlights the mimicry that is at the heart of his self-representation. Unlike its subversive counterpart that Homi Bhabha locates in its colonial performances, "mimicry" in Felatun Bey's case does not contest political-cultural hierarchies with a focus on their European sources (122). Because the Anglo-French content of "the picture" remains nondescript, the novel retains the focus on Ottoman identity as the abandoned origin. The picture, in other words, does not show what is being imitated, but becomes a device for reflecting Felatun Bey's inauthenticity. Imitation, in this scene, suggests a process of de-idealization, or more precisely, a removal from an idealized Ottoman identity. Felatun Bey's name, being the Ottoman Turkish pronunciation of Plato, signals therefore quite unsubtly a platonic tension between the copy and the idea wherein the idealized Ottoman identity is reinforced as the measure of authenticity: the farther Felatun Bey falls from it the less real he himself becomes. Just as Felatun Bey's clothes differ from day to day, so does his public image. A chameleon in appearance and manners, he evades predictability even as a copy of foreign pictures. As such, Felatun Bey's "mimetic competence is reduced to a double lack," to borrow from his namesake Plato, by the unrecognizability of his cultural identity on both local and external levels since the reader cannot identify any solid reference to either (Plato 325).

Unlike Bihruz Bey, Felatun Bey has his counter-representation. From the title of the text to the plot-construction, the contrast between Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi governs the narrative of Midhat Efendi's novel. As opposed to Felatun Bey's unearned and wasted access to financial privileges, Rakım Efendi achieves economic stability and progress through his honest,

hard labor. His name, deriving from the Arabic word راقم [the one who numbers or counts], flags Rakım Efendi's aptitude in accumulating and saving wealth. Rakım Efendi's economic mobilization is acquired through nothing other than his strong work ethic which is often lauded by the narrator of the novel: "Aman bu çocuk ne kadar çalışıyordu. Hani ya 'Gece gündüz çalışıyor' derler ya! işte gece gündüz gerçekten çalışan buydu." (135) ["My, how that young man worked! You know how they say, 'He works day and night'? He actually did work day and night." (10)]. The novel articulates the opposition between Rakım Efendi and Felatun Bey by granting the former a moral high ground earned through his humility and industriousness.

Rakım Efendi makes a living by tutoring foreign inhabitants of Istanbul in Ottoman Turkish and offering them his translation services. Well-versed in Arabic, Persian and French, Rakım Efendi turns his linguistic knowledge and skills into a sustainable means of income. Mastery of language, in other words, is a form of labor that facilitates Rakım Efendi's class-mobilization by giving him opportunities to mingle with affluent, non-native speakers of Ottoman Turkish such as the English gentleman, Mister Zikras. On a weekly basis Rakım Efendi visits the house of Mister Zikras to teach Ottoman Turkish to his daughters, Margaret and Jan, using French as the medium of instruction. In the meantime, Felatun Bey, who resents the attention and respect Rakım Efendi receives from the Zikras family, makes pathetic attempts to discredit him. For instance, he questions Felatun Bey's linguistic competence by arguing falsely that Persian letters such as پ،چ،ژ are not part of the Ottoman Turkish language. Daughters of Mister Zikras, and Rakım Efendi are embarrassed on Felatun Bey's behalf, shocked by the fact that as a native speaker of Ottoman Turkish he does not know its alphabet. It is at this moment in the novel that Rakım Efendi's superiority to Felatun Bey is established in the realm of language as well. The disparity between the two characters, therefore, extends beyond their economic

statuses, looming large also in the competitions over linguistic authority. With converging emphases on labor and language, the novel situates Rakım Efendi over Felatun Bey as the ideal Ottoman Turkish subject who knows his resources perfectly well and, furthermore, who knows how to utilize them correctly.

The novel can indeed be said to configure a much-desired Ottoman Turkish identity in the image of Rakım Efendi; however, this configuration does not concern itself simply with the shaming of the culturally, economically and linguistically stigmatized figures like Felatun Bey. Rather, economic and linguistic proficiency that incarnates in Rakım Efendi is readable as an indicator of a wider, imperially suggestive imaginary. Unlike Felatun Bey, who squanders all his money and cannot maintain a respectable social connection, Rakım Efendi builds enough wealth to live comfortably, and his story is concluded with a marriage and a subsequent childbirth. Rakım Efendi's financial cautiousness and cultural integrity —rewarded with fertility and prosperity— articulate the would-be scenario for the Ottoman Empire if it had not indebted itself to outside influences: a happy ending could be imaginable, the novel suggests, through a morally dictated rehabilitation of Ottoman economy and culture.

Despite his commendable modesty, Rakım Efendi is not altogether a man of the golden mean who just minds his own business without transgression. Contrary to his overall representation as a figure of measures, Rakım Efendi appears to harbor imperially suggestive ambitions that manifest in his relationship with women. He enchants, for instance, Margaret and Jan with his skills in Persian and Arabic, via seductive recitations from Hafez (58-9). In the meantime, he tutors Canan, his Circassian slave, in Arabic and Persian, while enjoying the amorous friendship of a French woman named Josephine. The triangle of docile lovers operates in the novel as a thinly veiled metaphor for a gendered imperial drive towards cultural and

linguistic domination. After another session of "Ottoman poetry" with Rakım Efendi, for example, Jan exclaims "English poetry never makes one thirsty for love. I used to like French poetry more but now that I've learned Turkish, I've given up on French poetry as well" (57).[168] Josephine also applauds Ottoman-Turkish superiority in her compliments on Rakım Efendi's household: "Everything about the Turks is better than the Europeans" (87). And lastly, Canan expresses her objection to the 'opportunity' to be sold to another master and keep the transaction money to herself, as she tells Rakım Efendi, "I shall be your slave, your servant. That would be enough to make me happy" (63). Though most desperate of them all, Canan's situation mirrors those of the other women in the novel in that they are all imagined to succumb to the sexually charged authority of Rakım Efendi. This poly-amorous erotics of subordination intimates a larger (inter-imperial) 'affair' in Midhat Efendi's text where women become vessels for an Ottoman-led rendezvous with Caucasus (and Russia along with it), France and Britain. The Ottoman Empire, anthropomorphized in the image of Rakım Efendi, determines the terms of this multi-imperial liaison by deploying Persian and French as its cultural and geopolitical assets.

The collective rush of the period toward linguistic homogenization, which Midhat Efendi, Ekrem and Hâmid partook in, is disrupted in such sexualized valorization of a multilingual and multicultural imperial identity. Linguistic and cultural hybridity, as long as it is kept in check and appropriated duly, is deemed integral in these authors' prose and poetry to the engineering of an Ottoman imperial agency that is incorrigibly masculine and homosocial. The creation of male-dominated intimacies, their texts show, hinges on a demonstrated command of linguistic and cultural hybridity which is cashed in toward a geo-economically potent imperial sovereignty. At the core of these representations is an eroticized validation of imperialist passions to conquer and colonize. Localization, or, homogenization of Ottoman Turkish language and culture, thus, is

willingly suspended in the visions of Midhat Efendi, Ekrem and Hâmid with an awareness of the value of the 'foreign' linguistic and cultural resources in the re-making of global Ottoman hegemony.

With such documentations of the interlaced social, sexual and imperial spheres of power, Ottoman Turkish fiction, non-fiction, and poetry of the nineteenth century provides a rich archive of imperial and colonial narratives (as well as their counter-narratives) that await the attention of post-colonial scholarship. It is true that inter-imperial, and intra-imperial politics of the time did not always nourish optimistic attitudes toward Ottoman revivalism. That the Ottoman Empire was incomparable to Britain in terms of its geopolitical force was beyond doubt; however, incomparability did not do much in the way of demotivating these authors who knew how to look beyond the grim present of empire. Where politics did not reflect the imaginary Ottoman intellectuals like Midhat Efendi, Ekrem and Hâmid wanted, poetics of sovereignty came to their aid, refueling the trust and belief in the revitalization of Ottoman glory. The possible regeneration of the Ottoman Empire formed the core of their strange comparisons in which the British Empire's materially undeniable supremacy was imagined paradoxically as reversible through the multilingually communicated exceptionalism of the Ottoman Empire. It is such anticipation of the comeback of imperial power that allows empire to survive even at times and in places where it is considered least likely to be alive. This is the warning issued in the Ottoman and British literatures alike in their configurations of and comparisons between empires.

Conclusion

Scrutinizing the poetics of sovereignty, in the scope of this study, leads to the conclusion that imperial power does not always enforce itself corporally. An intricate and enduring connection between empire and life is built gently and imaginatively in the poems of Keats and Galib, novels of Mary Shelley and Aziz Efendi, chronicles of Volney and Asım Efendi, and numerous other examples from diverse genres covered in this dissertation. It is this peculiar engagement with power, which alters when it alteration finds, that becomes investigable in the literary archives of sovereignty. If, as Agamben conjectures, literature "constructs what is lived on the basis of what is poeticized and not the inverse," the literary text might then as well encrypt the reimagining of the lived experience in tandem with empire (*The End of the Poem* 80). To contemplate the relationship between the empirical constitution of sovereignty and poetics, in other words, should not automatically encourage joyful anticipations of counterhegemonic lives. By enacting imaginaries that confront sovereignty only to incorporate them into it, hence, by gifting the sovereign with the self-empowering discourse of critique, literature can be the very agent that allows empire to metastasize, to enlarge its dominion beyond the visible. That is, imperial sovereignty mutates to conform to life, which is why it is a prerequisite to diagnose its ever-changing formations through its poetics in order to prevent it from absorbing its counter-narratives.

Derrida accentuates the double-function of the literary as a force that can be both complementary and deconstructive to structures of hegemony, when he aphorizes, "the space of literature is not only that of an instituted fiction but also a fictive institution" ("This Strange Institution" 36). *Spectral Empire* has investigated the poetics of sovereignty with attentiveness

toward this two-layered literary space wherein competing visions of oppression and justice crisscross each other. My analyses of texts across genres from the British and Ottoman literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have centered on the tension imperial sovereignty releases in the figurative restructurings of world politics. This tension, I have shown, does not diffuse itself magically when one forecasts, in a transgressive optimism, like Hardt and Negri, the demolition of empire at the hands of the multitudes. To suppose that revolutions would take down empire without seeing how empire can be confused as a revolutionary dynamic itself, which was the case in its Anglo-Ottoman narratives, is the bad faith of the criticism of imperialism. What is urgently needed, what I begun to provide here, is a vigilant critical mode that is not inebriated (or overjoyed) by the physical destructibility of empire.

Imperialism inscribed itself on aesthetic productions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, translating actual processes of marginalization into tropologies of otherness. Unsurprisingly it is the mantra of the critique of imperialism in literary studies to recall that authors from these periods, and "even the most cosmopolitan Romantics," in Manu Samirit Chander's words, "fetishized racial and cultural differences, at once reflecting and solidifying England's place as the empire's seat of cultural authority" (2). Without disagreeing with the premises of this historicist approach, *Spectral Empire* is grounded by the pursuit of a rather more complicated causality in the relationship between imperial sovereignty and literary imagination. In the first part of this study, I have outlined the metahistorical lives of empire that evade monolithic interpretations of imperialism. Empire is not a static entity that always leaves recognizable marks behind. It is not a tangible configuration that drives the poetic muse in predictable directions. Quite the opposite: as I have argued in the first and second chapters, empire recycles itself constantly to obscure the logic of its workings. Metaphorizing itself into a

gentle guard, as Keats characterizes it, or into a demanding beloved, as Galib sings in his songs, empire shape-shifts to begin again where it seemingly ends. The unusual meanings and forms it assumes, such as its anthropomorphizations in the fictions of Mary Shelley and Aziz Efendi, mystifies empire to the extent that it can hide in plain sight. This maze of representation, in which imperial sovereignty can roam uncaught, becomes decipherable when the Anglo-Ottoman letters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are read not as mere blueprints of imperialist tendencies but rather as archives of yet undiscovered epistemologies of empire.

Put differently, it becomes possible to know empire in the ways it conceals itself only if its poetics is allowed to unfold against the hermeneutic disciplining of historical-material determinism that is rampant in the postcolonial scholarship pioneered by Said. For Said, the relationship between "the arts and the disciplines of representation" and imperialist geopolitics is a strictly mimetic one, defined by the dominance of the latter, since the former "depended on the powers of Europe to bring to the non-European world into representations, the better to be able to see it, to master it, and above all, to hold it" (*Culture and Imperialism* 99). Said's argument, this dissertation has proposed, is flawed not because of its conclusions, with which I unreservedly concur, but because of its one-sidedness regarding the impact of literary representation (on its own terms) on the articulation of imperial sovereignty. The British and Ottoman reflections on empire studied here have revealed that literature does not simply imitate or follow the life of empire, but communicates its afterlives that otherwise remain untraceable in the cultural travels of imperialism Said was hard at work tracking. Little could one comprehend, for example, how imperial sovereignty spread across time and space in its potential to haunt existence in and through its ruins, if it were not for the authorial gaze that saw what a historicist would not. That the ruination of empire could announce a future for it, to which Hemans and

İzzet bore witness in their poetry, is the kind of knowledge made available only through the reversal of the hierarchy Said and others have continuously placed between the histories and literatures of imperialism.

Another hierarchy that has stayed intact in Said's work and postcolonial studies at large, but which I work to undo in *Spectral Empire*, concerns the positioning of the Ottoman Empire *vis-à-vis* the British Empire in the interrogations of imperialism. Orientalized in Western literatures and literary criticism alike, the Ottoman Empire's imperiality has been methodically removed from the range of postcolonial analyses. While the most current historical scholarship has started to tackle this problematic by successfully uncovering the muted narratives of Ottoman aggression, literature scholars continue to undermine the significance of Ottoman letters in global perspectives on empire. The Ottoman Empire is certainly not the only target of the epistemic discrimination dubbed "the inequality of ignorance" by Dipesh Chakrabarty (28). Among several others, the Russian Empire, for example, also suffers (or, enjoys, depending on one's vantage point) the uneven distribution of attention — which is also to say, culpability — sanctioned by Euro-, US-centric critique of empire that extends a virtual pass to what Edyta M. Bojanowska highlights as "Russia's manifest destiny of continental expansion" (20). My integration of Ottoman sources to Anglophone literary criticism contributes to such scholarly efforts to adopt a macrocosmic approach to imperialism that is mindful of the constellation of empires and their varying roles in the invention of the global order in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While it is certainly not my ambition to resituate the Ottoman Empire in the stage of inter-imperial rivalries as an equal of the British Empire in concrete geopolitical terms, I am arguing for the importance of revisiting the Anglo-Ottoman dynamics in light of Ottoman accounts. Doing so does not miraculously change the facts concerning the balance of power

between the two states; and yet, it does change the way we understand what constitutes imperial sovereignty as it brings to surface how empire operates viscerally and immaterially in its intersecting trajectories.

That said, the central thesis of this study —that imperial sovereignty resides and expands in figuratively expressed attachments to it— makes no claim against the historicality of empire. On the contrary, I have grounded my contentions on a consistent dialectics of the historical and the immaterial. The dialectical relationship between the apocalyptic and revivalist utterances regarding the fate of empire in British and Ottoman writings foreshadow Hardt and Negri's postulation that "the functioning of imperial power is ineluctably linked to its decline" (*Empire* 361). Indeed, in Anglo-Ottoman reconceptualizations of the imperial decline, empire is seen to return to the very history from which it was meant to exit. Unlike Hardt and Negri, however, writers in both literary traditions never step outside their historical moment to conjure the specter of empire. Both Selim III and Southey, for instance, historicized in their verse the spirit of imperial sovereignty as they projected a temporal continuity between its present and future through nothing other than what they hailed as the de-corporealized presence of power. In illustrating the ghostly maintenance of empire, they and others illustrated the crucial point overlooked by Hardt and Negri, which is that spectral empire has always dwelled in history.

The historical traceability of the specter of empire is the organizing theme of the second part of this dissertation. As I have documented in the third and fourth chapters by consulting to Ottoman chronicles and British travelogues, the absence of empire occasioned for many of its adherents the ideal condition for the revision of what imperial sovereignty could be. Just as an intense longing for an indestructible authority became manifest in Ottoman mourning for the loss of sovereignty, so there crystallized an unshakable trust in imperial hegemony in British

abolitionism. In each instance, empire coopted the imaginary of its disappearance into its own power structure, erasing its irreconcilability with the desire of emancipation from imperial reigns. To speak of the history of empire in a truly unconventional manner, which is the objective of this study, entails making sense of those maneuvers through which imperial sovereignty historicizes itself without lending itself to historical judgments.

The tactical de-imperialization of empire, meaning, its potential to refashion itself as a liberating power in its spectrality, is precisely germane to its material continuity. In nineteenth-century Greece, the specter of empire corresponded to the plea for a British protectorate, which, for Percy B. Shelley, amounted to a relative freedom. This relative freedom, to reiterate, was but another name for colonial regulation, which Shelley thought was a matter of geopolitical exigency, a necessity, in other words, to counter the multi-imperial competition over Greece. Likewise, Hâmid, a parallel figure to Shelley in the Ottoman context in terms of being a legislator poet who was involved in imperialist missions imaginatively and actively, was in the business of conjuring empire in unlikely places. During his services in Bombay as the Chief Ottoman Council, Hâmid ached for the establishment of Ottoman colonial presence in India to heal and unite the oppressed Muslims of the country under the clemency of the sultan caliph. Neither Shelley nor Hâmid was dispirited by the fact that their empires were not in possession — as sovereigns— of the respective regions they were writing about. Ironically, however, it was the anti-imperial struggles in India and Greece that emboldened Shelley and Hamid to wish for a power to assist them. That absent power —invited to presence with an assessment of the historical-material contingencies of liberation— was an empire whose imaginablity mattered to these authors more than its official viability.

Spectralized empire's infiltrations into history occur in and through comparative geopolitical assessments, at which figures like Shelley and Hâmid were remarkably skilled. Their judiciousness with respect to the multi-imperial foundations of hegemonic violence culminated in mutually performed comparisons between imperial sovereignties. As it showcased the historicality of the specter of empire in non-fictional as well as poetic works in the British and Ottoman literatures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the second part of the dissertation placed a recurrent emphasis on the role of comparison as a discursive means of redeeming imperial power. Indeed, a comparative frame of mind is a historically established reality of territorial expansionism, which Stoler explicates as follows: "As French architects turned to Russia, Russian rulers looked to North America, and early colonial America looked to Spanish and British policies in the Caribbean. Such borrowings mark a competitive politics of comparison that accelerated circuits of knowledge production and imperial exchange" ("Considerations" 38). The "competitive politics of comparison," as I have discussed, extends beyond the borrowings labeled commonly as *translatio imperii*, indeed nourishing ostensibly anti-imperialist discourses that wind up vindicating empire. Recall that Shelley and Hâmid's comparative remarks on empire contained a sharp criticism of imperialism directed specifically and only toward the rival sovereign. This carefully curated partial critique of imperialism, which always served to save one empire from critique at the expense of the other, is the fruit of the comparisons they drew between the British and Ottoman empires. Consequently, empire gains immunity against accountability by way of appropriating the critique of imperialism through these self-exonerating comparisons. Empire thus summoned to neutralize imperial clashes inevitably signifies something other than itself. It becomes a ghost in history, horrifying to some people and missed by others, but conjured eventually by all.

Coda: The Passing of Empire

Empire's capacity to digest the imaginary of its end and thereby keep coming back to life relies on conjurations that romanticize imperial sovereignty deliberately, or unwittingly. Derrida reminds us that the verb "conjure" means both "evoking; summoning" and "exorcizing," signifying therefore a conflicted attitude that welcomes a residual presence of power while attempting to expel it (*Specters of Marx* 49). Empire, as foreshadowed in its British and Ottoman poetics, is thus pulled back into existence paradoxically through its very negation, with the potentiality to haunt even the worlds that disavow it. What the British and Ottoman writers recorded in their works, then, was essentially something for the future: it had historical pertinence not only in their time periods but also in the coming centuries. Their poetic prediction that empire would vanish to re-emerge in unfamiliar forms became the truth of history during the First World War that was the official "death-day of empires," if Keats were to describe it.

Romantic prophecy of the ruination of the British Empire was acutely felt, if not yet fulfilled, in the wake of WWI. Uncannily, Britain's demise —a demise so inconceivable as the one envisioned by Barbauld at the height of its imperial hegemony— became conceivable a century later at another triumphant moment in the history of the empire. Whereas the war proved deadly to Russian, German, Habsburg and Ottoman empires, Britain came out of it with further territorial expansion, extending its hegemony to Palestine, Iraq, and Cameroon, among other sites. And yet, all these gains were possible at great costs, that is, at the expense of the British colonies. Contributions from colonies across continents to the war effort inadvertently worked to heighten Britain's vulnerability in financial and military terms. The greatness of Britain grew dubious as colonies began to spell out their own autonomous destinies one by one. As colonial oppression started to hit back at the empire through guerrilla wars in Ireland, civil disobedience

movements in India, and independence campaigns in the Caribbean, it was getting more and more difficult to for the government to display British glory.

Perhaps it was such desperate need for the restitution of imperial splendor that propelled the 1924 British Empire exhibition in London, which boasted the riches of empire to its more than twenty million visitors for the duration of two years. The exhibition was an attempt to appease the imperial pride through an opulent inventory of *objets d'art* and produce imported from India, Africa and the Caribbean. It was, plainly and simply, a spectacle of imperial gluttony that celebrated the British metropolitan commodification and consumption of the colonies.

The delights of the exhibition were not so quickly digestible to all attendees, however. Virginia Woolf, for one, could not suppress the nausea she got from such awful sight of abundance after she visited the exhibition. In her essay "Thunder at Wembley," Woolf commented, in the same prescient tone as Barbauld once did, "Empire is perishing; the bands are playing; the Exhibition is in ruins" (171). Woolf's prognosis, as David Bradshaw takes it to be, is a testament to the increasing likelihood that "the Colonies may be on the verge of reasserting themselves and breaking free" ("Introduction" xxii). Her review of the exhibition, I should add, merits a closer reading for its multidimensional reflection on what it means, or how it feels to bid farewell to empire. More specifically, what strikes me most in Woolf's statement is the curious simultaneity of festiveness and morbidity. Every morsel empire eats out of its colonies turns at the end into a piece of its own flesh. In what turns out to be its last supper, the British Empire is billed the much delayed dues of its global colonial violence. It is a deathly and yet visibly carnivalesque dinner. The ecstatic mode of self-devouring expresses itself in the concurrence of "empire perishing" and "bands playing." Seen in this light, the exhibition reads in Woolf's description as a parable in itself of empire's jubilation as it chokes on its final meal.

In her prose Woolf persists in inhabiting a historical consciousness saturated with the imperial legacy of Britain. She perceives aesthetics as a means of direct reckoning with empire, consciously accounting for the culture of imperialism, for example, even when she discusses the mechanics of character-building in her fiction: "I believe that all novels… deal with character" and "to express character," Woolf contends, one does not have "to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire…" ("Character in Fiction" 42). Although she was keen on not reproducing the stale narratives of empire, Woolf's fictional writings can hardly be said to grant readers a flight of fancy. To the contrary, they chronicle the aborted escape of the post-romantic subject from the ghosts of empire, as seen perhaps most clearly in her 1925 novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Mrs. Dalloway elegizes and ridicules the expiration of the British imperial decorum of social and individual existence in the aftermath of WWI, while it showcases, as Scott Cohen suggests, the "representational dilemmas involved with bringing the empire home" from the colonies (87). Embedded in this return of the empire, notwithstanding its postwar exhaustion, is a mutation reminiscent of the one found in the romantic reflections on imperial ruins. Despite the clear disenchantment with imperial authority that manifests in the tragic and tragicomic reflections of Clarissa, Peter, and Septimus, the novel retains a nostalgic awe toward "the majesty of England" (16). Kathy Philips contends that Woolf's writing is motivated by a critical positionality that does not translate smoothly into self-righteousness as it exposes how the British upper-class "life-style," in which Woolf was implicated, was nurtured by the "fruits of an Empire." (xxxviii). *Mrs. Dalloway* makes a generous display of such ambivalence toward empire, which crystallizes in monologues wherein speakers confess their commitment to empire without necessarily affirming it, as Peter does:

> Coming as he did from a respectable Anglo-Indian family which for at least three generations had administered the affairs of a continent (it's strange, he thought, what a sentiment I have about that, disliking India, and empire, and army as he did), there were moments when civilisation, even of this sort, seemed dear to him as a personal possession; moments of pride in England; in butlers; chow dogs; girls in their security. Ridiculous enough, still there it is, he thought" (73)

Hardly could a connection to empire get more intimate than the one Peter had, whose familial lineage is tightly woven into the fabric of empire. Immersed commercially and culturally in colonial enterprises, from which he acquired his wealth alongside his tongue-in-cheek appreciation of civilization, Peter is still wary of empire. He "dislikes" the empire, the colony, and the organized crime named "the army" that held them together. Woolf's choice of the word "dislike," implying nothing more drastic than a moderate aversion, perfectly describes the measured antagonism of Peter toward empire: his political and ethical compromise. After all, Peter's disapproval of the British imperialism does not eradicate his sentimental "pride in England." His investment in empire, literally and figuratively, is unshaken by his scorn for imperialism.

Peter's acknowledgment of the "strange" nature of his imperial pride deflects the reader from the privileges endowed upon him by empire. A "beneficiary…of global economic injustice," to borrow Bruce Robbins's term, Peter embraces empire as he loathes it, enjoying all the perks of a system he "dislikes" (6). This is not to argue that the text demonizes Peter on the grounds of his ambivalent relationship to power, that is, his simultaneous contempt for and pride in being tied to it. To the contrary, the very same ambivalence impinges on how one can read Peter, since the novel implicates everyone (i.e., the author and the reader) in this moral grey area. In Peter readers find a illustration of what Pierre Bourdieu phrases "the clandestine circulation of capital in the form of cultural capital," since Peter can be seen as a prototype of an intellectual who is self-consciously complicit in the uneven distribution of wealth and power, able to critique

institutionalized inequalities on an epistemological level while surrendering to (if not eagerly accepting) the contingencies and conditions that sustain hierarchies in lived experiences (26). Peter emerges in his own accounts, hence, as a socioeconomically mobile subject who can convert the critique of imperialism into cultural capital and enjoy the catharsis that stems from the discursive performance of that critique.

Such undoing of the dichotomy between resistance and obedience to power is what occurs when empire is conjured. It is this liminality regarding one's stance *vis-à-vis* empire that resuscitates imperial sovereignty even when its strength is actively undermined on the surface. *Mrs. Dalloway* dissipates the presumed threshold between pro and anti-hegemonic positionalities by buttressing the hauntological effect of empire. Woolf's novel, resonating with Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, mourns and mocks the passing of empire at the same time through figures who attach themselves to the imperial past with a more grotesque resignations than Peter's. Consider Lady Bruton, who, like Lionel, could not entertain the idea of a future without the interpellation of imperial authority, that is, without —as Woolf teasingly writes— "the thought of Empire always at hand" (166). Lady Bruton, as her name implies, personifies a cartoonish, brute adherence to power, a Valerian insistence (to recall Shelley's "The Animated Roman") on staying with empire. Her reluctance to be detached from imperial sovereignty is so engrained in her being that she cannot even think of dying unattended by it: "To be not English even among the dead - no, no! Impossible!" (166). Imperial identity proves to be the most precious element in Lady Bruton's being. As hysterical as it sounds, Woolf's characterization of her has a solemn tone to it, hiding some throbbing pain beneath the thin cover of sarcasm. Woolf, akin to Mary Shelley, refuses to dehumanize visceral identifications with empire; instead, she chooses to catalogue its ambivalent affective charges.

Lady Bruton thinks of her own death and empire with obdurate denial of their severability, and this pulls her from the margins of the narrative, where she is otherwise pinned as a flat character, to a crucial spot in the canvas of the novel, situated right next to Septimus and Clarissa. The reality of death interrupts the ordinary flow of life, demanding from all these three characters to re-route their stream of consciousness accordingly. Empire and the dead haunt their visions in disturbingly overlapping ways, as they do, for example, in the scene with the mysterious motorcar. Stuck in the midst of the traffic —immobilized as though by the curious gaze of the crowd— the motorcar triggers a collective speculation as to which royal member it might be carrying inside. Amused by the idea of the queen inconvenienced by something so beneath her as the petty hustle and bustle of the city, "strangers," including Septimus and Clarissa, "looked at each other and thought of the dead; of the flag; of Empire" (18). Thinking of the dead is a binding act in the narrative and social structure of the novel, operating as the building block of a community that is not aware of its existence. That is, Septimus, Clarissa, and Lady Bruton are enmeshed in the same loss but grieve it individually in isolated headspaces, partaking in what Tammy Clewell phrases as "endless mourning" that "compels us to refuse consolation" (199). If the novel "compels" the reader to do anything, it is to acknowledge that empire is a fundamental —not tangential— ingredient of such communal mourning. Empire, now imagined dead, is rendered simultaneously obsolete and contemporary in that it suffers the same existential shattering as the characters of the text, standing in for a faded but nonetheless enduring edifice of meaning and power. Just like the ghosts of the fallen soldiers Septimus cannot stop seeing, empire is there with all these "strangers" in its absence, a dead yet undying fragment of their collective consciousness. If, as Elizabeth Outka writes, *Mrs. Dalloway* plunges into the impossible task of "making the imagined dead body a revitalized material body," empire

constantly contaminates this desired transmutation (256). That is to say, if the novel ascribes tangible forms to the dead, it decidedly fails to sift out empire's ghost from its spectacle of spectres.

"Spectacle" in its twentieth century capitalist reproduction, as Guy Debord explains, enacts "the domination of society by 'perceptible as well as imperceptible things'" and "at the same time succeeds in making itself regarded as the perceptible par excellence" (14). To follow Debord's line of thought, the effacement of the distinction between the perceptible and imperceptible is the most radical trick power has up its sleeve, which, in Woolf's text, is vested in empire. The spectacle, in other words, is nothing other than empire, whose passing everyone present cannot help but watch. On the one hand, the novel makes a point of the spectacularity of empire with a well-placed pun on the passing of the queen. The motorcar, a magnetic field of attention by itself, is meant to move after all, but cannot do so, generating in the text an unusual heft of tension as though it were a funeral cortège. Woolf's subversive use of such orthodox metonymy for modernity as the automobile adds to the intensity of the caesura: the machine, in which the velocity of modern existence is supposed to materialize, becomes a metaphor of a suspenseful delay. The novel freezes its own temporality spectacularly with the quintessential object of motion. On the other hand, there is nothing spectacular about this moment: it is a motorcar, not a motorcade that accompanies the passing queen. Empire's spectacle is as deflated as the postwar mood of the British society. And it is precisely this aspect of the spectacle, meaning, empire's stretching into the banality of existence, that pumps life into its tired body.

In congruence with what I have noted in the works of Shelley and others, Woolf's novel treats empire and the subject as ontologically entangled, indistinguishable from one another in life and death, in the existential dullness that engulfs both. As such Woolf rehearses the

hauntology of empire prefigured by her romantic predecessors, who, she thought, were not capable of "dying" either.[169] Herself haunted by Gibbon, whose "great work," she stipulates in an essay, would "immortalize" the historian, Woolf alludes to empire in *Mrs. Dalloway* quite romantically as a relic of "greatness" perpetually disappearing, "sifting through the ruins of time" ("The Historian and 'The Gibbon'" 93; *Mrs. Dalloway* 16).

The metaphorical passing of empire that finds its post-romantic articulation in Woolf's writing is not without historical basis either. Not every proud British imperial actor was reassured of the empire's survival after its victory in WWI. The looming independence movements of the British colonies were enough to alarm, for instance, even those who maintained a militant (in the literal sense of the word) belief in empire, like Henry Wilson (1864-1922), the British army's Chief of the Imperial General Staff. In his 1921 correspondence with Arnold Robertson, the Consul-General at Tangiers at the time, Wilson laments that "the British Empire at the present moment has no Army worth the name, and in addition such semblance of troops as we have are scattered in the most scandalous manner" in numerous corners of the world, across Ireland, the Rhine, Silesia, Constantinople, Palestine, and Egypt ("Wilson to Arnold Robertson" 250). Wilson's worry was not merely that the army was too disorganized to live up to —if not secure— the imaginary of a unified empire. He was genuinely distressed that empire's doom was approaching, and that it was to be precipitated by the Irish revolution. In another letter from the same year, the retired Field Marshal ominously writes that Egypt and India were next to declare their sovereignty after Ireland, and from there the British "shall have to start again and build an empire" ("Wilson to Morland" 318). This was not so inconceivable a scenario, "because bear in mind," he adds, "Portugal once had an empire…" (318). In a recognizably Volneyesque fashion, Wilson invokes the cyclicality of imperial regimes to

envisage both the end and the rebirth of the British Empire. It is only fitting that the same year he would go on to address the next generation of military officers at the Staff College with a lecture on "The Passing of Empire," rekindling imperialist impulses to defend and expand Britain with a morose emphasis on its always already impending death (Jeffrey 289).[170]

Of all the curious statements Wilson makes, his imperative "to start again and build an empire" stands out most for its uncannily commanding force. His quick resolution "to have to" rebuild an empire (in the event the current one collapses) summarizes neatly his political determinism in which allegiance to imperial power is taken to be a universal condition. Why this compulsion, one wonders? What compels, or could compel anyone to recreate empire? Why on earth should empire be inevitable?

❖❖❖

Halide Edib Adıvar (1884-1953), a prolific writer from the post-imperial republic of Turkey, shared exactly this sense of wonder regarding how empire manages to not disappear for good. Edib traveled extensively in Europe, South Asia, and the United States, joined the Turkish armed forces in the war against Greece in the wake of WWI, and then became a parliament member. The author of more than twenty works in various genres, Edib wrote bilingually in English and Ottoman Turkish. She was a true Anglophile, who later served as the chair of the English department at Istanbul University, and translated Shakespeare, Orwell and other classical and modern figures of the English canon into Ottoman Turkish.

Edib wrote some of her fiction in London, and made the acquaintance of the members of the Bloomsburg Group that Woolf was closely associated with. Still, whether she was familiar with Woolf's writing is a matter of debate. Nevertheless, while the paths of Woolf and Edib did

not seem to cross personally or intertextually, their preoccupation with the remnants of empire brings them together. Edib's exceptional attunement to the hauntology of imperial sovereignty is what approximates her writing to that of her contemporary fellow author, who similarly rendered visible in her works the invisible comebacks of imperial sovereignty. Both authors checked the pulses of their empires, which were dying different deaths but ultimately resembled each other as they transformed into ghostly presences of power. In an aesthetic camaraderie with Woolf, Halide Edib had the following to say for the eternal recurrence of empire:

> "At this point one has to stop and ponder over empires in general…One has to find explanation for the forced or voluntary coalescence of nations…Somehow humanity cannot get away from them. The post-war period has been one for the breaking up of empires. The very words Empire and Imperialist have come to mean something bad. But hardly had small nations found themselves turned into independent nations, than they began forming alliances and confederations…" (*Inside India* 366-67)

Extracted from "Inside India," an admixture of memoir, political and historical treatise and travelogue published in English in 1938 after Edib's trip to India, these remarks astutely encapsulate the *Weltschmerz* on the eve of WWII. Alliances formed by the Great Powers and the eventual emergence of the League of Nations suggest to Edib a continued effort to re-form empire out of its debris. Nations, like shards of those broken vessels of bygone imperial regimes, gravitate in postwar international politics toward each other to reassemble empire without denominating it officially as such: the alliance between nations reconstitutes empire in an unconventionally fragmented shape, overseeing the structuring of the world under the pressures of ever-present inter-imperial tensions. The fact that Edib offers this assessment in her accounts on Indian independence movement is certainly not a dismissible detail. During her abode in India Edib had a close contact with Mahatma Gandhi and other thinkers and activists of the Indian anticolonial revolution. Nonetheless, it is fair to underline that Edib was more skeptical of the Indian cause than she was sympathetic to it, for she was of the opinion that the religious schism

in India turned "the outside Power," i.e. Britain, into "a necessity, a fixture" (115). In her resignation to empire as a harmonizing "fixture," however, Edib does not treat peoples of India as subjects exceptionally prone to imperial hegemony. It is not out of sheer racially motivated reservations that she perceives the relationship between empire and colony as mutually dependent. Rather, she extrapolates from the Indian case a human condition that is unthinkable without a serious consideration of empire, as she prompts "humanity" to "ponder over empires."

Zooming in on the historical context of Edib's writing, her readers find that she was part of a generation of Ottoman Turkish intellectuals who had to navigate a period of seismic sociopolitical shifts. The turn of the twentieth century marked a turbulent age of transition from an imperial to a national imaginary for Edib and other authors studied earlier in this dissertation, such as Ekrem, Midhat Efendi, and Hâmid. However, unlike many of her peers, Edib was extraordinarily astute in her skepticism of this transition. She would not propose a clear demarcation between the two regimes, since, as she explains in her memoirs, "the new leaders were at heart unconsciously empire men with a moderate constitutional ideal which accorded representation to all" (*Memoirs* 266). The ideologically invented chasm between the imperial past and the national present evaporates when one knows —as she did— that "Turkey was an empire" (266). Hence, Edib refused to take the constitutional revolution at face value when determining the indeterminable, that is, where empire ends and nation begins.

Edib's non-binary approach to the relation between empire and nation is laudable because it predicts the recent social scientific refutations of the historically construed division between the two. Kumar, for instance, underlines the fact that early modern "assertion of empire as sovereignty or self-sufficient authority" blends nicely with "the central claims of the nation-state" (*Visions of Empire* 24). As for its modern afterlives, Chatterjee locates empire in the

"imperial prerogative" of national governments like the United States to "declare the colonial exception" ("Empire and Nation Revisited" 495). Empire and nation converge in Edib's thinking in the same way they do for these scholars. A. G. Hopkins regarded them as "closely related themes" (25). No amount of nationalism could suffice to chase away the specter of empire, according to her. After the official disintegration of the Ottoman state, Edib surmised, "Turks were the only mass of people in the empire…who could still be indiscriminately used to support the ghost of the empire" (*Turkey Faces West* 111). She incisively concluded that summoning empire was the primary act of nation-building in the case of Turkey.

Edib's reluctance to pit nation conceptually against empire was far from an isolated intellectual idiosyncrasy. At the end of WWI, with the prospect of the empire's minorities establishing their own independent nation states, two competing, yet teleologically connected ideological programs elicited widespread support: Neo-Ottomanism and Pan-Turanism. The latter mobilized mythological Turkishness as the organizing element of a multi-religious and plurilingual society in contrast to the former's avoidance of ethnocentrism. In spite of their divergences, ideologues on both sides prepared themselves for the nearing end of the Ottoman Empire with a determinedly imperial vision. Edib is known to have had an active involvement in the Pan-Turanist movement, which, for her, had the potential to preserve the hybridity of the Ottoman Empire in a national polity controlled by Turks. Hülya Adak underlines that "Edib's Turanism and her longing for a multi-ethnic Empire are not contradictory" ("An Epic for Peace." xiv). In *Turkey Faces West*, an extended political historical treatise she wrote in English and published in 1930, Edib herself acceded to the imperialist character of what was nominally a nation state: "The Turk perhaps was never a nationalist in politics. Empire builders rarely are" (76). The possibility of synthesizing empire and nation in the ethno-cultural leadership of Turks

was so close to her heart that Edib even wrote a novel about it in 1913, titled *Yeni Turan* [New Turan].

Set in 1931, *Yeni Turan* is a speculative novel that seeks to provide a glimpse of what the future holds for Turkey after the partitioning of the empire becomes predictable in the unrest of ethnic minorities in Turkey and the wider Middle East. Charging ahead in its temporality, the novel fictionalizes the zeal for salvaging Turkey from the wreck that was the Ottoman Empire, while also exploring the possibility of imperializing the emerging Turkish nation. To devise a future for Turks, in which they continue to occupy the position of the hegemon, the text tests the viability of Neo-Ottomanism and Turanism as alternative ideologies for the achievement of that goal, using ideologically charged romance as the engine of its narrative. The love triangle between Kaya, Oğuz, and Hamdi Paşa operates in the novel as a conduit for the contest over the definition of the regime in the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire's fall. Kaya and Oğuz participate in this endeavor as the youthful leaders of Yeni Turan, whereas Hamdi Paşa, the 60-year-old head of Neo-Ottomanists, embodies the old establishment. The Neo-Ottomanist narrator, Asım Bey confesses to the reader that his uncle Hamdi Paşa convinces Kaya to marry him by blackmailing her with the execution of Oğuz, Kaya's platonic lover and comrade. A disenchanted insider figure, Asım Bey recounts his hate and envy for his uncle's arch enemy who succeeds in rising to power and ensuring that, as the title of the novel foreshadows, Yeni Turan determines the future of the country.

Named after the eleventh century Turkish nomadic tribe, Oğuz symbolizes the return of the mythical origin of Turks to reinstate their hegemonic status in the dissected geography of the Ottoman Empire. He is endowed with disarming oratory skills envied by all including Asım Bey. In one of his campaign speeches Oğuz tells the crowd,

> Birkaç ay sonra siz ve bütün millet tekrar ülkemizi idare için yeni adamlar seçecek ve bu yeni adamlar vasıtasıyla Türkiye'ye dört sene için harici ve dahili şeklini vereceksiniz...ben Yeni Turan'ın çocuğu, sizi Yeni Turan'ın yoluna çağırıyorum...Zannetmeyiniz ki ben bu yola yalnız Turan'ın çocuklarını, Türk kardeşlerimi çağırıyorum. Hayır, hepsini, Türkiye'nin bütün çocuklarını...Kürtleri Arapları Ermenileri, Rumları hepsini çağırıyorum. (*Yeni Turan* 33-4)
>
> [In a couple of months you will elect new men to administer our country again, and by means of these new men, you will assign Turkey its internal and external shape for the next four years…I, a child of New Turan, am asking you to take the path of New Turan…Do not assume that I am asking only the children of New Turan, my Turkish brothers. No, I am asking everyone, all children of Turkey…Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, everybody to take this path.]

Oğuz creates a magnetic field around him by attending to the wounded Turkish ego, buttressing the special status of the Turk as the chosen one among many contenders for sovereignty. However, in perfect congruity with Edib's own dialectical take on empire and nation, Oğuz does not let nationalist chauvinism undermine his plea for unity. He is cognizant of Turkey's dependence on the cooperation of minorities to actualize the dream of a hybrid yet Turkocentric rule. Fittingly, he adopts an approach of mastery when dealing with the communal schisms that plagued the Ottoman Empire, as he includes the minorities in the very political rhetoric that marginalizes them and centers authority on Turkish agency.

Oğuz's rhetorical granting of will to minoritized populations to participate in the remaking of a Turkish hegemony pronounces the seamless entrance of empire into the budding democracy of the nation state, revealing an imperial urge to expand the range of sovereignty. In his apostrophe to the children of the post-imperial nation that was yet to materialize, Oğuz declares the coming of a democratic sovereignty with a stress on parliamentary elections, that is, on the shared capacity of self-determination of peoples that will replace the authority of the sultan. The formation of democratic nation states after WWI, as Agamben notes, "coincided with a permanent state of exception in the majority of the warring countries," which included Turkey as well (*State of Exception* 12). Behind the veil of the legal right to determine the fate of the

nation (beyond the juridical-political intervention of the sultan) was a dormant totalitarianism that inserted itself into the logic of inclusive-exclusion permeating the national constitution of Turkey. Signs of future catastrophes that undergirded the foundation of the democratic Turkish nation state, such as the Armenian genocide and the ethno-religious cleansings targeting Kurds and Alevis, flash in Oğuz's conditional welcoming of the non-Turkish into the imagined community of Turkey. The threat of violence that accompanied Turkish inclusivity reverberates in his voice. Concealed in his symbolic gesture of embracing all is the intrinsic conditionality of Turkish tolerance for pluralism.

Oğuz's campaign publicizes the supremacy of Turks as though it were an act of altruism, that is, as if it were the consensus, and to the benefit, of other ethnic and racial groups. This discursive reconciliation between Turkish exceptionalism and multicultural cohabitation marks the imperial condition of Oğuz's national imaginary. His propaganda of a demographically diverse nation state communicates, in Adak's words, the Turkish "wishfulness for the inclusivist Ottomanist ideal" (xv). Concurrently national and imperial, Oğuz comes forward in *Yeni Turan* as one of those "empire men" authorized to "administer our country again," which happened to be a historical phenomenon Edib took note of in her autobiographical writing. It was not uncommon to see, according to Edib, "many well known men of the empire" become "ministers of public instruction one after another" (*Memoirs* 347). The appointment of Ottoman Turkish imperial figures to national duties and offices provides thus another layer of proof for the amalgamation of empire and nation in the engineering of the Turk as the supreme sovereign.

Neither Oğuz nor any ideologue of Turanism offers a substantial rationalization for the Turkish entitlement to be the sole representative of power in a constellation of communities, other than allusions to the Ottoman Empire as an example for the exceptional greatness of Turks

in managing social heterogeneity. When Oğuz speaks of the Ottoman heritage, however, he mourns and celebrates the empire by justifying its fall and revival all at once: "Birdenbire Osmanlı İmparatorluğu pek gevşemiş ve çürümeye yüz tutmuş esasından sarsılıyor. Etrafımızda zaten mevcut olmayan muayyen ve müttehit bir maksat, bir emel, bir yol eksikliğini ayağımızın altında kayan ecdat yurdunun harabesini, hararetine susamış olduğumuz ocağımızın soğumasını duyuyoruz (*Yeni Turan* 39-40). [All of a sudden the Ottoman Empire gets uprooted from its loose and rotting essence. We are feeling around us the absence of a unified and definite purpose, the absence of an objective and a trajectory, the ruins of an ancestral land sliding under our feet, and the freezing of our hearth the warmth of which we long for.] The feeling of "absence" heightened by the decomposition of imperial sovereignty overwhelms Oğuz. An existential abyss emanates from empire's ruination. Sharing a spirit with the mystical authors of the previous centuries, compared to whom he stood closer to the material death of the Ottoman Empire, Oğuz dreads the purposeless life that is deprived of power. However, his mournfulness soon gives way to cheeriness as he assures his audience that empire is not done with eternally. Oğuz conjures empire in his speech as he craftily diverges from its ruins toward its new foundations: "Evvela hepimiz ecdadımız gibi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na sağlam ve yeni temeller atmak lazım geldiğine kaniyiz ya! (*Evet evet sedaları*)...Pekala şimdi bu temeli nasıl atacağız? Bir kere, ecdadımızın bunu nasıl ve ne şerait içinde yaptığına bakalım. Ecdadımız kuvvetli bir merkeziyet üzerine bina edilmiş mutlak fakat adil bir Türk hükümeti temeli atıyordu değil mi? (41) [Firstly, we all concur that it is a must to construct new and robust foundations for the Ottoman Empire just like our ancestors! (*Exclamations of "yes"*)... So, how are we going to lay this foundation then? Let us first consider how and under what circumstances our ancestors accomplished this. Did not our ancestors found the absolute and just Turkish government on a strong center?] The

physical decay of empire presents an opportune moment to Oğuz for refiguring a Turkish sovereignty in a familiar yet fresh imperial mold. The ideal of "absolute" and "just" governance extracted from the mythologized Ottoman past is what Oğuz relies on to excite the multitudes, to restore faith in the return of empire. He resorts to the intoxicating effect of power —just like Selim III, and his other mystic predecessors— to secure a most spirited attachment to his cause. The imagined leader of new Turkey leads his base thus by mystifying empire, by conceiving the Ottoman Empire's collapse as a felicitous event for the spiritual healing of Turkish imperial sovereignty.

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In its Anglo-Ottoman literary inscriptions, empire survives through the promise of its end, resuscitated by the anticipation of its collapse. Empire's future-life sparkles before the eyes of its beholders who think they are staring at its approaching termination. Edib detects this post-mortem perseverance of imperial sovereignty at a historical moment when the sick man of Europe was unambiguously dead. She observes that the Ottoman Empire would not rest in peace, but would revisit the new world of nations even after its official burial through the persisting spiritual devotion to imperial sovereignty. Woolf, meanwhile, keeps track of such spectralization of empire by bearing witness to its corruptive effect on the souls of the living. In her portraits of the void that was growing beneath the merry pretenses of the British Empire, one cannot help but see the concurrent decay of the bodies of people and imperial authority. Imperial growth flags its impending death. Empire finds no peace and all its war is done. This end, on the other hand, as Woolf mournfully depicts in her novels, announces the coming of an age in which empire will live on to haunt its survivors ontologically in its immaterial presences.

The future of empire, glimpsed by the earlier British and Ottoman writers and inhabited by Woolf and Edib, is a point in time when imperial sovereignty remains part of the mundane while it may seem out of this world. It is a moment when empire does not restrain its effect solely to grand narratives, imposing rituals, or pseudo-universalist enterprises. In this future empire is more at home in details, surviving through its ability to merge with the minutiae of existence as well as the most momentous phenomena such as revolutions. Actualization of such sovereignty, to borrow from Foucault, "consists in the codification of a whole number of power relations that render its functioning possible, and that revolution is a different type of codification of the same relations" (*Power* 123). It is through what Foucault dubs as "metapower" that empire casts its shadow over the relationship between the world and the subject, impinging on indifferences and resistances alike (123).

Insofar as spectral empire is predicated on an imaginary of sovereignty that reaches after omnipresence by obfuscating its influence, its temporality knows no boundaries between the past, the present and the future. Woolf and Edib, in conversation with their British and Ottoman predecessors, attest to the time of empire that never runs out: spectral empire is anchored in history so firmly that it is unbothered by the waves of change. The poetics of sovereignty that permeates these authors' works prefaces the warning today's historians issue : "empires — whether or not so-called— have not only persisted into our own times but remain distinct possibilities for the future" (Kumar "Nation-states as empires" 120).

That future is now, empire is here.

Notes

[1] For ease of reading, for both English and Turkish speaking audience not well-versed in Arabic alphabet, I will quote Ottoman Turkish texts in Latinized versions throughout the dissertation. Sources of translations and transliterations will be indicated in footnotes following each quotation. I will be using Victorial Rowe Holbrook's translations and transliterations of *Hüsn ü Aşk* [*Beauty and Love*].
[2] *Beauty and Love* 175.
[3] *Beauty and Love* 175.
[4] *Beauty and Love* 190.

[5] For debates on the relationship between ontology and politics in political theory, see Strathausen; Abbott; and Marder.
[6] Here I have in mind also the perceptive studies of Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, Linda Colley, Nigel Leask, and Peter J. Kitson. While in agreement with the critical spirit of these studies, I accentuate in this study the neglected fact that literary imagination in the long nineteenth century does not only reflect imperial desires and anxieties but also reveals their so far unaddressed forms and shapes.
[7] Examples of misguided impositions of the Saidian critical paradigm on the political and aesthetic significations of the Ottoman Empire are many, since orientalism has been a guiding theme for scholars, such as Mohammed Sharafuddin, and Jeffrey Einboden (in addition to the previously cited ones), who studied the Anglo-European engagements with the Ottoman Empire.
[11] For sustained analyses of metaphor's ideological applications in other contexts, see the works of Peter A. Dorsey and Catherine Hezser. In his study of the rhetorical dimensions of slavery in revolutionary America, Dorsey states that the metaphor of slavery "reflected certain aspects of material and social reality, but it also posited a selected version of that reality, and, as a result, distorted it" (xii). Hezser surveys the "religious, psychological, and political usages" of the metaphor of slavery in Jewish writings of Hellenistic and Roman times, where it indicates certain political consciousness as regard the "dominion, denunciation and mistreatment of the Jewish subjects" (345).
[12] Almost a decade earlier than the publication of *Empire*, Negri already addressed the importance of thinking ontology in conjunction with politics. Not quite congruent with the ahistorical tone of *Empire*, however, he writes in *The Savage Anomaly*, "it is history that must refound ontology, or (we could say) it is ontology that must dilute itself in ethicality and historicity in order to become a constitutive ontology" (84).
[13] As another scholar observes, "the metaphor of empire" suits Hardt and Negri "as a substitute for globalization," (Muscarà, 332).
[14] For a scathing critique of Hardt and Negri's politics see Christian Thorne's article "To the Political Ontologists."
[15] For other relevant and interesting studies, see also the articles of Ika Willis, and Hanne Birk and Birgit Neumann.
[16] Since empire's metaphorical transformation is a spatial and temporal matter, the question of period should therefore be dealt with cautiously. Why would empire resort to abstraction at a historical juncture when it is almost impossible to imagine its absence given its worldwide dominance? How can we distinguish or connect Victorian, romantic, and early modern metaphorical articulations of empire without dismissing their distinctive temporalities? An intellectually fulfilling answer to this question requires a careful comparative, trans-temporal study of the metaphor of empire that is beyond the scope of one single chapter.
[17] Although the waves of post-colonial critique, inspired by Edward W. Said, reached the shores of romantic studies in the 1990s, there was no shortage, as Nicholas Roe puts it, of "contextually informed criticism" in the preceding decade (*John Keats and the Culture of Dissent* 6). The works of Marjorie Levinson, Marilyn Butler and Jerome J. McGann set influential precedents for the later historically grounded analyses. Nigel Leask confirms that "history is once again on the agenda, and the political and

ideological concerns of poets like Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and even Keats are now read as being constitutive of their poetry rather than merely 'background' material" (*British Romantic Writers and the East* 11). While, however, there is certainly a methodological continuity between these two 'generations' of romantic scholarship, the rather recent critique of romantic orientalism and imperialism can be argued to have stretched the earlier focus on 'context' toward the global, imperial histories of Britain.

[18] The 1986 *Studies in Romanticism* forum led by Wolfson, "Keats and Politics" included essays that uncover "Keats's anti-aristocratic sentiments, his liberalism, his radicalism" (Wolfson, "Introduction" 172). Analogously, the essay collection edited by Roe, *Keats and History* (1995), set out to unsettle "the myth of Keats's unworldliness" (Roe, *Keats and History* 3). For a detailed discussion of "how the consciousness of history shapes Keats's writing of 1819, " see also James Chandler's *England in 1819* (Chandler 408).

[19] In a similar vein, Makdisi contends that "in his poem 'On First Looking 1816 into Chapman's Homer,' Keats explicitly compares the sudden unveiling of the new literary world made available to him by that volume to the prospect made available to the gaze of the imperial adventurer" ("Romantic Cultural Imperialism" 616).

[20] Likewise, another critic underscores the parallel between Keats's representations of oriental commodities and the ideologically charged obsession of the age with "eastern luxury and ostentation" (Fermanis 113).

[21] I borrow this phrase from Deborah Forbes who employs it in her discussion of Wordsworth's "moral accountability" in *Sincerity's Shadow: Self-Consciousness in British Romantic and Mid-Twentieth Century American Poetry* (24-7).

[22] On the imperial appropriations of classical antiquity see C. A. Hagerman's book, *Britain's Imperial Muse: The Classics, Imperialism, and the Indian Empire, 1784-1914*, and Krishan Kumar's article, "Greece and Rome in the British Empire: Contrasting Role Models."

[23] There is a general tendency in romantic criticism to associate Roman imperial style with Napoleon and situate British reclamation of ancient Greek heritage against it. Jonathan Sachs problematizes this dichotomy in his study of *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination, 1789-1832*.

[24] It is important to note that Southey adds in the poem, "Thy influential spirit dwells and reign," which gestures toward the ontological, rather than cultural aspect of the subject's attachment to empire (204). Later in the chapter I dwell on Southey's and other romantic authors' spectralization of imperial power.

[25] "Political Greatness" was written in the same year as "Ode to Naples" where Shelley confidently remarks, "Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be, / Now art, and henceforth ever shall be, free" (610-12).

[26] Apter's theorization of "'small p' politics" poses a productive challenge to grand critical narratives of the production of the political as it draws attention to its micropolitical dimension "that speaks in its own language" and "defines distinct modes of acting or articulating politically that evolve and mutate" (34).

[27] Another example from Shelley's poetry that is worth spotlighting is his description of "man" in "Ode to Liberty" as "the imperial shape" (308). The poem merits attention for its ontological fusion of empire with the human in what reads like an anti-imperial narrative at first glance.

[28] Empire registers in his sonnet, "Happy Is England! I Could Be Content," like an irresistible urge, an instinct that compels Keats to claim his sovereignty, to "sit upon an Alp as a throne" (58). No longer visible in the form of a polity, it is internalized, presenced in the deep wells of human body as "an inward groan," a visceral noise of an ontological longing. Empire proves impossible to forget wholly in the poem because the worldly order of things and beings on the outside bears its traces.

[29] See Allport; Janowitz; Levinson; McFarland; and Goldstein.

[30] As reiterated by many scholars, a ruinology of the Roman Empire —incorporated into "the continuing power of one imperial class to dictate what should be seen and valued as history"— inflected the self-perception of the British upper class (Harries 82). Gazing at the silhouettes of the Roman past

was, in Kevis Goodman's words, "an experiment in the historiography of the past" that made it possible to write one's own imperial genealogy (111).

[31] These efforts capitalized not only on the revised historiography of the Roman Empire but also on its language and literature that were also regarded as ruins in their own right.

[32] Keach comes very close to pinpointing the role of imperial ruins in the preservation of empire in its immateriality. He notes that "'Empire' may ultimately survive only in its ruins…The question that makes all the difference…is whether or not we awaken from what haunts us in the ruins of empire" (42).

[33] Hemans quotes Byron in several other poems, including "Records of Woman," "Ancient Greek Chant of Victory," "Parting Words," "The Image in the Heart," and "The Land of Dreams."

[34] Byron cites Gibbon in *The Corsair* and "Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte."

[35] For more on Hemans's influence on Shelley, see Kelly.

[36] Mary Shelley and Percy B. Shelley frequently summon "multitudes" in their reflections on social chaos as well as imperial decline, as they do in *Frankenstein* and *Laon and Cythna*, with explicit nods to Volney's *Ruins* where imperial ruins designate a site "once animated by a living multitude" (23).

[37] Likewise, Volney's *Ruins* made available the trope of spectral and anthropomorphized empire to the Shelleys. When pacing through ruins, Volney's narrator sees "a pale apparition, clothed in large and flowing robes, as spectres are represented rising from their Tombs" (26). The "phantom" as he calls it, lifts the narrator to "the aerial heights" where they both stare "down on the earth" and traverse the regions of fallen empires (30-31). Particularly at this moment of ascension, of such (virtual) panoramic access to the entire world, Volney animates the guiding phantom — in the "flowing robes" that give him an imperial demeanour — like the ghost of empire.

[38] Pertinent to the discussion of imperial ruins is also the debates on the gothic in relation to empire and imperialism. "The Gothic," according to Laura Doyle, communicates "an anxious global consciousness," while it encodes, as Ailise Bulfin states, the "invasion anxiety" of the colonizer (Doyle 516; Bulfin 24).

[39] Discussions of Southey's relationship with empire revolve often around his longer works. See, for instance, Leporati, and Pratt on the imperialist tenets of *Madoc*.

[40] This şarkı's translation is mine. Transliteration is Kalkışım's, 220.

[41] Galib's şarkıs are lyric poems, often idolizing the beloved in the image of an inaccessible sovereign.

[42] The Galata Mevlevi Lodge, dating back to the fifteenth century, continued its religious practices till the 1920s, the early republican period, during which activities of private worshipping centers were officially banned. The lodge was later converted to a museum and reopened to visitors.

[43] In transliterated text, 220.

[44] In Tanpınar's vocabulary and early twentieth century Turkish critical parlance, terms such as old poetry, the classical poetry, or divan literature function more as ideological markers than periodic ones, perpetuating the Eurocentric misconception that the tension between the old and the new, the traditional and the modern emerged and resolved itself only in and through the encounters with the West. Tanpınar's occidentalist bias is at work when he associates "old poetry" (pre-nineteenth century Ottoman literature that was heavily influenced by Persio-Arabic cultural heritage) unfavorably with "Şark" [the East] and applauds the Western-rooted novelty of the fin de siècle writers of Ottoman Turkish literature. For more on Tanpınar's Occidentalism and an interesting comparison between his literary historiography and Auerbach's *Mimesis*, see Yashin 167-69.

[45] Arabic literature in particular was a rich reservoir for Western romance genre that dates back to the medieval period. As Maria Rosa Menocal explains, reasons for this were multilayered, mostly political and economic: "A surprising number of historian of various fields, nationalities, and vested interest have described the relationship in the medieval world as one in which al-Andalus (as Muslim Spain was called by the Arabs) and its ancestry and progeny that were ascendant, and ultimately dominant, in the medieval

period. It has been variously characterized as the age of Averroes, as an Oriental period of Western history, a period in which Western culture grew in the shadows of Arabic…" (2).

[46] Tanpınar then goes on to describe in detail how the beloved is represented in "old poetry": "All the attitudes of the beloved are the sovereign's attitudes. They do not love, but accept only being loved as if it were some sort of a natural given. Furthermore, they possess the beneficences of a sovereign. And likewise, as they wish, they withhold these favors and beneficences. They even distress, torture, and kill" (28).

[47] As Holbrook writes, "Separation of the sacred from the secular in literature," paralleling the state politics of 'modernization in Turkey, "has relegated texts categorized as 'spiritual' to a marginal status isolated from those deserving serious intellectual and artistic attention" (*The Unreadable Shores* 10).

[48] For an earlier, insightful study of the political dimension of Ottoman mystical tradition, see the chapter "Religion, Ideology and Consciousness in the Ottoman Empire at the End of the Nineteenth Century" in Şerif Mardin's *Religion and Social Change in modern Turkey*.

[49] The rhetorical devices of Persian Sufism coopted by Ottoman authors assumed ideological significations peculiar to their new literary and political environment, which is to say, Ottoman mysticism is simply one of many iterations in the multifaceted tradition of Sufism (Elias 595), and its function as a conduit for imperial motivations should be scrutinized with this caveat in mind. Contrarily, Sufism has been shown to be instrumental in anti-colonial struggles. Looking at the "Sufi military movements in Algeria and Libya in the 1800s and early 1900s," Fait Muedini claims, "the anti-colonialist leaders… used their Sufi influence to help wage military jihad against the French and Italian colonial forces" (136).

[50] Mevlevi order, inspired by its designated leader, poet Rumi, dates back to the thirteenth century. Even at the earliest stages of its establishment, the order had followers among high-ranking officials as well as a wide public adherence. It steadily spread in time with the initiatives of sheiks and the endorsements of sultans or their relatives. In Istanbul and Konya, the cities where it was perhaps most effective in terms of its social outreach, the order did not behave simply as a religious formation but was also a shaping force in literary, cultural and artistic settings (Tanrıkorur 468-75). For more on this topic, see Gölpınar.

[51] See Ayvazoğlu, 23-4; Gölpınarlı, 7. For an extended discussion of Selim III's relationship with Mevlevism, see Gawrych.

[52] "Kaside" is Ottoman Turkish spelling for Arabic term *qaṣīdah*, which means also poetry and poetry-writing more broadly.

[53] In transliterated text, 75.

[54] Translation is mine.

[55] Transliteration is Arslan's, 64, 88.

[56] Transliteration is Yıldız's, 128.

[57] Aziz Efendi exhibits his erudition on mysticism in his other texts such as "Varidat" [Inspirations] where he dwells on the complexities of Sufi sayings and concepts (Okay "Aziz Ali" 334).

[58] Transliteration is mine.

[60] Transliteration is Yılmaz's, 35.

[61] Translation belongs to E. J. W. Gibb.

[62] Gazel, or "ghazal" in Arabic, is a poetic form that has different yet interculturally connected genealogies in Persian, Hindi, Urdu and other languages. Its central themes include love, separation from the beloved, and amorous appreciation of beauty. For more information on this subject, see the chapter "The Gazel: Meaning and Tradition" in Andrews's *Poetry's Voice*.

[63] Transliteration is mine.

[64] Transliteration is Kalkışım's, 166. While Galib treats melancholy as the defining mode of existence for the subject, he does not succumb to absolute nihilism. There is room in Galib's poetry for the celebration of human existence despite its finitude, which owes also a lot to his mysticism. For an interesting Foucaultean reading of the relation between Galib's mysticism and self-care, see Yavuz.

[65] This is reminiscent of Penelope's recourse to weaving and unweaving as a way to prolong her mourning.
[66] See Mehmet Arslan's entry in İslam Ansiklopedisi for a biographical account of Şeref Hanım (Vol 38, p.550). "The Ottoman women poets," Didem Havlioğlu suggests, "disrupted the male-oriented system not only by their presence but also by signaling their awareness of this assigned positioning in the delivery of their poetic messages" (43). For more on Şeref Hanım's authorship and the mystical dimension of her writings, see Morkoç.
[67] Transliteration is Yusuf Mardin's, 209.
[68] Transliteration is İpekten's, 78.
[69] Transliteration is Holbrook's, 189. Translation is Holbrook's, 190-91.
[70] See Behar, 53; Cevdet, 150; Meral, 144. Given that many writers of the nineteenth century could read French texts in their originals, Volney's circulation in Ottoman literary culture cannot be restricted to his translations. That said, my concern is not this circulation. Rather than tracing Volney's travels in Ottoman letters, that is, rather than prioritizing his influence, here I focus my attention on Ottoman iterations of ruins that predated him by centuries.
[71] Transliteration is Holbrook's, 130. Translation is Holbrook's, 131.
[72].Transliteration is Kaplan's, 323.
[73] "Kaside" is Ottoman Turkish spelling for Arabic term *qaṣīdah*, which means also poetry and poetry-writing more broadly.
[74] It has been established, for instance, that the subject's depravation of the privileges financed by imperial enterprises culminates in what one scholar dubbed "imperialist nostalgia," engendering a self-serving yearning for the exploitative regime of empire (Rosalto 107). With a minor modification of the term another critic has similarly claimed, "post-imperial nostalgia" carries along "a metropolitan desire not only for that which the metropolis has destroyed in the colonies, but for the very possession of those colonies that have become irretrievably lost for the metropolis, which, as a consequence, also has lost its status as metropolis" (Medeiros 208). For more on the conceptual and political distinctions between "colonial nostalgia" and "imperial nostalgia," see Lorcin, 9.
[75] For example, as she investigates "imperial nostalgia" in twentieth century English novel, Kathleen Williams Renk argues that novels from the period "meditate on and at times mourn the loss of empire" (218).
[76] There are certainly some exceptions in which melancholy is analyzed in connection with the present circumstances of empire, rather than its past. David G. Riede, for one, holds that Lord Tennyson's "melancholy draws...upon an idiom of eroticized political imperialism," informed by the contemporary engagements of the British Empire with the Orient (659). Another scholar contends that "Britons had to reimagine grief as a force to be mobilized and deployed" to further imperialist missions in colonies (McDonald 4). And yet, melancholy directed at empire itself (not its agents) and its implications for imperialism remain an uncharted territory.
[77] In his essay, "Trauer und Melancholie" [Mourning and Melancholia], Freud writes: "melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious" (245). "The distinction between mourning and melancholia," objects Judith Butler, "does not hold because they are inevitably experienced in a configuration of simultaneity and succession" (472). Indeed, Freud stipulates to the difficulty of such discrimination himself as he repeatedly points out their commonalities: "melancholia too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object" (Mourning and Melancholia 246). In addition to Butler's emphasis on their simultaneity, distinguishing melancholy from mourning proves a challenge also because it amounts to an ontological differentiation between the subject and the object, or between the "world" and "ego," as Freud would say (246). When the scales of the relationship between the object and subject tip toward the former, that is, when the object continually acts upon the worlding of the subject, mourning and melancholy become further indistinguishable in the absence of a resolution. And it

is such constant processing of loss embraced as a way of being —not whether it can be ended and cured— that begs attention in Ottoman mystical melancholy.

[79] Transliteration is Bülbül's, 66. Translation belongs to Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpaklı (*Ottoman Lyric* 157).

[80] Transliteration is Ceylan and Yılmaz's, 172.

[81] In transliterated text, 317.

In transliterated text, 262.

[83] Within a year, before he finished *Mihnetkeşan*, İzzet succeeded to have his atonement approved. He was pardoned back to the care of the sovereign only to be exiled shortly thereafter, and this time he did not survive it.

[84] Büşra Ersanlı Behar describes the backgrounds and missions of Ottoman historians as follows: "Ottoman administrators —sultans, viziers and ulama— were the figures who made and wrote history. In general sense, the historical existence of the Ottoman Empire and its definition of state and power constituted the foundation of the worldview of the vak'a-nüvis who had an official status in the palace; this individual was tasked by the sultan to chronicle the events and deeds of his reign" (41). For more on the subject of Ottoman historiography, see İnalcık, and Menage.

[85] Transliteration is Yılmazer's, 436.

[86] Transliteration is Yılmazer's, 489.

[87] In transliterated text, p. 15.

[88] In transliterated text, p. 90. Common to these historical accounts is the contrast drawn between the Ottoman Empire as the seat of Islam and non-Muslim belligerents as hostile invaders. Chroniclers, for example, often condemned Russians as enemies of all Muslims, blaming them for "ravaging hearts in the realm of Islam" (Ahmed Câvid Bey 126; in Baycar's transliteration, 182).

[89] In transliterated text, p. 164.

[90] In transliterated text, p. 120.

[91] In transliterated text, p. 135

[92] In transliterated text, p. 113

[93] In transliterated text, p. 152.

[94] Transliteration is Bülbül's, 46.

[95] Shelley's main source of inspiration for "Hellas," Aeschylus's *Persae* resounds in Hassan's orientalist description of Ottoman expansionism. In the preface Shelley states, "The Persae of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes…" (318).

[96] Aamir Mufti considers such reversals of Said's critical paradigm reductive, arguing that Said's work is more mindful of the volatile nature of orientalist discourse than it is credited for (28-9).

[97] According to Ballaster oriental plays allowed European women playwrights to cast light on women's social issues in their home countries (90). Einboden finds in Shelley's *Laon and Cythn*a a sincere interest in Islamic social codes, suggesting an orientalist attitude that eases the cultural encounter between the East and the West (136). Sharafuddin contends that Western urban commercialism is critiqued in romantic praise of the rural orient (228). Juxtaposing nineteenth century representations of the orient with those of the eighteenth century, Aravamudan sees traces of a cosmopolitan consciousness instead of imperial desires in what he calls "enlightenment orientalism" (253). In a similar vein Gottlieb proposes that romantic orientalism articulates a "cooperative" and "egalitarian" version of globalism (148).

[98] For a detailed discussion of this point, see Guthenke's book *Placing Modern Greece: The Dynamics of Romantic Hellenism*, especially the chapter on "Realizing the Ideal."

[99] For a historical review of this issue, see Hoock.

[100] Greek and Roman pasts, according to Krishan Kumar, signified two contrasting role models for British imperialism. He explains as follows: "Empire in the Roman mold meant death and destruction. This was the lesson taught not just by Gibbon and Montesquieu but by a host of other Enlightenment

writers…Greece, by contrast, spelled life, light, and liberty. Goethe and Schiller praised its achievements to the sky. The Romantic poets, such as Keats, Byron, and Shelley, were in love with ancient Greece, Athens especially, and frequently drew the contrast between the grace and creativity of the Greeks and a rigid and militaristic Rome, obsessed with order and discipline" (87).

[101] The ambiguity of the historical origins of the conceptualization of race is certified by the fact that various studies discover its traces in different historical periods (See Banton; and Eze.). After noting, "the 'Race idea…' was strongly present in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century" Peter J. Kitson cautiously adds that it did not contain "a single hypothesis but several competing theories about the origins of the differences between human beings" (49).

[102] In Britain, polygenist and physician Charles White (1728-1813) claimed that blacks and whites were unequally dissimilar, that "material differences in the organization and constitution of the various tribes of the human species…mark a regular gradation from the White European to the brute creation…The European excels the African" (80). In France, Jullian-Joseph Virey (1774-1847), an anthropologist and naturalist who wrote *Histoire Naturelle du Genre Humain* [Natural History of Humankind] promoted — along with historians such as Augustin Thierry, Jules Michelet, and François Guizot— racialized ideas of society and human civilization. Likewise, German philosophers and philologists such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) and Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) "laid the groundwork for the later 'Aryan race' myth" (Bruce Baum 98).[102]

[103] Relatedly, in his book, *Orientalism and Race*, Tony Ballantyne uncovers the colonially mediated linguistic sources of Aryan theory. He writes, the "Sanskritocentric image of South Asian language and culture had a significant impact on European thought in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," nourishing "the Aryan idea" that "played a central role in the development of imperial ethnology, from Ireland to South-East Asia" (32).

[104] According with Bernal's claims is the mainstream nineteenth century "theory that physical beauty and racial perfection was found among the ancient Greeks" (Challis 94). Post-colonial approaches to classicism have unearthed the intertwinements between the Greco-Roman antiquity and imperial legacies in the nineteenth century. See, for example, the essay collection, *Classics and Colonialism*, edited by Barbara Goff.

[105]Whiteness was far from being a static signifier in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, having its own ladder of legitimacy. According to race theorists like Robert Knox (1791-1862), for instance, "Saxons" and "Ancient Greeks" were superior to the Caucasian peoples of Russia and the Balkans (366).

[106] "White mythology," to borrow Derrida's term, of ancient Greece and the West was not simply a matter of contriving a past; rather, it entailed a simultaneous reshaping of the present and the past to generate a coherent narrative where little to no coherence existed (11). The disparity between contemporary Greece and ancient Greece was not only a temporal one to the Western gaze. Even the most militant philhellenes like Byron admitted, "to talk, as the Greeks themselves do, of their rising again to their pristine superiority, would be ridiculous" ("Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" 91). Similarly, Thomas De Quincey remarks scornfully in his essay on "Modern Greece, that not "one drop of genuine Grecian blood…flows in the veins of any Greek subject" (354).

[107] "During the nineteenth century, travelers linked Turkey and Greece in their imagination" and were not always pleased with the cultural affinity they came across amongst Ottoman Turks and Greeks (Harlan 425). To the disappointment of many, "The Greeks and Turks had become closely linked" (Wallace 39). Travellers' reactions to the current state of Greece were surely not entirely unaffected by their positional backgrounds. Class, gender and race were important differentials in the evaluations of Greece. See the essay collection edited by Vassiliki Kolocotroni and Efterpi Mitsi for a study of gender's role in philhellenic representations.

[108] Leake resents that "travelers who visit Greece generally return from thence with an unfavorable opinion of the people. But it is not difficult to account for this…travellers are generally contented to follow the beaten route of Athens, the Islands, the Asiatic coast, Troy, and Constantinople… they come

chiefly into contact with those classes upon which the long subjection of the nation to the Turks has had the greatest effect… (7).

[109] The emphasis on the Christian character of Greece formed the other layer in the Eurocentric engineering of Greece, or alternately, the Greco-centric making of the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Enabling a strategic muting of pagan histories, Christian Greece served to de-radicalize identification with Hellas, that is, to affirm being Western in Hellenic terms without the nagging suspicion of its theological appropriateness.

[110] This "occidental self-definition," in Makdisi's words, designates "a sense of self that could be defined against the Asiatic others who were subjected to the empire" (*Making England Western* 12). Makdisi astutely underscores how imperial identity of the British Empire was being configured in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the binary opposition between the East and the West. However, despite the fact that his own word choices —i.e. "the Asiatic others" — immediately bring to mind the vocabulary of Ypsilantis, Shelley and other philhellenes, Makdisi curiously eschews the role of Greece in Britain's process of westernization (or Rome, for that matter). That is, it escapes Makdisi's attention that British self-making (as in French and German cases, to a certain degree) rested not only on the negative model that was the orient but also a conceptualization of the occident that was positively inspired by Hellas.

[111] The purpose of highlighting Ypsilantis's and Delacroix's characterizations is not to pinpoint a norm of representation for Ottoman Greece of the nineteenth century. They are, nevertheless, not isolated examples either, since their characterizations echo in the works of Shelley, Hunt and others.

[112] This was a conscious preference on Shelley's part as he purportedly confessed to Edward John Trelawny: "I had rather not have my hopes mocked by sad realities" (Trelawny 86). Writing about Greece from a safe distance, however, was not peculiar to Shelley. Others like Goethe also used Rome as a template for Greco-Roman representations instead of suffering a journey to a war-stricken Greece. As a matter of fact, "it was exceptional," holds David Constantine "to think a journey to Greece essential for a Hellenist" (109).

[113] Here I use the version of the poem edited by Anahid Nersessian, and highlight textual differences between two editions where relevant.

[114] After *Laon and Cythna* was withdrawn from circulation Shelley had to revise the poem and curb its anti-Christian sentiments, replacing overt allusions to God and Christianity with abstract word choices such as "Power" (Donovan 49).

[115] Thucydides's historical treatise, *The Peloponnesian War* influenced Shelley's aesthetic agenda in *Laon and Cythna*. Speaking of natural disasters happening in Greece, Thucydides postulates that a devastating plague broke out "in Ethiopia, the far side of Egypt" and "then spread to Egypt and Libya," landing "on the city of Athens suddenly" (96). Thucydides's orientalism is revived in the following lines from *Laon and Cytha*: "Left Plague her banquet in the Aethiop's hall" (183); or, in his depiction of famine in the environment of "dark desarts [sic.]" and "the aerial minarets" with "the Aethiopian vultures" flying above them (195).

[116] "By setting *Laon and Cythna* in Constantinople, and eventually re-titling the poem *The Revolt of Islam*," a critique notes, "Shelley could attack organised religion and tyrannous government, and advocate revolution more easily" (Stock 342). Shelly wrote *Laon and Cythna* during the period of continued state censorship and violence, when he "felt the precariousness of [his] life," as he worriedly stated in a letter to William Godwin, the (*The Letters* 155). Publishing on the Greek issue was not a risk-free venture either at this time in history, since the Greek revolution had unsettling resonances with the Irish 'problem' as well as the French revolution, and "no open support" to it "could be tolerable to the Government" (St. Clair 139). Illuminate the circumstances for the Shelley's potentially strategic employment of Islamophobic jargon, however, should not undermine it.. Rather, doing so demonstrates the disconcerting applicability of Islamophobia as a tempering device even in ostensibly radical-leftist visions that Shelley has long been a champion of.

[117] As a matter of fact, Shelley's aversion to "a resurgent, institutional, politically reactionary Christianity" stays intact in the poem as evidenced in his mockery of the Christian priest who conspires with imperial powers to suppress the revolution (Butler 132). In *Laon and Cythna*, "A Christian Priest" personifies the religious exploitation despised by Shelley: the priest "dared not kill the infidels with fire / Or steel, in Europe; the slow agonies /Of legal torture mocked his keen desire: / So he made truce with those who did despise" (201). Shelley lampoons the progressive Europe for its 'polished' means of disciplining and punishment ("the slow agonies of legal torture"), and turns the Ottoman Empire into a site of unpalatable collaboration and identification. Shelley's emphasis on the translocation of violence to the "East" is laudable for its still historically relevant astuteness, that is, for its pertinence to today's portrayal of the Middle East as a zone of ordinary brutalities. Waleed Hazbun terms this phenomenon as "Middle East exceptionalism", an ideological representation of the region "as 'less globalized' and 'less democratic' than most other regions of the globe" (207-8). See also Diana K. Davis for an incisive analysis of the politics of Middle Eastern environmental historiography.

[118] According to the *OED* the use of "swarthy" in reference to complexion dates back to early sixteenth century. Whether the term had an established racial economy back then or not, the examples given in the dictionary from the period —i.e. "swarthy Egypt" and "swarthy Ethiope"— hint at its pertinence to geo-racial discrimination.

[119] Although Shelley does not offer a conspicuously white image of Laon, by virtue of his kinship with Cythna, Laon is impliedly so as well. The fact that Cythna is named numerous times in the poem "Laona" and described by Laon himself as "A second self, far dearer, and more fair"further magnifies the white self-sameness of the couple (85).

[120] According to Cian Duffy, *Laon and Cythna* is a poetic effort "to re-locate the apparent catastrophe of the Revolution with a long and explicitly *natural* economy of hope" (127). The poem, in a sense, contrasts the devastating consequences of the French revolution with the one that occurs as the necessary outcome of historical progress, and functions as a textual representation of Shelley's "gradualism" (Behrendt 20).

[121] Until the turn of the nineteenth century, the British and Ottoman empires maintained a considerably stable relationship that rested on trade. The capitulations exacted from the Ottoman state by Britain eased the maritime flow of imports and exports, fostering a reciprocally beneficial commercial exchange. This so-to-speak innocuous partnership was displaced by a volatile political alliance in the aftermath of the French advances in Egypt and Syria (1789-1801). Fighting side by side with the Ottoman Empire against Napoleon's invasion mainly to preserve its unhindered access to India, the British Empire became from this point onward tightly involved in the international diplomacy of the Ottoman state (Talbot 205). Yet, the harsh inter-imperial conditions of the period built and demolished alliances between states like walls with uncemented bricks. No sooner had Britain established itself as an ally than it had to act against the Ottoman Empire as a result of the Porte's decision to wage war on Russia in 1806. The British state sided with Russia in order to stay in good terms with this major imperial force and sustain its support in forestalling Napoleon's imperialist campaigns. This shift in British and Ottoman foreign policies led to the 1807 Anglo-Ottoman war that was resolved in two years with the Treaty of the Dardanelles which reinstated France as the common enemy

[122] It was from Greece, Hunt wrote, that "England herself has derived her admiration and her adoption of freedom of government, of liberality of sentiments, and of patriotic enthusiasm" (Qtd in Wallace 181).

[123] A detailed biographical account of Byron's visit to Greece and Constantinople can be found in Beaton (3-29).

[124] Landor generously communicates his zeal for Ancient Greece in his writing. He wrote a large volume of poetry, *Hellenics*, which retrieves the forgotten grandeur of Hellas through the retellings of mythological scenes. Like Byron and Shelley, he was drawn to the imagined perfection of Greece's past rather than its present when the concern was predominantly cultural-intellectual. Although, however, these romantics tended to archaize Greece in their literary productions, they were still acutely cognizant

of its contemporary quandaries, specifically, the geopolitical ones. For an informative account on Landor's classicism, see Nitchie.

[125] The universalist horizon of the liberalism of the period, according to Lisa Lowe, was framed more in tandem with than in opposition to geo-cultural and racial inequalities: "the universality of human freedom" became thinkable through the interpretations of "social relations in the colonized Americas, Asia, and Africa" and the exemption of "slaves, colonized, and indigenous peoples… by that philosophy" (16). According to Debbie Lee, romantic understanding of liberty was inflected in and through a conscious contrast with slavery. The slave trade and the plantation slavery, she argues, "led to the interpretation in Western culture of slavery as the polar opposite of freedom" (18).

[126] Whereas Britain's involvement in the slave trade came to a controversial end as the parliament illegalized it in 1807, the ban did not target the institution of slavery as a whole, exempting the practices of enslavement in the colonies. It was not until the end of the 1840s, almost a decade after the 1833 Emancipation Act, that official emancipation finally came through.

[127] A comprehensive overview of the British efforts at suppressing the slave trade in the Ottoman context can be found in Hakan Erdem's book, *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire, and its Demise*, 1800-1909.

[128] It was relayed also in observations of British diplomats and travelers published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that "after the Greeks found that their streets were full of Turkish soldiers, and that resistance would only lead to instant death, they threw down their swords and submitted to their fate, that of being bound and sold as slaves" (Comstock 47)

[129] For an extended analysis of the categories of slavery in the Ottoman Empire, see Toledano, "Late Ottoman Concepts of Slavery (1830s-1880s)."

[130] Whether Greeks were guaranteed absolute immunity is subject to debate especially when it comes to "the forcible recruitment of native Christians as elite imperial servitors" (Ágoston and Masters 531).

[131] The problematic aspects of Montagu's thoughts on Ottoman slavery are interrogated in the works of Adam R. Beach and Meyda Yeğenoğlu.

[132] The status of slavery had its own internal, racially determined hierarchies in the Ottoman Empire. Distinctions amongst slaves were manifest especially in the realm of domestic servitude, where "African slaves…could not aspire to much upward mobility" whereas "white slaves… had prospects of betterment, mostly through marriage to upper-class males" (Toledano *The Ottoman Slave Trade* 281). For more on the subject of Ottoman slavery, see Toledano's recent book, *As If Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East*.

[133] One of such accounts, published in 1608, relates the torments of the English sailors "enslaved in the city of Alexandria" who served "in the galleys…laden with irons on their legs" (Vitkus 60-1). Another recounts the encounters between the newly captured and the previously enslaved British in Algiers, and the shocking discovery of "above a hundred handsome youths compelled to turn Turks…and all English!" (102). In congruence with these, an interesting narrative provided by a crew member on a British ship sailing to a new colony in the West Indies, seized by the pirates in 1639, emphasizes the ethnic and religious character of the slaves and the captives, bewailing "The once-famous churches of Asia are now swallowed up by the Ottoman sword and the Mahumedan unbelief" (140).

[134] To illustrate, voicing his sympathy for workers in his "Satiric exhortation" to William Wilberforce, a prime abolitionist member of the British parliament, Byron demanded in "Don Juan," "You have freed the blacks —now pray shut up the whites" (895).

[135] Cobbett's white supremacist thinking is evident in his reflections on the question of equality between blacks and whites: "I deny all equality. They are a different race; and for Whites to mix with them is not a bit less odious than mixing those creatures which, unjustly apparently, we call beasts" (Qtd in Kitson 39)

[136] There were, to be sure, counter-examples in which authors referred to the inequality between whites and blacks not to deflect, but to confront British racism. One of them, Hannah More, took an uncompromising stance against slavery in her 1788 poem "Slavery: A poem." The principle of equality,

More remarked, did "Change with the casual colour of a skin" (45) in the juncture of the slave trade, and its perpetrator whom More called "white savage" concealed the ugly truth behind its colonial structure: "Conquest is pillage with a noble name" (48). The inequality between white and black lives were thus contested both on moral and political grounds. In his autobiographical book, Olaudah Equiano wrote that "God looks with equal good-will on all his creatures, whether black or white —let neither, therefore, arrogantly condemn the other" (329). See also Alan Richardson's reading of Thomas Chatterton's *African Eclogues* in which he draws attention to the colored dimension of late eighteenth century racial consciousness (134-37).

[137] For a glance at the history of anti-colonial struggles in Xhosa, see Peires.

[138] Romantics abundantly moralized the concept of slavery in their prose and poetry to promulgate their faith in liberty. Samuel Taylor Coleridge condemned slavery "as an absolute subversion of all Morality" (Qtd in Lee 55) while William Wordsworth described it in "The Prelude" (1805) as "the most rotten branch of human shame" (325).

[139] Translation is mine.

[140] Hâmid's literary investment in India predates this trip. In 1875, when he was still in Istanbul, Hâmid saw a figurine of an Indian female, which inspired him to write a play titled "Duhter-i Hindu" 'The Indian Girl'. "The subject matter of this play", Nüket Esen suggests, "is the cruelty of Britain to India as its colony. It is a text in which the exploiter and the exploited confront each other" ("Batı Hakkında" 21). This confrontation, nonetheless, resolves with the restoration of the British administration in Bombay through the collaboration between the colonizer and the colonized. This collaboration is observably racialized and gendered in the play, which is especially striking in the exchange between the Indian spies and Elizabeth, and the depictions of these characters in the first scene of the fourth act (see "Duhter-i Hindu", 110-16). Accordingly, while the play reflects Hâmid's discomfort with British colonialism, it also shows his inability to imagine an autonomous, decolonized India. Another play by Hâmid that awaits attention for its staging of the hierarchical relationship between the Indians and the British is "Finten", in which a fatalistic romance between the colonized and the colonizer takes place in London.

[141] See especially his poems "Malabar Hil" (Malabar Hill), and Kambala Hil (Cumbalas Hill).

[142] Hâmid's pastoral poetics reinforces imperial ideology in a colonial setting where it hides more than it reveals, which brings to mind (as a comparable example) William Wordsworth's obfuscation of the enclosure acts in his adoration of nature. For more on Wordsworth and such aesthetics of amnesia, see McGann 90.

[143]Hakan T. Karateke's elaboration on "gurbet" is helpful at this point: "A somewhat nebulous word, *gurbet* is both a place and a psychological or emotional state of varying intensity. It often describes the environment in which a person suffers a strong sense of homesickness resulting from cultural and linguistic solitude" (158).

[144] Whereas he seems obsessed with the British in his prose, Hâmid seldom pays attention to Indian subjects, and when he does, he is anything but courteous. His letters are replete with explicit racism. In one peculiar instance, Syed Tanvir Wasti detects, Hâmid "caustically comments that the monkeys that roam the forests of Matheran are more intelligent than some of the men and better looking than some of the women" ("The Indian" 34). At another moment, in which he talks about a couple of a wealthy Indian man and an English woman, Hâmid snidely references Shakespeare's *Othello*: "In the company of that ugly man and beautiful girl, I felt like I was reading *Othello*" ("Recaizade Ekrem Bey'e" 317). Hâmid's racist aversion to this interracial companionship extends to Indian self-governance, as he strongly believes that the core issue with the Indians is their own "arriviste character," their inclination to "enjoy the wine . . . that others drink" (*Hatıraları* 155).

[145] When it is audible, Hâmid's anti-British tone reflects the inter-imperial distresses of the Ottoman State. His scornful remarks on the British invasiveness, for example, coincides with the defeat of the Ottoman army in the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878), which cost the Ottomans a number of provinces

in the Caucasus and Balkans. In 1877, before witnessing the end of the war, Hâmid was already mourning each Russian invasion. He declared in his letters the day of their victory as "the most unfortunate one for the Ottomans, on which all the peoples and soldiers of the Ottoman community should wear black dresses and wail" ("Hüsnü Bey'e" 81). Although the war came to an end with a truce thanks to the British 'convincing' the Russians to accept it, Hâmid was certain that the British and other Western involvements were not genuinely benign, but designed primarily to serve their own geopolitical interests: "All the European states are united against us…If Europe was in favor of us, it would have prevented the war from happening in the first place" ("Pirizade İbrahim Bey'e" 91). His bitter cynicism was later justified, one might say, by the British and French invasions of Tunisia and Egypt.

[146] Even before the sultan assumed the title of caliph, "as early as 1873, British intelligence officer George Percy Badger questioned the prestige and legitimacy of the Ottoman caliphate among the Arabs in a report indicating a policy path for the British government in the case of a conflict of interest with the Ottoman caliphate" (Aydin 62). Whether in part because of the British efforts or not, the Ottoman caliphate confronted obstacles in charming all peoples of Islam as it wrestled with the continuing spread of Shi'ism from Iran in addition to the rising Arabic nationalism in Syria (Deringil, "Legitimacy" 347).

[147] Although the Mamluks and Ottomans were opponents, they cooperated at times against their mutual enemy when, for instance, "in 1511, Bayezid, on the request of Qansuhal-Ghawri, sent both men and construction material for the building of ships to be used against the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean" (Boyar 96).

[148] As Subrahmanyam points out, the attitude of Indian, and more broadly Asian Muslims toward the Ottomans and the Portuguese was far from uniform, which is why the Ottoman imperial interest in India should not be understood strictly within the confines of the "holy cause" it presents itself through (*Explorations in Connected History* 44).

[149] If interested in the details of the contents and missions of the ships, see Casale, "Ottoman Warships in the Indian Ocean Armada of 1538: A Qualitative and Statistical Analysis."

[150] Evaluating the inter-imperial tensions in light of the archival sources in Spanish and Portuguese from the period, Dejanirah Couto holds that the Ottoman Empire's "activities in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean" were "tracked with special care" by the "Portuguese of the *Estado da India*" ("Murad Bey" 187).

[151] The early modern Ottoman Empire, "the second empire" as Baki Tezcan terms it, garnered limited attention with regard to its imperial agency (10), despite the fact that the sixteenth century Ottoman Empire, in Sanjay Subrahmanyam's words, was "the only great power with a true maritime reach" that "possessed territories in all of the 'seven climes' of traditional Islamic geography" ("The Fate of Empires" 76). Although the growing transcontinental Ottoman hegemony during this period is a solid testament to the historical presence of Ottoman imperialism in the early modern era, there is a perplexing reluctance to consider it as such in Turkish and global Anglophone historical and literary scholarship. 'Expansion' is the word encountered frequently in accounts of Ottoman imperial growth, as though the Ottoman state were an organic matter (not a political formation) that just happened to enlarge its body seamlessly over time and across places. What is problematic from ethical and scholarly standpoints is the sheer lack of critical will to come to terms with the violence, oppression and assimilation —collateral or systemic—Ottoman expansions entailed, i.e. the indispensable ingredients of any imperial hegemony. This hesitation, verging on complicity with the neutralization of imperial pasts and thus enabling nostalgic attachments to empire through such silencing, is prevalent even in the most recent critical volumes on Ottoman history, wherein 'imperialism' hardly ever qualifies any form of Ottoman hegemony of any age.

[152] Translated by and quoted in Herzog and Motika, 143.

[153] For an analysis of the linguistic unrest of nineteenth century Ottoman Empire and its intra-imperial background, see Lewis pp. 12-27.

[154] This dualistic positioning of Ottoman Turkish literature has been taken up in scholarship as well, where the focus has been the unquestioned transformation of literary identity from imperial to national

aesthetics. A well-known example of this analogy is found in Halman's book, *A Millennium of Turkish Literature*, pp. 63-79. For an insightful critique of this formulation, see Holbrook, "Concealed Facts" pp. 81-86. See also Yücesoy for an extensive analysis of the inter-imperial entanglements between Persian and Arabic in the ninth and ten centuries.

[155] See Teoh's essay for a glimpse into the inter-imperial history of the shadow puppet theatre, *wayang*, in the context of post-independence Indonesian literature.

[156] In Midhat Efendi's text, both Persian and French become signifiers of the gap between the lower and upper middle classes of Ottoman society, yet, are nonetheless incorporated to Ottoman Turkish as necessary means of social mobility. See Mardin for an extensive analysis of the class-related implications of the Ottoman-Turkish indigenization.

[157] Elsewhere Kühn expanded on what he termed "colonial Ottomanism", and argued that "Ottoman policy makers were very careful to employ…elements of colonial rule that they considered conducive to securing Ottoman domination over Yemen, and not implement others that they feared would undermine Ottoman rule" (*Empire* 13).

[158] Historians have thus established that western-modeled modernity occasioned in the Ottoman context a conscious negotiation with outside resources in a strategically imperializing manner. "[F]ollowing the European scramble to colonize Africa in the aftermath of the British occupation of Egypt," Cemil Aydin writes, "Ottoman intellectuals, like those in other parts of the Islamic world, reassessed their understanding of…Western civilization" (45-6). This reevaluation did not necessarily amount to a civilizational divorce; rather, it fostered what Fuchs has termed as "imperial mimesis" that enabled the import of the political cultural institutions and stratagems of the enemy against their very source (118). It was in this spirit that the Ottoman Empire mimicked the domination methods of its European adversaries. Selim Deringil named such imperial performance as "borrowed colonialism" via which the Ottomans hoped to "avoid becoming a colony, and to stake a legitimate claim to existence in an increasingly hostile world" ("They Live" 341). However, as Deringil demonstrates through its French-modeled colonial policies in Libya, the Ottoman state was pursuing something far more dramatic than survival. By building government forts, founding schools and newspapers, and most important of all, by providing military training to the tribes in the region (and imposing forced conscriptions), it was striving to uphold "an Ottoman presence in Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa" (322). Analogously, the empire was affirming its existence as an expansionist polity in Southwest Arabia as well. In Yemen, it "institutionalized the difference and cultural inferiority of the indigenous people vis-à-vis the conquerors" by binding local people to its governance through the Ottoman taxation, military recruitment, and judicial institutions (Kühn, "Shaping and Re-shaping" 316).

[159] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Ottoman-Turkish and Turkish into English are mine.

[160] Modern Turkish scholarship has drawn attention to this paradox, and interpreted it under the rubric of cultural synthesis (See Kolcu; and Okay). The intra-imperial and inter-imperial exigencies that inhered in it, however, have remained unexamined.

[161] Translation is mine.

[162] In particular, the conventions of the ghazal form seem to haunt Hâmid's language in this poem. For an illustration of these conventions, see Ahmet Atilla Şentürk's close reading of Şeyhoğlu's ghazal, pp. 7-8.

[163] Translation is mine.

[164] Translation is mine.

[165] Translation is mine.

[166] For an account of the earlier Ottoman efforts at securing loans from Britain and France, see Anderson.

[167] Translation belongs to Melih Levi and A. Holly Shissler.

[168] Levi and Ringer 6. I use the translations of Melih Levi and Monica M. Ringer in my citations from Midhat Efendi's novel.

[169] Woolf writes in her 1932 essay "A Letter to a Young Poet": "I do not believe in poets dying; Keats, Shelley, Byron are alive here in this room… " (222).
[170] In his diaries Wilson sang the same refrain over and over again. In an entry dated December 6th 1921, approximately two weeks before his lecture on the passing of empire, he declares: "The British Empire is doomed" (*Field-Marshal* 315).

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