Introduction

This book investigates how Percy Shelley, Lord Byron, and their circle understood the idea of "Europe." What geographical, political, and ideological concepts did they associate with the term? Which locations, historical episodes, and opposing "others" did they use to formulate those understandings? Through new readings of important texts—notably *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *A Defence of Poetry* and *Hellas*—I analyze how Shelley and Byron construct ideas about Europe's culture, history, geography, and future. In addition, the book gives sustained attention to underread material, especially Percy Shelley's *Laon and Cythna* and Byron's *The Age of Bronze*, arguing that they are central to an understanding of the poets' work and thought. Shelley's and Byron's interest in Europe, I suggest, is part of an ongoing contemporary debate prompted by the political reshaping of the continent following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. By discussing the circle's writings in terms of contemporaneous materials (including political commentaries, travel writings, newspapers, treaties, and diplomatic correspondence), I show how this wider context illuminates, and is illuminated by, the poets' ideas of Europe.

On one level therefore, this book provides fresh perspectives on Shelley's and Byron's writings and ideas, particularly those that concern political revolution, the classical tradition, the Greek War of Independence, and European diplomacy. But the implications for Romantic studies go still further. As I outline later, scholars have recently invoked "cosmopolitanism" as a means to interpret Romantic writing outside its traditional relationship with nationalism. But, there is a problem with this approach: cosmopolitanism is an imprecise term, which, in its concern to transcend national loyalties, can too often ignore local contexts and steer perilously close to universalism. And although it presents itself as an idea "without limits," unconstrained by parochial restrictions, cosmopolitanism nevertheless depends upon very particular advantages: wide travel, advanced education, and mastery of many languages. For this reason, a new approach is needed which sees Romanticism outside both the limits of nationalism and the problematic connotations of cosmopolitanism or "world citizenship."

That approach can be found, this book argues, in a study of the idea of Europe, since an investigation of that concept engages with transnationalism as well as the specificities of particular locations and cultures. As I will show, "Europe" is a term rich with analytic possibilities: it can evoke totalizing narratives of common history or identity and also express a range of competing political and ideological systems. By focusing on ideas of Europe and tapping into this complexity, I show how the Shelley–Byron circle is interested in particular locations and local identities as well as transnational ideas about politics, history, and culture. This book therefore sets out an approach—both to Shelley's and Byron's work and the Romantic period more generally—which can account equally for the local, the national, and the transnational rather than privileging one perspective over the others. A focus on nationalist ideology in the period risks marginalizing important transnational concerns, especially regarding revolution, cultural encounter, and the transmission of political and cultural ideas across borders. On the other hand, an overemphasis on "cosmopolitanism" ignores the localism and sense of specific place that remains central to much Romantic writing. This book, therefore, explores the sometimes uneasy coexistence of local, national, transnational, and even universalist perspectives, both within the works of individual writers and the debates of their contemporary society. The acknowledgment of this interaction (and its consequent problems) leads to a more sophisticated understanding of identity and politics in the Romantic period.

The Idea of Europe

What does it mean to talk of Europe as an idea? In brief, I am interested in Europe as an ideological and cultural concept which is both "invented and experienced." "Europe," I want to suggest, cannot be defined definitively; instead, it signifies "a series of world-views, [. . .] of perspectives on reality, sometimes only dreamt or desired, sometimes experienced and realized."[1] Furthermore, it is partly "an ideological program which can be mobilized and invoked" for specific purposes; rather than asking "what is Europe," says Mikael af Malmberg, we should instead examine how various ideas of Europe are used for political and cultural ends: "how does Europe work as a practical category, as a classificatory scheme, as a cognitive frame?"[2] In this respect, Europe is continuously reimagined in order to give particular meanings and order to the past and the future.[3] Significantly, it is also a component in further constructions; it shapes perspectives on the world and acts as a "cognitive frame" for further interpretations of politics,

cultures, and so on. Ideas of Europe are thus both products and producers of complex interpretative processes.[4] With this in mind, my book examines how ideas about Europe were constructed in the early nineteenth century, and how those ideas were subsequently used in ideological and political terms.

It would be misleading, however, to understand Europe simply as a "historically fabricated" invention.[5] Europe, necessarily, is more than just an "idea" since it also consists of concrete applications: it is built upon (perceptions of) actual reality and therefore affects understanding of the material world and its politics.[6] Europe is not merely a "symbolic operation learned and communicated among human beings"; it is also a "reality of the material world and its human transformations by techniques and organization."[7] This relationship is symbiotic: figurative ideas of Europe stem from (interpretations of) actual historical events or geographical observations, and those ideas, in turn, reconstruct perceptions of Europe's "reality." In this respect, Europe exists on the porous boundaries between the real and the imagined, between the "material world" and its symbolic representations.

The Romantic Period: Europe and Nationalism

How have Romantic period studies imagined Europe thus far? Traditionally, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been associated with emerging ideas of nationalism, which Stuart Woolf defines as the "identification of a people with the territorial nation state."[8] Histories of nationalism typically argue that the partition of Poland, the American and French Revolutions, and the local reactions to Napoleon's conquests inspired a "blueprint for a political program of national autonomy, unity and identity."[9] This configures Europe as a place where hostile states are in perpetual competition, and where peoples and communities increasingly define themselves by their distinctive "nationality." Following this pattern, historians have attempted to show how British national identity emerged in the eighteenth century. Linda Colley suggests that the 50 years after 1776 were "one of the most formative periods [. . .] in the forging of British identity," principally because prolonged conflict with France helped to shape a "particular sense of nationhood."[10] Similarly, for Gerald Newman, the theoretical components of nationalism—awareness of common language, war against a (French) other, hostility to Francophile upper-class culture, new secular ideas of progress—combined to form a "consuming fire of nationalist demands and actions" as early as the 1740s.[11]

Faced with this familiar interpretation, many literary critics associate the writing of the period with the development and consolidation of the nation state. The tellingly titled *Romanticism in National Context* argues that "the Romantics looked within their own nations, seeking to put down new roots in history, in folklore and folksong, in pure, indigenous traditions of language, speech and expression, in bards and ballads."[12] In this sense therefore, ideas about literary tradition and national history are mutually constitutive: some critics have suggested, for instance, that Walter Scott's and William Wordsworth's writings assert a nationalist purpose by "emphasizing the connection of a people to its land" and by connecting "nineteenth-century readers to the national past that defines them."[13] This also has implications for how British writing engages with "foreign" influences and peoples. Although the post-Revolutionary period witnessed the migration of ideas and literatures "across social, cultural, national borders," Peter Mortensen characterizes this interconnection as a "phobic" relationship: the 1790s saw a rise in so-called Europhobic discourse, or a fear of "alien" influences in British literature and politics.[14] This association of the Romantic period with nationalism has two important consequences. First, it constructs Europe as a foreign space, distinct and detached from Britain. As I will demonstrate, this is not necessarily a pervasive view: many of the individuals I discuss, regardless of political persuasion, see Britain as being inseparably connected to a shared European culture, history, and politics. Second, this emphasis on nationalism interprets Europe as a patchwork of hostile states, divided by impenetrable cultural and political borders. Again, this is only one of many competing perspectives: ideas about rivalry and competition exist alongside assumptions of mutual interest, common cultural foundations, and even dreams of past and future unanimity. In order to appreciate the full complexity of ideas about Europe in the Romantic period, it is therefore necessary to challenge and moderate any overemphasis on nationalism.

Beyond the Nation

How, though, is it possible to configure the period outside the terminology of nationalism? Recent theorists have investigated how texts, identities, and communities refuse to be confined by national boundaries. After all, nationalism can only be understood in the context of "internationality," since it constructs itself on the difference of "others" and on the interaction of purportedly discrete spaces and communities.[15] For this

reason, nationalism must necessarily coexist with "transnationalism," a term which, according to Stephen Vertovec, "broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of nation states."[16]

A number of scholars have adopted a "transnational" approach by analyzing cultural encounters and texts outside the framework of nationalism. In Mary Louise Pratt's terminology, these studies often talk about "contact zones," or "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash," and mutually influence one another. Such "transcultural" interplay challenges the straightforward construction of nationhood in direct opposition to an enemy.[17] Texts too can be understood in terms of transcultural circulation: literary works often travel beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language. Rather than being inseparably wedded to a particular nation or locality, they circulate in new contexts, both "locally inflected and translocally mobile."[18] Understanding these exchanges can therefore reconfigure texts and identity politics outside the language of nationality without problematically dissolving the notions of community and people in a "postnational" abstraction.[19] Importantly for my purposes, these perspectives also allow early nineteenth-century Europe to be understood outside the dominant ideologies of nation-building.

Indeed, some historians have reconceptualized the period by looking beyond the standard emphasis on the rise of popular nationalisms and the nation state. Instead, Napoleonic rule imposed a measure of administrative and cultural uniformity across the continent, while the growth of empires caused transnational governmental procedures to be "exported to the rest of the world."[20] Felicity Nussbaum's dissatisfaction with the restrictive "boundaries of national histories and literatures" have led her to focus on "worldwide crossings" of people, goods, and ideas in order to show the interaction of "the local, the regional and the global" in eighteenth-century cultural and commercial encounters. Significantly, this critique of nationalism opens analytical space for the local as well as the transnational, since it explores how "the regional, national, transnational and global are mutually implicated" rather than one obscuring or dominating the others.[21]

Several recent studies have examined these "worldwide crossings" in Romantic literary culture, arguing that the period was characterized by "*commerce des lumières* (exchange of enlightened ideas)," "transnational dialogue," and "new forms of cosmopolitan identities and politics."[22] Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, for example, suggest that the early nineteenth-century novel developed not through "nationally distinct trajectories" but through "intersections and interactions among texts, readers,

writers and publishing, and also critical institutions that linked together Britain and France."[23] Central to this is the idea of "sentimental communities" of readers: the international popularity of works by Goethe, Staël, and Rousseau created "transnational communities" linked by a shared emotional sympathy that "transcends nations, classes, and patriarchal families."[24] Karen O'Brien argues that eighteenth-century historians—Voltaire, William Robertson, Edward Gibbon—wrote "cosmopolitan histories" which explore "how national identities intersect with [. . .] one another" in "a common European civilization."[25] Robertson, for example, discusses how the kingdoms of Europe, "formerly single and disjointed, became so thoroughly acquainted, and so intimately connected with each other, as to form one great political system."[26]

It might seem, therefore, that my interest in the idea of Europe is connected to this recent work on Romantic period "cosmopolitanism," especially since I discuss ideas not necessarily grounded in nationalist ideology. In fact, however, there are several problems with using cosmopolitanism as an interpretative framework. The first regards the term "cosmopolitanism" itself.[27] Generally used to posit some sort of opposition to local loyalties and nationalisms, it "has acquired so many nuances and meanings as to negate its role as a unifying ethic." Not only do the sheer range of those varieties (for example, Christian, bourgeois, feminist, or socialist cosmopolitanisms) invest the term with bewildering vagueness, but it also implies a "detached loyalty" to abstract concepts—for example, "the human"—which are "incapable [. . .] of providing any kind of political purchase."[28] In brief, "the term cosmopolitanism is too imprecise and widely contested to serve as a useful register of interactions between homelands and others." For example, it might denote someone utterly without roots or affiliations and alienated from society, or a "citizen of the world," equally "at home" in different cultures.[29]

There are other problems too. Thomas Schlereth defines cosmopolitanism as "an attitude of mind that attempts to transcend chauvinistic national loyalties or parochial prejudices." However, this suggests that the cosmopolitan is somehow removed from contexts and that it steers dangerously close to "universalism," an erasure of difference which posits "an ideal for all men at all times." Such pretension to universality is especially problematic because cosmopolitanism typically represents the "social aspiration of the elite intellectual class": it is associated with the sophistication and wide travel of the rich and intellectuals.[30] This is a very considerable problem for those who would emphasize the unconventional or innovatory perspectives afforded by cosmopolitanism. Some have even suggested that the social exclusivity of "cosmopolitan taste" makes it politically reactionary, although it should be remembered too that cosmopolitanism's refusal

to be confined by a political state means it is sometimes "at odds with the dominant culture and questions its hegemony."[31] Indeed, radical writers—including, as I will show, the Shelley–Byron circle—sometimes manage to be both antiestablishment and totalizing when they attack governments for suppressing supposedly universal, but often quite personal, political ideals.[32]

Regardless of the complex political connotations, cosmopolitanism in the sense of wide travel, advanced education, and mastery of many languages is necessarily a minority experience. It might present itself as an idea unconstrained by local loyalties or parochial restrictions, but it nevertheless depends upon very particular circumstances. Given that cosmopolitanism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is so dependent on educational and financial advantages, to what extent does it really permit the erasure of cultural barriers that it purports to accomplish?

Europe: Beyond Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism

This book builds upon studies of Romantic period cosmopolitanism by seeking to view the period and its literature outside the framework of nationalism. However, I am not trying to identify and celebrate a "cosmopolitan Europe," nor do I use "European" as a synonym for "cosmopolitan ideal." Instead, I am interested in the range of meanings Europe possesses in the period. "Europe," I will argue, is a term rich with analytic possibilities: it is used to evoke totalizing narratives of common history or identity, as well as express and legitimize numerous political and ideological systems. As Étienne Balibar says:

> The name of Europe [. . .] has been connected to cosmopolitan projects, to claims of imperial hegemony [. . .] to the resistance that they provoked, to programs dividing up the world and expanding 'civilization' [. . .], to the rivalry of 'blocs' that disputed legitimate possession of it, to the creation of a 'zone of prosperity' north of the Mediterranean.[33]

My purpose is to analyze the different interpretations and implications of "Europe" in the Shelley–Byron circle and, more widely, in early nineteenth-century Britain. By studying these various representations, I approach the period and its writing beyond the restrictive boundaries of nationalism, without falling into the vague and problematic connotations of cosmopolitanism or "world citizenship."

In this sense, therefore, I am following recent work which, by reconsidering ideas about cosmopolitanism and nationalism, seeks new ways to understand the politics of identity and community. Bruce Robbins redefines cosmopolitanism as "an impulse [. . .] to transcend partiality that is itself partial": it looks beyond local specificity and is also a product of it. In this respect, it is a methodological median between "false universalism" (which purports to erase or ignore local differences and boundaries) and a restrictive preoccupation with those parochial divisions.[34] Nussbaum hopes for something similar when she calls for eighteenth-century "global studies," which both "questions the boundaries of national histories" and avoids a homogenizing and universalist perspective.[35] My contention here is that a nuanced study of the idea of Europe can effect this possibility, principally because it has to acknowledge how locally grounded and transnational ideas interact to construct concepts and interpretations of Europe.

Furthermore, it may well be unhistorical to speak of a binary distinction between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. In this case, new approaches are needed to conceptualize the period's identity and community politics more fully. As several historians have observed, eighteenth and nineteenth-century intellectuals and revolutionaries often sought to represent their ideals and assumptions as simultaneously national, European, and universal: "by representing French culture as the leading edge of civilization, [French thinkers] identified the cause of humanity with their own national causes and saw themselves at the same time as French patriots and upstanding citizens of a cosmopolitan Republic of Letters."[36] For this reason, my analysis of ideas about Europe acknowledges the imbrication, rather than the incompatibility, of nationalist and transnational perspectives.

I am seeking, therefore, to complicate the concepts of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, and understand the period in terms of the interactions and frictions between localism and universalism. Noting that "neither cosmopolitanism nor localism/nationalism are possible as pure positions," David Simpson asks whether models can be found to negotiate these perspectives without succumbing absolutely to either of them.[37] What I am suggesting is that an investigation into the meanings of Europe assists this project, moving understandings of (Romantic) identity politics in new directions and encompassing the full richness of the period's (trans)nationalism. Of course, this is not to imply that a European viewpoint is entirely unproblematic. As I will show, it can privilege local specificity—the supposed perfection of classical Greece, for example—just as it can construct Eurocentric universalisms. But since it can encompass both these perspectives, analysis of the idea of Europe can do full justice to conceptions of identity and society in the period.

The Idea of Europe and the Historical Moment

Why, though, am I focusing on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Many historians associate this period with significant developments in the history of the idea of Europe, particularly a decline in the notion of "Christendom" and its gradual replacement with secular understandings of collective European identity—for instance, shared "arts and inventions" or military superiority.[38] In this way, Europe came to be understood as a system of states held together by civil sovereignty, commerce, and diplomatic mechanisms designed to prevent religious wars and the growth of a hegemonic power.[39] Montesquieu, for example, defined Europe in terms of "laws, morality, aristocracy, monarchy and liberty," treating it not just as geographical term, but also a "cultural, political and intellectual entity with its own history and its own distinctive features."[40] Enrique Dussel also traces to the eighteenth century the influential idea that Europe has its intellectual and cultural origins in ancient Greece: an ideological construct which ignores how Greek texts were mediated through Muslim civilizations and insists that Greek culture is "exclusively western and European."[41]

Furthermore, the tumultuous events following the year 1789 prompted prolonged competition over the political and ideological shape of Europe. How should it be organized? What intellectual frameworks should justify or modify that structure? The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars can thus be seen partly as a struggle between competing ideas of Europe: should it be a homogenously ruled empire, a network of rival regions, or an "association of nations"?[42] Other problems, which now seem very contemporary, also emerged or became more intense at this time: difficulties of European nationalisms and conflict; questions about the geographical limits of Europe; the necessity of maintaining a "balance of power"; overtly imperial relations between Europe and the rest of the world. These enquiries became fused with earlier ideas about Europe as "a civilization superior to all others" and as a "commercially integrated community," creating new and influential tensions in nineteenth-century constructions of Europe.[43]

As this implies, relations with the non-European world were especially crucial. Woolf argues that, through comparison with the extra-European world, "a distinctive conviction was forged of what constituted the essence of Europe's superiority," namely "role of the rational state" in furthering "civilization and progress." This, in turn, "justified the material exploitation" of the rest of the world. The emergence of new disciplines—anatomy, anthropology, and philology—allowed Europeans to construct themselves and their "others" upon purportedly scientific foundations and according to renewed conviction of a unique "civilizing mission."[44] This is not an

entirely uncontroversial view: recent scholarship has suggested that, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "there seems to arise a new desire [. . .] to construct an idea of Europe as 'complete knowledge of itself' "; that is, to assume that Europe can be understood without reference to the rest of the world. Instead of identifying an inferior other outside Europe, Montesquieu, Staël, and others transferred its function onto a "negative part, or moment, of the European self"—most usually, the Italian or Iberian south. By this means, they translate the ancient "discussion between freedom (Europe) and despotism (Asia) [. . .] into a modern latitudinal rhetoric of north and south." These eighteenth-century ideas—of an industrious north and a backward south—still inform modern "expectations of what we take Europe to be."[45]

Of course, one could criticize these perspectives for oversimplifying or misrepresenting the (pre) Revolutionary period as an exclusive "point of origin" for certain ideas of Europe. However, the wider point can be accepted without reservation: the Romantic period, with its prolonged military and ideological conflicts, oversaw profound debate about Europe's history and potential future. This book sets out to uncover how those ideas of Europe were constructed, both by the Shelley–Byron circle and in wider British culture of the early nineteenth century.

However, my focus differs from the above examinations of Europe in two principal ways. First, these historians usually "narrate" Europe, tracing changes in the concept over long periods of time. They talk, for example, about the increasing importance of secularism, or the establishment of a modern "rational state." Writing a smooth trajectory of this kind is not my purpose here. Instead, I aim to show how ideas of Europe contain several contradictory narratives, which run concurrently and are in debate. Second, while historians of the idea of Europe often focus on broad strands of time and sources, my study is of a much more specific group of individuals: the Shelley–Byron circle. As Peter Burke has argued, investigating the use of the word "Europe" is all very well, but we need to be sure whose idea is under discussion and under what contexts and constraints those thoughts operate. By identifying "the 'repertoire' of concepts available for expressing group identity in different places and times," we can edge toward a "social history of consciousness of Europe."[46]

Percy Shelley and Byron are especially suited to such an investigation, not only because they experienced and were fascinated by the sociopolitical events of the period which saw Europe redefined, but also because their works, as I will explore in detail, engage with many different ways to approach and understand Europe. They write about travel across borders (both within and outside European space); they discuss political change and the prospects of a new future for Europe; they show (problematic) interest in non-European cultures; and they identify ancient Greece and

Rome as the "foundations" of European culture. Of course, focusing on particular individuals brings its own difficulties—their radicalism, relative wealth, and (classically based) education undoubtedly affect their conceptualization of Europe. They understand Graeco-Roman civilization, for example, not just in terms of its antiquarian interest, but as a living tradition which frames and inspires an understanding of Europe's shared present and future as well as its common past. Furthermore, their perspectives are shaped by a British radical interpretation of "liberty" as freedom from religion, censorship, and political "despotism." My purpose is not, therefore, to operate under the illusion that Shelley and Byron are straightforward representatives of all British ideas of Europe. Instead, I want to show, first, how their specific reflections contribute to wider understandings of the history of the idea of Europe and, second, how a study of "Europe" can inform readings of their work, allowing us to see it outside the frameworks of nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Throughout the following chapters, I read Percy Shelley's and Byron's works alongside the writings of their "circle," a term I use broadly to refer to those people they traveled, corresponded, or met with in a defined period of their careers. In this respect, I contribute to recent work in Romantic studies which examines authors and texts in terms of sociability and community.[47] In general terms, I show how the circle discussed topics of mutual interest, and how works were composed as part of group dialogues about, say, Napoleon's downfall, the Greek War of Independence, or the prospect of radical revolution. But, I also highlight more specific interconnections: the significance of Hobhouse as an author who shared many of Byron's intellectual interests in politics and travel writing; Percy Shelley's suggestion that Byron write a poem on the French Revolution, a proposal which eventually inspired his own *Laon and Cythna*; Byron's engagement with political debates about international relations in the 1820s, and his association, through Thomas Moore and Hobhouse, with radical and Whig politicians and ideas. By showing how these individuals are part of interwoven group conversations and how the circle interacts with wider cultural discourses, I hope to avoid both an isolating focus on discrete individuals and the totalizations which would come from generalizing too broadly about ideas of Europe in the period.

Structure and Argument

Each chapter in this book deals with a specific moment in the careers of Byron or Percy Shelley, tracing their use and interpretations of Europe

at that exact time. In his analysis of how texts both document and "critically construct" history, James Chandler explains how "case studies" are used to comprehend and interpret specific events according to the concerns of later commentators. Historical understanding is thus constructed by a "dialogue" between two specific moments. Clearly, my book can itself be seen in these terms, since it examines historical ideas of Europe in terms of recent developments in Romantic period studies and burgeoning interest in the meanings of Europe. However, the Shelley–Byron circle also engages in this process, constructing ideas of Europe through a dialogue between the ideological concerns of their present (for example, radical politics) and interpretations of ancient and recent historical events or "cases," such as Waterloo or Greek–Persian conflict. Moreover, case studies strive to identify both a unique instant and the wider schemes or structures for comprehending concepts at that moment.[48] In this way, the Shelley–Byron circle's writings reveal certain cultural structures and patterns for understanding Europe in the nineteenth century, but they are also partly anomalous, imparting unique viewpoints that, for specific reasons (for example, their political perspectives or aristocratic backgrounds), cannot be seen as entirely "representative" of those general structures.

Part 1 of this book introduces the key ways in which the Shelley–Byron circle construct ideas about Europe, focusing on *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and other contemporaneous travel writings. The circle's real and imagined journeys through European spaces prompt reflections on borders, local particularity, and national rivalry. However, those same journeys also posit a transnational politics and culture, based on classical inheritance and the shared political implications of the Napoleonic wars. Chapter 1 focuses on Byron's trip to the Near East in 1809–11. It examines his depiction of borders within and between European states, before considering how these boundaries construct ideas of Europe and its "others." The chapter also introduces the problem of Greece and its supposed legacy, considered central to the development of European civilization, but problematically located within the Ottoman Empire. Chapter 2 investigates how Byron, Percy Shelley, and their circle respond to the post-Waterloo political situation in 1815–16. In the face of competing political programs for reorganizing the continent, they acknowledge a new multiplicity surrounding ideas of Europe. At the same time, however, they also articulate a singular history which narrates Europe's development according to a specific ideological agenda determined mainly by their radical suspicion of reactionary politics. Furthermore, they understand Europe in terms of "freedom" and "liberty,"—concepts which simultaneously evoke and challenge the potential for European unity. Chapter 3 focuses on Byron's residence in Italy

between 1817 and 1818. Byron uses specific places in the Italian states to frame discussions of European history: he describes the uniqueness of certain locations, especially Rome and Venice, but also uses them to construct a federal idea of Italian culture and history. Italy, in turn, becomes a symbol for understanding modern Europe, particularly the ongoing struggles of monarchy and "freedom," and the spread of a shared religion and classical heritage.

Part 2 builds upon the ideas about Europe elucidated in the first three chapters, especially regarding international politics, the classical world, and experiences of travel. Percy Shelley uses these concepts about Europe for political ends: to articulate his interests in radical reform, and generalize his interpretation of European culture into an ideal model for universal progress. Chapter 4 shows how, for the Shelley circle in 1817–18, ideas of Europe emerge from reflections on the French Revolution and its legacy. I also consider how the circle identifies border-zones between Europe and Asia (especially in Constantinople), and how America is both an "other" and a more perfect version of Europe. The chapter concludes by discussing how the Shelleys were attacked for being "uneuropean" because they held allegedly defective (sexual) mores. In Chapter 5, I turn to the texts in which Percy Shelley uses the word "Europe" most often: the *Defence of Poetry* and *Hellas*, both written in 1821. He writes about Europe in ways that are both totalizing and specific; in other words, he builds ideas of Europe on specific historical moments, but also universalizes European civilization into an ideal for all places and periods. The chapter continues by considering the circle's concurrent interests in travel, translation, and the (im)possibilities of transcultural communication.

Part 3 explores the Byron circle's engagements with actual political attempts to reshape Europe in the post-revolutionary period: the "congress system" and the Greek War of Independence. I discuss how Byron and other activists and politicians use discourses about Greece, revolution, and (trans)nationalism to both advocate and critique practical models for Europe's future. Chapter 6 analyses the Byron circle's reactions to international diplomacy in 1822–23. While Byron and associates denounce oligarchical tyranny, the politicians responsible for the congress system use the language of peace and cooperation to construct very different ideas of Europe. Crucially, however, as in Chapter 2, the word "liberty" is used to articulate and justify very different interpretations of Europe's history and future. Lastly, Chapter 7 deals with Byron's final trip to Greece in 1823–24. Greece and Europe come to be seen as inseparable concepts: support for the Greek War of Independence is intimately linked to enduring preoccupations with European cultural

heritage and the possibility of radical change. Problematically though, differing interpretations of the War expose ideological conflict about the idea of Europe, the nature of "liberty," and the purposes of that radical cause.

These chapters therefore analyze a range of interweaving and competing concepts, which are particular to the circle itself, but also contribute to much wider debates about the future of Europe and the interpretation of its histories. In the face of this complexity, it might be tempting to conclude that Europe is "a mass of values" which "have simply accumulated without being ordered to form a harmonious synthesis."[49] But just because a complete "synthesis" is impossible, this does not mean that identifiable positions and trends cannot be recognized and analyzed. Percy Shelley, Byron, and their circle construct Europe using radical interpretations of "liberty" and "freedom"; they understand Europe through particular imaginings of ancient and modern Greek and Roman history; they define European spaces and cultures against Islamic and American others. As part of these processes, they identify both a flawed and aberrant Europe (of depots and restorations) and an alternative European future, mediated through their interests in radical politics and the prospect of revolution (or at least a process of reform). These Europes are entwined together, both conflicting with and conceptually dependent on one another. Most importantly, the Shelley–Byron circle uses the language of "Europe" in a particularizing and a universalizing manner. They identify specific historical events, places, and writings which construct a uniquely European culture, while also generalizing that culture into a universal ideal for all humanity, a process which purports to disguise Europe's particularity.

By exploring these ideas, this book reconsiders the circle's ideas and politics, and notes how its members engage with and use contemporary events for ideological purposes. Significantly though, Europe is both a discourse centered on political "debate and conflict" and has the "proportions of an unattainable idea."[50] In other words, ideas of Europe are political programs and not just immaterial "ideas"; yet, at the same time, they have a utopian dimension, since they look for a social prospect beyond immediate material conditions. The language of Europe is a way to engage with (the frustrations of) political circumstances and "go beyond" those restrictions by appealing to something more ideal. This tension is central, I think, to comprehending the politics of Percy Shelley, Byron, and their circle. And nor do the implications of my argument end there. By showing how various texts engage with ideas about Europe, I present an approach to the period outside the dominant language of nationalism and the potentially imprecise generalizations of cosmopolitanism.

"Europe" evokes a vocabulary able to articulate both transnationalism and the specificities of particular locations and cultures. For this reason, the study of the idea of Europe can enable new ways to understand the complexities of identity formation and the politics of community in the Romantic period and beyond.

Part 1

The *Childe Harold* Pilgrimage: Byron's European Tour, 1809–18

Chapter 1

"Spain, Portugal, and Greece": Byron on the Borders of Europe, 1809–11

Introduction

This chapter explores how Byron perceived and imagined Europe on his trip to the Near East between 1809 and 1811. The tour inspired the best-selling travel poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage I and II* (1812), which I read alongside Byron's contemporaneous journals and correspondence. Additionally, I examine texts by individuals whom Byron met on the journey and who published their own accounts shortly before or after *Childe Harold*. This includes John Cam Hobhouse, who accompanied Byron until July 1810; Sir John Carr, who met Byron in Spain; and John Galt, who traveled with him from Gibraltar to Malta and later socialized with him in Athens and Smyrna.[1]

Byron labels his expedition as both real and imagined: a fictionalized interpretation of an actual experience. In the preface to *Childe Harold I and II*, Byron insists that his poem documents an actual journey. The scenes correspond to particular places experienced by the author: "Spain, Portugal, Epirus, Acarnania and Greece." But, despite this specificity, he also insists that the narrative is invented; it makes "no pretension to regularity" and is framed by the imagined consciousness of "this fictitious character, 'Childe Harold.' "[2] In making this double assertion, the preface presents the Mediterranean tour as both a literal and an imagined journey, where representations and real experiences of European space are interdependent. In Stephen Cheeke's words, Byron explores "the materiality of history" and "all that [a location] represents imaginatively or historically,

all that expands [. . .] beyond the circumference of the actual spot."[3] *Childe Harold* participates in this "materiality" as well as in imaginative construction; it shows that the perception and the production of spaces are interrelated.

I am particularly interested in how the poem produces ideas of European space by perceiving and conceiving the places it mentions. For example, in the opening stanza of *Childe Harold*, the narrator locates his muse in Greece:

> in Hellas deem'd of heav'nly birth
> [. . .]
> Yet there I've wander'd by thy vaunted rill;
> Yes! sigh'd o'er Delphi's long-deserted shrine.
> (Canto 1, lines 1–6)

The narrator alludes to an actual place, but also to an imaginative landscape loaded with classical allusion and mythological significance. Delphi is both a real space experienced by those who visit it and an imagined cultural space which resonates with readers far distant from the actual site. That resonance both creates and presupposes a community of readers who appreciate classical heritage and trace that shared culture back to ancient Greece. By describing his reflections on Delphi, Byron thus formulates an idea of European culture premised upon, and bound together by, classical inheritance. His writings document the lived experience of European travel, while simultaneously constructing the Europe through which he and his characters move.

The chapter pursues three lines of enquiry. First, it explores the presentation of boundaries within and between European states, and how this helps construct ideas about Europe. In his writing about Spain and Portugal, Byron describes a European space checkered with state and cultural rivalries, but which also allows for travel and cultural interaction. In this way, Byron presents contrasting strategies for articulating difference within Europe—sometimes privileging divisions and sometimes identifying evidence for commonality. Second, the chapter discusses the "edges" of Europe and what signifies a transition to alien, non-European space. Byron identifies Albania, Gibraltar, and Constantinople as border-zones where otherness meets familiarity and differing Asian and European social practices clash and interact. Last, the chapter introduces a theme central to this book: how the spatial politics of Greece's location—within the Ottoman Empire—affects the idea of a European tradition centered on ancient Greek civilization. Greece is simultaneously conceived as a European progenitor as well as a corrupted and alien other. In this respect, Greece is central to

European history and self-representation, but it also is inseparable from non-European spaces and cultures. For the Byron circle, Greece epitomizes uncertainty about the borders and definition of Europe.

Boundaries within Europe

Writing to his friend Robert Dallas, Byron presents two quite distinct perspectives on the possibility and utility of travel:

> All climates are equally interesting to me; that mankind are everywhere despicable in different absurdities; that the further I proceed from your country the less I regret leaving it, and the only advantage you have over the rest of mankind is the sea that divides you from your foes [. . .] I would be a citizen of the world, but I fear some indispensable affairs will soon call me back.[4]

Byron notes that travel in unfamiliar places accentuates division: societies are defined by their different flaws and separated by physical and cultural barriers. However, he also celebrates the unconstrained freedom of his journey: he is comfortable in "all climates" and is almost a "citizen of the world," unrestrained by borders or emotional longings for home. These two perspectives, I want to suggest, shape Byron's perception and conception of European spaces. He imagines and experiences Europe as open and interconnected as well as fragmented and divisive.

In *Childe Harold*, when the protagonist arrives at Lisbon, the narrator imagines Europe as a place of international conflict, where state boundaries are the scenes of competition between rivals. Portugal is "a nation swoln with ignorance and pride, / Who lick yet loath the hand that waves the sword / To save them from the wrath of Gaul's usurping lord" (1.222–4). Portugal is proud of its independence and is the scene of spatial conflict, at the boundary of French and British influence. This nationalistic focus peaks in the stanzas condemning the Convention of Cintra in 1808:

> And ever since that martial synod met,
> Britannia sickens, Cintra! at thy name
> [. . .]
> Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
> To view these champions cheated of their fame.
> (1.306–7, 311–12)

In this view of European politics, competing nations thrive on conflict over boundaries and engage in a contest which seeks to expand and harden

the spatial divisions between states. Byron frames his Iberian experience in terms of national comparison and notes the differences between British and Spanish practices: "Spanish roads," for example, "are far superior to the best English turnpikes."[5] In this way, he establishes cultural borders as well as political ones, noting the extent and type of differences indicated by customary behavior and social convention.

While in Spain, Byron encountered Sir John Carr[6] whose *Descriptive Travels in the Southern and Eastern Parts of Spain* (1811) presents Europe as fractured by national rivalries. He notes that "the admiration of the English, and abhorrence of the French, [is] every day more and more conspicuous" among the Spanish. Carr also devotes much space to laughing at, or exclaiming against, Spanish culture: the bad food, the filthy inns, the incompetent government, and the ill-kempt women.[7] His is a Europe divided by borders and otherness; the purpose of travel is to catalogue this unfamiliarity. Indeed, for Carr, each person is a traveling island of nationhood, unable to traverse the borders of cultural difference. Individuals are held as symbols of their countries: after the battle of Talavera (1809), Spanish crowds parade English tourists, thanking them for the victory and calling them by spurious military titles.[8] John Galt, whom Byron first encountered in Gibraltar, also imagines Europe in this manner. His book *Voyages and Travels in the Years 1809, 1810 and 1811* regularly launches into national triumphalism. At one point, he claims that "all the greatest additions which the moderns have made to the faculties, the knowledge, the comfort, and the power of man, are of British origin," before pompously explaining how "the ranting tragedy of the Revolution, and the solemn farce of the Emperor [Napoleon] are exhibitions [. . .] offensive to good taste."[9] The companion volume, *Letters from the Levant*, ends by proclaiming Britain "the most independent, singly and collectively happy" country in the world.[10] By using these words, Galt sketches a border around Britain, separating it by virtue of its alleged security and happiness. Galt's years of travel, and two volumes of reflections, merely confirm the absoluteness of such divisions within Europe: the unassailable barrier between the familiar and the unfamiliar.

The narrator of *Childe Harold*, however, is not always so constrained by national boundaries. Describing the Spanish–Portuguese border, he says:

> Where Lusitania and her sister meet,
> Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
> [. . .]
> Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,

> Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall
> Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul:
>
> But these between a silver streamlet glides,
> And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
> Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.
> Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
> And vacant on the rippling waves doth look.
> (1.360–1, 366–73)

The border, and the intense separateness of the two countries, dissipates into a pastoral scene undivided by military or diplomatic rivalries. A similar process occurs between stanzas 52 and 60, when the narrator turns from Spanish politics and literary romance to apostrophize Parnassus. This translocation across borders uses the ancient mythological traditions of Greece to illuminate modern Iberian events and disrupts both spatial boundaries and temporality. The analogy constructs a kind of Hellenistic commonality, whereby the images of ancient Greece can frame or contextualize contemporary incidents elsewhere in Europe. In this way, therefore, the poem presents an idea of Europe unencumbered by boundaries—where illusory borders can be crossed at will, ancient practices illuminate contemporary politics, and cultural traditions are applicable outside their location of origin. The poem does, however, also note the potential dangers of this undivided Europe, especially in imperialist rhetoric. The narrator laments how Napoleon's ambition knows no limitations, and how his empire does not respect the sanctity of separations, absorbing conquests into itself: "When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his wings unfurl'd, / [. . .] the young, the proud, the brave, / [. . .] swell one bloated Chief's unwholesome reign (1.547–50).

Some contemporary reviews of the poem find these complex ideas of Europe uncomfortable, arguing either that Byron had misunderstood the real "state of Europe," or that he possessed defective views on patriotism and national pride. *Town Talk*, for instance, chides Byron for praising Spanish courage, whereas in fact "the Spanish rely *more* upon the *power* of the allies than *their own spirit* and patriotism" (italics in original). Indeed, the reviewer considers Spain a lost cause, counseling instead that Britain should attack France directly. He understands that *Childe Harold* seeks to investigate Europe, but interprets that treatment rather narrowly and criticizes the poem for underestimating "French tyranny" and for overindulging Spanish (rather than British) national interest.[11] The *Christian Observer* also connects Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* to changes in European politics: "his Lordship seized the tomahawk of satire, mounting the fiery wings of his muse, and, like Bonaparte, spared neither rank, nor

sex, nor age, but converted the republic of letters into one universal field of carnage."[12] Just as Napoleon ruptured the pan-European "republic of letters" with aggressive military universalism, so has Byron colluded in this project, his vitriolic literary attacks symbolizing the decline of genteel cultural exchange across borders. Both these reviewers see the centrality of Europe in Byron's work, but they disagree with the ideas allegedly presented: *Town Talk* considers Byron insufficiently conscious of the borders between European states, inappropriately supporting another national interest, while the *Observer* regrets that he antagonizes cultural conflict, particularly between Scotland and England.

Most reviews accuse *Childe Harold* of being inadequately patriotic. The *Critical Review* says: "we hope in some future Canto to welcome the Childe's return to his native country [. . .] retaining his innate enthusiasm only for the nobler purposes of a legitimate and patriotic ambition."[13] The reviewer finds Harold's transgression across borders problematic, perhaps because it implies a view of Europe not easily compartmentalized into patriotic spatial territories. Similar sentiments recur in Francis Jeffrey's otherwise positive assessment in the *Edinburgh Review*: Byron's writing and Harold's movements, "run directly counter to very many of our national passions." The *Satirist* addresses the author directly: "For shame! for shame! my Lord. Are these the sentiments of a Briton [. . .] Devoid of all generous and patriotic enthusiasm?"[14] For these writers, the borderlessness of Harold's wanderings—his lack of consistent affiliation with a specific state or locale—is profoundly unsettling in a time of war, when state boundaries and competition for territorial control is paramount. The *Quarterly Review* even accuses the poem of being excessively cosmopolitan in its means of expression, objecting to the mix of "Greek, Saxon, and modern English" in the line "And where these are, light Eros finds a feere."[15] As Jane Stabler observes, hostile reviews often associated this "incongruous" and unconventional style with unstable, anti-establishment politics: Byron's "refusal to discriminate in matters of style was equated with democratic principles" and construed as an unpatriotic challenge to British foreign policy.[16]

These reviews, however, only comprehend one aspect of the poem, for it is not explicitly anti-nationalist—especially in the sections extolling Spanish and, later, Greek achievements. Instead, *Childe Harold* emphasizes both the connection and the separations between peoples across Europe. The bullfighting scene operates as a marker of cultural identity, separating locals from travelers. Harold is distressed by this parochial "ungentle sport" and aware that it creates a cultural border between locals and the alien "others" (1.792, 827–36). But the narrative voice also identifies common correlations across these cultures: the vestiges of a "fallen" chivalric tradition, the former nominal unity between "Christian shores," and, more

recently, the cause against a common enemy (1.881, 685). Such correlations facilitate understanding across national borders: they allow the bullfight to be (ironically) understood in the context of a shared chivalrous past; they enable swift comparison between this Sabbath-day pursuit and the riotous social display of a Sunday in Hackney. At such moments in the poem, European societies both clash and interact, and the experience is described in terms of familiarity and alienation. Another example occurs in the lines "Fall'n nations gaze on Spain; if freed, she frees / More than her fell Pizarros once enchained" (1.913–4). This manages to invoke a specific Spanish nationalism and brings together oppressed "fall'n nations" jointly inspiring each other to "freedom." This kind of commonality contrasts with the imperial erasure of borders alluded to in the Pizarro reference and now represented by French advances into the Iberian Peninsula. In this way, Byron imagines Europe both with and without unassailable borders: it is a space checkered with state and cultural separations, but also an area of uninhibited travel and extensive cultural interaction. The first edition displays this in its appendix, which provides translations of Romaic texts, a list of Romaic authors, and a lexicon of phrases. The appendix has a particularist element in that it seeks to reinvigorate the language and literature of a specific geographical and cultural space. But, it also introduces the language to a wider readership and enabling intercultural communication beyond the borders of the region.[17]

All these examples display variable spatial understandings of Europe as both divided and undivided. But they also negotiate contrasting societal understandings of Europe: they highlight specific (and potentially divisive) cultural practices and an awareness of how those same practices can be mutually comprehensible and comparable. In this way, the examples present contrasting strategies for articulating difference within Europe—either privileging those divisions, or attempting to reconcile them by focusing on potential sources for commonality. Some moments—for example, the bullfighting scene—show how a pluralistic comparison of different European cultural practices and a more homogenous understanding of shared culture are evident in the same instance. The spatial investigation of borders thus leads to reflections on cultural ideas of Europe—particularly the contrasting visions of Europe as pluralistic variation or as a single cultural entity.

It is productive to compare Byron's spatial and social ideas of Europe with those put forward by Galt in *Voyages and Travels*. Galt contends that France has traditionally striven for pan-European authority: "Kings of France have never ceased to cherish the wish and hope of being Emperors of the West," either through "coercive wars to recover the sovereignty of Europe," or cultural imperialism ("[France] set herself up as transcendent in the arts and sciences [. . .] and acquired no small ascendancy in

the minds of the admiring vulgar").[18] Galt thus equates European unity with French expansionism, though he exalts British "commercial power" in opposition to this aggressive model. British possessions are not tyrannical, Galt argues, because Britain aims to create trade routes rather than "one corporative despotism." First, this theory makes history and contemporary politics a battle for the idea of Europe, pitting French federalism against British commercial networks. Second, it suggests that a unified Europe will occur if all European space is overwhelmed by specifically French military and cultural power. In this respect, the borderless Europe, where political and cultural boundaries between countries are erased, is merely the consequence of aggressive state expansion: it follows national competition for bordered territory. Byron's vision is more complex, since he overlays divided and undivided ideas of Europe, exploring how certain scenes reveal both parochial and collective notions of Europe. As I show in subsequent chapters, this becomes extremely important in Byron's later discussions of Greek heritage and independence, both in later Cantos of *Childe Harold* and at the end of his career in 1824. Indeed, the following chapter argues that the Shelley–Byron circle combine bordered nationalist understandings of Europe with hopes for a common or transnational European culture and purpose.

At the Edges of Europe

Childe Harold does not only investigate boundaries within Europe. It also explores the edges of Europe; that is, spaces defined by borders with a non-European "other." This theme first arises in Canto 1: after commenting on the fluid border between Spain and Portugal, the narrator constructs a new frontier between chivalric Christian Europe and military Islam—a division "Of Moor and knight [. . .] The Paynim turban and the Christian crest" (1.383–5). The second Canto develops this idea, establishing a geographical and racial division between Europe and Africa:

> Through Calpe's [Gibraltar's] straights survey the steepy shore;
> Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
> Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor.
>
> (2.190–3)

The narrator creates a cultural border between European familiarity and "otherness," remarking on the "Moslem luxury" of "Wealth and Wantonness" and the warlike "wrath how deadly" (2.570–2, 583). This

builds a very clear separation between European and non-European space, the division indicated by Islamic rule and nonwhite skin color. Consequently, those people occupying European space can be represented as a single group, despite their various nationalities and allegiances. The narrator uses "Giaour" as an umbrella term for western European Christians in conflict with "Othman's race" (2.729–30) and also refers to the "ancient butcher-work" of "Frank and Turk" (2.602–3). Hobhouse defines "Frank" very specifically as "a name that includes all those of whatever nation who are dressed in the [manner . . .] of civilised Europe,"[19] and Galt also uses the word in this sense, referring to "Frank families [. . .] of English descent."[20] They thereby construct a homogenous idea of European peoples defined by contrasts with Ottoman and Islamic society. Significantly, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "frank" has etymological associations with "free" and "freedom." It can mean the following: "free in condition; not in serfdom or slavery"; "released from captivity"; "free from restraint or impediment."[21] In this respect, the word has political connotations, defining European "freedoms" in contrast with Islamic decadence and despotism.[22]

The usage of "Frank" might seem to establish an idea of European solidarity opposed to an Islamic "other." In fact, however, Byron employs the word to signify both collectivity and separateness within European countries. In a supplementary paper to *Childe Harold*, he uses "Frank" to refer only to the French, mentioning "Englishmen, Germans, Danes, &c." separately, and imagining various European peoples competing for influence in the Greek regions. In the appendix though, the word reemerges as a collective term for all Europeans: "it is pleasant to be a Frank, particularly an Englishman, who may abuse the government of his own country; or a Frenchman, who may abuse every government except his own."[23] This sentiment is particularly significant since it acknowledges both differences and connections between European peoples. In this sense, therefore, Byron's investigation of the boundaries of Europe exposes a certain ambiguity regarding (the existence of) European identity. This becomes all the more complex when *Childe Harold* turns away from the spaces and peoples on either side of the apparent European border to observe the spaces of that border itself.

The narrator locates one such border-zone in Albania, an outpost of civility, where "chivalrous emprise" meets the "savage men": "Here roams the wolf, the eagle whets his beak, / Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear"; "The scene was savage, but the scene was new" (2.337–9, 376–7, 385). Albania represents a barbarous space, as if Europe is the epicenter of civilization and the further away one travels, the more diluted that civility becomes. At these edges of Europe, humans are hardly distinguishable

from animals: the "wilder men" and the "savage [. . .] scene" are defined in terms of each other. However, Albania is also a borderland between Christianity and Islam—"The cross descends, thy minarets arise, / And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen" (2.340–1). This implies a clash between two cultures and their symbols, rather than a movement from a single "civilized" society to its absence. In this respect, Byron presents the spaces outside Europe in a deeply ambiguous fashion, suggesting that the Islamic world is both "savage" and a rival civilization.

This uncertain conception of the non-European continues in Byron's letters. He remarks on the incivility of Islamic customs, especially the "horrible cruelties" of war, but also finds recognizable social interest in high rank, decorum, and property.[24] In this sense, Albania is both strange and familiar; Byron's travels have led him to a border-zone between the alien and the known. His letters from early 1810 reveal his awareness of traveling at the edges of Europe—" I am now on the Asiatic side," he says on March 19, adding a month later that "I have traversed Greece [. . .] and got into Asia," as if he is crossing an invisible boundary.[25] More revealingly, he informs Henry Drury that "Albania I have seen more of than any Englishman (but a Mr Leake) for it is a country rarely visited from the savage character of the natives, though abounding in more natural beauties than the classical regions of Greece."[26] This important phrase confirms Albania as a borderland where unknown savagery and ancient Greek high-culture confront and interact with one another. Byron is fascinated by such meetings of otherness and familiarity, and these borders are sometimes articulated in terms of European and Asian boundaries, Christian and Muslim rivalry, or Frankish and Turkish social customs.

Other writers also identify Albania as a borderland. The "Mr Leake" mentioned by Byron, a British traveler and resident at Ali Pasha's court, says that the area has historically been the scene of "Oriental" and Frankish interaction, signified by the mixing of Christian and Islamic practices. Albania is thus a mysterious place where "the exact boundaries [. . .] are doubtful"—on the edges of the familiar, but not quite alien.[27] Hobhouse also calls Albania a country which "has never been accurately described"; it is a place on the borders of the known, since travelers have found it "impossible to give [. . .] the actual boundaries of the country." Unable to associate themselves either with Frank or Turk, the local inhabitants instead define themselves by their marginalized independence: "For when the natives of other provinces, upon being asked who they are, will say 'we are Turks,' or 'we are Christians,' a man of this country answers 'I am an Albanian.' "[28] Hobhouse understands the region in terms of Christian-Turkish interaction and is disconcerted to find people on the "frontiers" who do not define themselves according

to that rivalry, choosing instead to name themselves after the borderland that separates and connects the two.

Hobhouse identifies other such border-zones at the edges of Europe. He portrays Constantinople as a place of interfaith tension: "the distinction between the Mahometan and the Christian resident or settler, is perhaps nowhere so decided." The Bosphorus is a boundary between Europe and Asia: "country houses of the Franks [. . .] in the European style" face Karak-Anadoli, "the castle of Asia" across the water, making a clear geographical division between continents. Moreover, his experiences in the city prompt reflection on different cultural practices:

> The system of manners belonging to the civilised ancients of the West and East, seems to be nearly the same as that of the modern Orientals, and entirely distinct from that of the Franks and of Christendom. If the Russians, Poles, and Hungarians, have any peculiarities which distinguish them from other Frank Christians, it is because these nations are of Oriental origin.[29]

Unlike some contemporaries, Hobhouse does not associate the spaces and cultures outside "Christendom" with savagery. Firstly, he identifies the modern Orient with ancient classicism, potentially legitimizing the occupation of Greece by suggesting that the Turks are the cultural inheritors of classical civilization. Secondly though, he makes "Frankishness" fully separate from both "Eastern" cultures and ancient Greece and Rome; the Franks instead represent an independent, younger tradition. In this sense, a specifically "Frankish," or western European, self-identity is not dependent on classical inheritance and developed only after the growth of Christianity. By distinguishing between different societal traditions in Europe according to geographical location and climate, Hobhouse recalls Montesquieu's distinction between northern and southern European peoples. Those in the north have "*peu de vices, assez de vertus*, *beaucoup de sincérité & de franchise*" (few vices, enough virtues, and much sincerity and frankness), whereas in the south "*vous croirez vous éloigner de la Morale même; des passions plus vive multiplieront les crimes*" (you will believe you have moved away from morality itself: the liveliest passions will increase crimes).[30] According to Roberto Dainotto, this complicates any straightforward separation between free Europe and despotic Asia, by internalizing an "other" within Europe: the north's "civilization" defines itself against the stagnant and barbaric south.[31] Hobhouse similarly identifies two governmental traditions along the same north–south axis: north-western "Frankish" culture, and southern Greco-Roman-Oriental "system of manners." However, because he associates classical civilization and the Orient together, Hobhouse challenges

those thinkers, including Byron, who enshrine Greece at the centre of European tradition.

In all these writers, the interest in borderlands and cultural confrontation serves a double purpose: it establishes a division (however vaguely defined) between Europe and its "others" and, at the same time, it shows how that divide can be traversed. Étienne Balibar provides a useful metaphor for this perspective when he describes European space as consisting not of separate regions, but of "overlapping sheets or layers"—a phrase which acknowledges the division of borders, but which also allows for their flexibility.[32] Hobhouse proposes that various peoples—Romans, Slavs, Huns and Scythians—all traveled through Albania and left their marks on the region.[33] This theory partly upholds the separations between those peoples with their different histories and enduringly distinct social customs. Yet, it also suggests that cultural and spatial borders are open: boundaries can be established, but can also disappear or be relocated over time.[34] For John Carr, too, the border can be a place of exchange and cultural fluidity. Reflecting on the Moorish rule of Spain, he commends the "brilliant dominion" which led to "a high degree of renown for those arts and sciences, and system of political economy, which enrich and embellish nations." Carr does not define Spanish "civility" in opposition to Islamic "otherness"; instead, that civility is the product of the Moorish encounter. As such, the Gibraltar–Africa border is a space for cultural exchange: "the most southern point of Europe, where there is a large Moorish round-tower [. . . faces] a craggy mountain of stupendous height called Ape's Hill, the ancient Abyla, one of the northern bulwarks of Africa."[35] Carr describes a border here, but one of mutual naming and interaction—a crossing point, not a barricade. Even Galt, preoccupied with French–British rivalry, sees the Mediterranean as a connecting space, linking "opulent and populous lands" from the "rich tract of Asia Minor" to the "celebrated kingdom of Egypt." The sea enables communication, acting as a gateway rather than a barrier.[36]

Traversing borders is important for Byron. In his letters, he constantly boasts of having swum the Hellespont from Europe to Asia. Writing to John Hanson, he declares that "if I should ever be induced to sell N[ewstead]—I will pass my life abroad.—If I retain it, I return, if not I stay where I am." The prospects of future wanderings are thus related to the uncertainties regarding Byron's property problems; as he probes the edges of Europe, the spaces of "home" are under threat, and he defines himself by his dislocation.[37] On the ship back to England, Byron declares himself more comfortable with the spatial ambiguities of travel than with the bordered securities of his own country—he wishes to return "either to campaign in Spain, or back again to the East," to a border-zone poised between the familiar and

the strangeness of adventure.[38] Furthermore, many of the shorter poems printed with *Childe Harold* are concerned with the traversal of borders. One discusses the swimming of the Hellespont, while another negotiates the relationship between spatial translocation and attachment to a particular locale: "Think of me sweet! when alone / Though I fly to Istanbul / Athens holds my heart and soul" (from poem VII, "Athens 1810"). In the second poem of the XIV, the narrator at first pines for "the distant shore which gave me birth," but later sees the spaces of "otherness" transformed into the familiar:

> Lady! when I shall view the walls
> Where free Byzantium once arose;
> And Stamboul's Oriental halls
> The Turkish tyrants now enclose
> [. . .]
> On me 'twill hold a dearer claim,
> As spot of thy nativity.
> (lines 33–40)

The speaker envisages his alien surroundings as a romantic scene, both perceiving the unfamiliar space and reimagining it in more reassuring terms.[39] All these poems deal with the physical crossing of spatial and cultural borders, but they also illustrate confrontations with "otherness"—in the sense of both antagonism and accommodation. For this reason, these border-zones represent the interaction of non-European "otherness" and European familiarity. In doing so, they both confirm and erase separations between peoples and their cultures.

Locating Greece

In addition to Albania, Gibraltar and Constantinople, another borderland at the edge of Europe is Greece:

> The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
> Unchanged in all except its foreign lord—
> Preserves alike its bounds and boundless frame.
> (*Childe Harold*, 2.836–9)

Greece is both a specific location, constrained, and overrun by a "foreign lord," but its cultural legacy also inspires people beyond its historical and spatial borders. When the narrator mentions "the scenes our earliest dreams

have dwelt upon" (2.833), this phrase explicitly acknowledges the importance of Greece as a conceived, as well as a perceived, space. Moreover, the use of "our" constructs some kind of non-Greek cultural community connected to Greece and its achievements:

> Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
> Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearied, throng;
> [. . .]
> Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
> Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
> (2.855–60)

This section locates Greece at the margins of Europe, overwhelmed by Ottoman otherness, but also central to European culture and education. For those travelers who visit and imagine Greece, it is a borderland where the familiar and the unfamiliar are negotiated and redefined.

Hobhouse also understands Greece as a borderland between Franks and Turks. "At Athens," he says, the Turk is "subdued either by the superior spirit of his subjects, or by the happy influence of a more genial climate" and gains "a new character, ornamented by the virtues of humanity, kindness, and an easy affability, to which he attains in no other quarter of the Mahometan world." In this respect, Athens is the point where two cultural traditions interact—where Grecian tradition affects and is affected by Turkish "ferocity." Hobhouse, like Montesquieu, implies that particular places are associated with specific forms of cultural behavior: the "soil" of Athens moderates the conduct of the fierce Ottomans. Later, however, Hobhouse seems uncertain how to express Greece's complex relationship with western European countries. He contends that "Europe is indebted to this once famous country" for many intellectual and technical innovations, but that, partly due to its Ottoman government, it has recently degenerated and now offers "no useful invention which they have transmitted to the West." Greece is both within and outside the pan-European transmission of ideas.[40]

If Hobhouse suggests that Greek and Ottoman culture can affect one another, creating a border-zone between Europe and its others, John Galt asserts the indissoluble foreignness of the Turks: though they "are the masters of Greece [. . .] Europe is not the proper country of that people [. . .] In Europe the Turk appears as a stranger." The Ottomans have illegitimately traversed into Europe by invading Greece—although the region itself is not unambiguously part of Europe since "the Greeks are almost as ignorant of the west of Europe as we are of them."[41] For Galt, borders can only be crossed in one direction: the European traveler can experience and analyze

unfamiliar territories, but the peoples living in those places (Turks and modern Greeks) either remain bound by their locations or can only venture out illicitly.[42] The learned European traveler can take possession of Greece, claiming it as a predecessor for his society, but the Ottomans cannot lawfully rule it. In this respect, Greece acts both as a border-zone and as a conceptual barricade against the Ottomans: it asserts European superiority, as well as acknowledging the complex cultural legacies in the region.

Despite the spatial ambiguities of Greece, Hobhouse appropriates its history to construct a shared European tradition. The Greeks are "in possession of the key of a treasury, whose stores they were unable to use" and thus, it has been left to British scholars and collectors to reclaim the culture and language which "was once that of all the civilised nations of Europe."[43] First, Hobhouse maps out the "true" legacy of Grecian glory: preserved by Western Europe, and thus central to European identity. But second, he strips modern Greece of any such pretensions to inherit that achievement itself, partly to legitimize the first point, but also to reimagine Greece as a border-zone on the edges of European civility and partly overrun by non-European barbarity. In this way, he explores its problematic location, situated on the borders between classical and Ottoman civilizations, but also constructs a kind of progress theory, in which certain sociocultural "values" (like technical innovation) were at first Greek, but have now come to represent Europe. Hobhouse identifies Greece and modern Europe as stages in a teleological theory of progress.

While Hobhouse appropriates ancient Greece conceptually by absorbing it into a European foundation narrative, other individuals, notably Lord Elgin, literally took possession of Greece by removing its artifacts for personal or government collections. According to William St. Clair, the publication of *Childe Harold*, with its verses attacking Elgin, unleashed debate regarding the legality of this practice:

> No longer did the conversation turn on the dry academic question of whether the marbles were truly "Phidian" or not. Now the question was what right had Elgin to remove the precious heritage of a proud nation [. . .] The Elgin marbles had now become a symbol, of Greece's ignominious slavery, of Europe's failure to help her, and of Britain's overweening pride.[44]

On one level, Byron satirizes Elgin's behavior as a straightforward imperial conquest: "the last poor plunder from a bleeding land" (2.114). However, Byron also appropriates Greece for his own reasons, representing the Parthenon as a timeless symbol of civilized resistance against barbarian invaders and arbitrary "tyrants" (including Elgin himself) (2.101, 119).

This is a disagreement about how (and not whether) Greece can be used ideologically to interpret Europe's cultures and traditions. Are ancient Greek artifacts the cultural property of all Europe, implying a shared heritage? Or do the claims of modern Greece hold sway, an argument which posits a Europe of more firmly divided spatial and national loyalties? The sections of *Childe Harold* which denounce Elgin (for example, 2.91–117) enter the debate in a double-sided manner. The liberal use of classical allusion makes reference to a shared, European-wide cultural base, but the denunciations assert a more nationalistic cause too, emphasizing the intellectual and literary independence of Greece and opposing its appropriation by any "Despot's chains" (2.108). Interestingly, Elgin's own justifications are similarly double-edged: "the exertions I made in Greece were wholly for the purpose of securing to Great Britain, and through it to Europe in general, the most effectual possible knowledge."[45] He argues that Greece's buildings and statues are "all Europe's" and should be shared among other countries, but also that Britain is the most advanced inheritor of that tradition and therefore deserves to increase its own knowledge further by removing artifacts. In other words, both Byron's and Elgin's arguments depend both on a shared European heritage and on more nationalistic explanations.

For this reason, therefore, *Child Harold* establishes and questions the Greek connection with Europe, tracing a cultural link between ancient Greece and modern European powers while denouncing those countries' mistreatment of the region. Sometimes, this occurs simultaneously, as when the narrator combines mythological allusion (comprehensible to educated western Europeans and thus a sign of cultural connection) with overt criticism of British policy toward Greece:

> Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears
> The ocean queen, the free Britannia bears
> The last poor plunder from a bleeding land
> Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,
> Tore down those remnants with a Harpy's hand.
> (2.112–16)

Canto II also makes repeated reference to a tradition of "freedom," crucial to the self-definition of Greece and those countries who claim intellectual connection with it. The narrator proclaims Greece as the land of "lost Liberty," and suggests that the recapture of that freedom is partly an exercise in national independence: "who would be free themselves must strike the blow / [. . .] Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no! / True, they may lay your proud despoilers low, / But not for you will Freedom's altars flame"

(2.721–25). Almost immediately, however, this struggle is reinterpreted as a wider clash of cultures:

> The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
> The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest;
> And the Serai's impenetrable tower
> Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
> (2.729–32)

These terms imply a western European or Christian collective pitting against the Islamic other; and in this sense, Greece's lack of independence is an issue affecting all European countries. By invoking the complex matter of "freedom," the poem manages to fuse ideas of nationalistic independence (and thus of a divided Europe) with notions of a European tradition of free government—a tradition itself under threat, but derived from Greece and fundamentally distinct from Ottoman despotism. As I discuss further in the next chapter, this twofold notion of "freedom" also guides the Shelley–Byron circle's responses to subsequent political developments following Napoleon's defeat.

The idea of "freedom" also directs conceptions of Europe's future. In *The Curse of Minerva*, which Byron wrote between March and November 1811,[46] Minerva declares Britain the simultaneous heir and despoiler of Greek "freedom": "Pallas when she gave / Your free-born rights, forbade ye to enslave" (lines 227–8). The poem climaxes in an apocalyptic vision of international rivalry and destruction, a nightmarishly fractious idea of Europe in which "freedom" and Greece are marginalized—where "Gaul shall weep ere Albion wear her chains" and Britain's empire collapses amidst local uprisings and interstate conflicts (284, 309). John Galt also imagines Europe in terms of antagonism, not community. He remains suspicious of Hellenism, arguing that European history owes more to innovation than tradition: "I am very willing to allow the ancients to have been very extraordinary persons, yet you know I have always thought but little of their great affairs, and particularly of their famous characters, compared to the great affairs and famous characters of the moderns." Classicists "attach more value to the past than it deserves, and regard the present with far less esteem that it merits." For this reason, Greek inheritance (and European commonality based upon it) can be legitimately discarded. The focus on "the moderns" explains, first, why he interprets the spaces he visits in terms of present international rivalries (the Near East is too "hollow and unsafe for the new superstructure" states of Britain and France) and, second, why he debunks ancient mythological traditions by guessing at the "real" events which inspired them (for example, the Chimera represents "a wicked old

woman").[47] His explanation of intellectual history is also premised upon rivalry and discord:

> The two ancient nations which have affected to the greatest extent the condition of mankind in Europe, are the Greek and the Jew: the former by their literature, and the latter by their religion, but the sentiments of the former have ever been at variance with those of the latter [...] The religion of the Jews, as perfected in Christianity, teaches only peace and good-will to man [...] The literature of the Greeks exalts into virtues those qualities which are calculated to make war admirable for its own sake.[48]

Just as conflict motivates current political events, so does competition underpin Europe's cultural inheritance. Therefore, although Galt does identify specifically European mentalities, created by a combination of Greek and Jewish thought, any potential commonality is buried beneath the enmity intrinsic to that fusion, as well the diverse aims, structures, and procedures of competitive European states.

Why then are border-zones, particularly Greece, so important for the construction of Europe? Balibar writes that:

> Border-zones [...] are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but are rather at the centre. If Europe is first of all the name of an unresolved political problem, Greece is one of its centers, not because of the mythic origins of our civilization [...] but because of the [...] problems concentrated there.[49]

Since Greece can be described as a tyrannized subject, an intellectual predecessor, a common progenitor, or an "other," it can evoke contrasting notions of Europe—from a unified cultural heritage, to a disparate medley of states striving for power and independence. The reason these complex associations are possible lies partly in the spatiality of Greece, both within and outside Europe, both part of and excluded from Christendom, and the location of both high civilization and alien barbarity. In this respect, like Montesquieu, Byron's circle presumes a close connection between space and social structures, but this relationship leads in two directions. On the one hand, they use Greece to explore the vagaries of European divisions and borders, while on the other, they try to establish secure ideas about European government and historical tradition based on comparison with non-European "others." The longevity of classical thought adds further intricacies to this double-project: Greece is at the centre of the educated European's intellectual self-definition and at the margins of modern geopolitics; both a specific locale and a source of wider, common tradition,

and imagery. I show later in Chapters 5 and 7 that the Greek War of Independence further encouraged the Shelley–Byron circle to see Greece and Europe in terms of one another. Significantly though, Greece epitomizes and inspires uncertainty over the "borders" of Europe: it is alternately marginal and central in the negotiation of European spaces.