"I KNOW THEE NOT, I LOATHE THY RACE": ROMANTIC ORIENTALISM IN THE EYE OF THE OTHER

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> I must go to the Orient: all great glory comes from there.
>
> —Napoleon

> Is it some yet imperial hope
> That with such change can calmly cope?
> Or dread of death alone?
> To die a prince—or live a slave—
> Thy choice is most ignobly brave!
>
> —Byron, "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte"

Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, conceived in a spirit of rivalry to British imperialism in India, extended French military ambitions beyond the limits of Europe and initiated a legacy of colonialism in Africa that would produce, among other less commendable cultural artifacts, a rich Orientalist literature, of which Flaubert's *Salammbo*, with its luridly sensual evocations of decadence and the corrupt grandeur of power, might be considered typical. Napoleon, too, seems to have gone to Egypt pursuing a mirage of Oriental glory that would contribute to his career as an aspirant to Empire and confer on him the status of world-historical figure that Hegel and others would later fabricate for him as the outstanding political leader of the age. The campaign itself was characterized by extremes of violence and bloodshed that surpass even the usual sanguinary passages of Napoleon's military exploits and rival the surrealistic excesses of Flaubert's novel; and the desert conditions and brutal methods of warfare taxed Napoleon's capacity for leadership. But it was an uneven contest at best, as the fully modernized French forces clashed with quasi-medieval Muslim hordes lacking arms and military discipline. Victory for the French here, as in Europe, was simply a matter of the triumph of the modern imperial nation-state, with its institutionalized techniques of political organization, over peoples still living in traditional forms of social life. Napoleon, with his talent for stage-managing political events, was

thus able to capitalize on French military superiority to keep morale high in otherwise demoralizing conditions. At the climactic moment of the battle of Cairo, for example, as French troops besieged the beleagured city under the shadows of the monuments of Giza, Napoleon is reported to have exhorted his troops, "Soldiers, from the top of the pyramids, forty centuries look down on you!"[1]

By thus positioning himself at the apex of a world-historical narrative that provides the vantage of the Hegelian sovereign subject over the spectacle of sin and suffering being enacted below, Bonaparte inaugurates an essential gesture of Romantic Orientalism, which is predicated on the assertion of hegemony of West over East through the implicit privilege it assumes in placing the imperial observer in a position of metacritical superiority toward the colonial terrain that he surveys. Orientalism, Edward Said observes, is "a kind of Western projection onto and will to govern over the Orient" in which "the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks." In the version of universal history constructed by Napoleon, the events of the Egyptian campaign are placed in a narrative form that "supplants Egyptian or Oriental history by identifying itself directly and immediately with world history, a euphemism for European history." Thus written into a master narrative that places the Orient in the object position of a narrative grammar in which the imperial French general is the implicit subject, the battle of Cairo is not only a literal event; it is also a discursive strategy that furthers "Napoleon's wholly Orientalist engulfment of Egypt by the instruments of Western knowledge and power."[2]

During the Egyptian campaign, Napoleon is also reputed to have obtained from the ranks of his captives a harem of "Asian women" to serve his sexual needs and "to aid," comments his biographer André Castelot, "in forgetting the unfaithful Josephine." The French general's desire to possess an Empire in the East is mirrored in his need to assert control over his female subjects. Yet with typical ambivalence, Napoleon seems to have been physically repulsed by the actual presence of the Egyptian women when they were once in his possession. "Their obesity, their 'coarse extremities' (to use his expression), and especially their odor," writes Castelot, "were such that he repeatedly sent them back without having used them" (112). The one exception was the sixteen-year-old daughter of a local sheik, who suited the Emperor's taste for more submissive and less grossly physical womanhood. After she was abandoned by Bonaparte, the girl was arrested by the Egyptian

authorities and interrogated about her conduct in the affair. Although she claimed to have repented any attachment to Bonaparte, her father disowned her, and her interrogators were unimpressed by her disavowals. For her collaboration with the infidel, she was killed by having her throat cut by the impassive authorities.

This unfortunate incident, which invites comparison with any number of similar episodes in the Oriental tales of Byron, might seem insignificant when set against the wholesale massacres of the Egyptian campaign. But when considered as representative of the complex history of proliferating violence that was set in motion by European imperial ambitions in the nineteenth century, the event is an allegory of the conflicting cultural and political interests that intersect in the contested terrain of Orientalism, which here are tangibly focused in the need to lay claim to the bodies of Asian women, to penetrate and possess the Oriental harem, and to assert control over its compliant subjects. That the Egyptian authorities shared with Bonaparte the need to control the passive feminine object in this case cannot undo the recognition that the dynamic of the encounter was initiated by the intrusion of Western imperialism, which too often masked its colonization of Oriental subjects under the guise of the liberation of women from patriarchal oppression. Just as the British suppression of the practice of widow immolation (*suttee*) in India was in some ways liberating, but was also an instance of conflicted cultural dominance, as Gayatri Spivak has argued, so the supposed "civilizing mission" of French colonialism in Egypt must be considered as complexly implicated with the more negative effects of subjection and subalternity that were inscribed in the bodies and lives of colonized women.[3] The incident of the death of Napoleon's harem girl thus serves to initiate an inquiry into the workings of Romantic Orientalism as a site of cultural contestation in which the violent conflict for ideological hegemony over political terrain is figured in the struggles of men to assert power over Eastern women, who embody the mirage of the Orient in its most ambiguously sexual and politically charged form.

A similar drama is played out in texts like Beckford's *Vathek* (1786) and Byron's Oriental tales, beginning with *The Giaour* (1813) and culminating in cantos 5–8 of *Don Juan* (1821–23), which are equally fixated on the topos of the Oriental harem and on the figure of the veiled Eastern girl who stands as a synechdoche for the colonial other. These texts are underwritten by a narrative structure in which a male subject's attempts to "liberate" a female

object from the tyranny of the harem is interrupted or arrested by a stereotypical patriarchal oppressor who blocks or thwarts the achievement of narrative desire in the possession of the woman. Seen in the eye of the Eastern other, however, these texts reveal their hidden ambivalences and imperial ambitions as documents that are implicated in the Orientalist program.

Similarly, the figure of Napoleon, with his dark alter-ego the tyrannical Eastern sheik, can be seen reflected in the (re)doubled imperial figures who are the subject(s) of these texts, and who embody the desire of authors like Beckford and Byron to assert authorial hegemony over the feminized East and bring it under the regulation of the masculine West. Byron's text is thus shadowed by the imperial ambitions of an Egyptian campaign that does not appear overtly in the narrative but is its covert motive as an Orientalist construct. As Daniel Watkins observes, "While they never figure directly in the [Oriental] tales, the Napoleonic Wars assuredly fired Byron's imagination, as they constitute the largest, most immediate, and most sweeping event of the age, bringing before the public mind not only the sheer power and complex strategies that characterized modern warfare, but also an encompassing set of ideas about the exciting possibilities and dangers of restructuring society entirely." As for Napoleon himself, his "presence, marked by military genius, charisma, and courageous resistance to tyranny," provided a paradigm for the new form of Promethean subjectivity that was expressed in the contemporary wars of national liberation.[4] Jerome Christensen comments that "for Byron, Napoleon [was] the exemplary, all but the sole historical figure of the age," and his image shaped Byron's own self-fashioning as the (anti)type of the torturously introspective poetic persona: the figure of aggressive world-historical ambition.[5] Byron initiated his own Egyptian campaign in Greece against the Turks, in part, it might be argued, in imitation of the Emperor whom he at once despised and admired, in order to resume the imperial aspiration whose abdication he lamented in his "Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte" (1814), as well as in the effort to act out the role of Western savior of Greece that was written into his contemporary Orientalist productions. But the Napoleonic wars of national liberation were betrayed by the fact that "Napoleon's fight against tyranny" was quickly transformed into "a war for imperialism" (Watkins, 20), and Napoleon himself unmasked in "his flagrant duality, the antithetical mixture of dust and deity" that characterized his "psychological image" (Christensen,

72). Thus the Titanic aspirations of the world-historical Hegelian subject toward autonomous self-creation were revealed as the imperial ambitions of an Emperor bent on subjecting history to his political will, and the campaign in Egypt reduced to a blatant propaganda ploy that was meant simply to enhance Napoleon's prestige in Paris. Hence a deep ambivalence inhabits the figures of Byron's Napoleonic self-invention, as images of the contradictions of the age of bourgeois revolution and aristocratic reaction.

In the same vein, the Philhellene ambition to champion Greece as a bastion of freedom and democracy against "Oriental despotism," which is the ideological substance of much of Byron's work, also carries, as Martin Bernal and William St. Clair both point out, an undercurrent of imperialism and Eurocentrism. The implied ideological structure of Romantic Hellenism casts "the cause of Greece as the cause of Europe," and portrays the Turks as "a cruel, aggressive, barbarian race posing an active threat to Western civilization."[6] But in fact, the atrocities committed on both sides of the Greek War of Independence rivaled those of Napoleon's campaign in Egypt, as ardent European champions of Greece like Byron quickly discovered.[7] As Jerome McGann observes, "the Greek revolution . . . represented the beginning of the end of the Turkish Empire and the definitive emergence of European imperialism—at the head of which was England—into world history."[8] Both Byronic Philhellenism and Napoleonic imperialism were motivated by the desire to impose on the bloody struggles in the East the form of a world-historical narrative in which European modernity supersedes a spurious Oriental despotism as the dominant cultural system. The genuinely liberating impulse of Romantic Hellenism thus subsists within and serves to legitimate an imperial narrative that portrays the extension of European dominance over the East as historically inevitable.

The texts of Romantic Orientalism must therefore be read as part of the cultural apparatus whereby the Orient is contained and represented by ideological frameworks that serve both to incite confrontation and to seal off contestation within the larger structures of imperial history. The fact that such cultural strategies continue to have force in the incipiently postcolonial world and work to structure relations between East and West as violent exchanges of opposed powers suggests that the texts of Romantic Orientalism deserve attention not only as historical artifacts of the great age of imperialism, but as forms that continue residually to inform inter-

national relations in an emergent postmodern, multinational world order. To move beyond the legacy of colonialism requires the ability to see Orientalist discourse through the eye of the Eastern other, in order to avert the more violent consequences of the history of subjection and subalternity that continues to haunt the contemporary political situation.

In the introduction to *The Colonial Harem*, an unsettling study of the images of Algerian women captured on the postcards of French colonial soldiers, Malek Alloula proposes a project of opposition to the extension of cultural hegemony that is enacted through what he calls "the colonialist gaze" which is trained upon the figures of these veiled, or, more often, unveiled women. The Eurocentric phantasm of the colonial harem, with its captive and captivating aura of feminine sexuality and its highly paradoxical combination of male hyperpotency (in the figure of the cruel and indolent sheik) and male castration anxiety (in the figure of the eunuch), has served as an obsessive sight/site of colonialist desire since the eighteenth century, when it was given definitive expression in Montesquieu's *The Persian Letters* (1721). Napoleon's harem fantasy in Egypt was consequently as much a cultural construct as a personal sexual fetish; and the increasing popularity of such literary representations of the harem as those of Byron, Beckford, and Flaubert closely parallels the rise of European colonialism in the East. Alloula reveals the subtext of the Orientalist genre to disclose the imperial motive inherent in these seemingly exotic subjects. "To track," he writes, "through the colonial representations of Algerian women—the figures of a phantasm—is to attempt a double operation: first, to uncover the nature and meaning of the colonialist gaze; then, to subvert the stereotype that is so tenaciously attached to the bodies of women."[9]

Behind the multiply reproduced images of women posed in the lurid focus of these crypto-pornographic postcards, Alloula finds inscribed a single figure for colonial perceptions of the colonized, which can be formulated as "the practice of a right of (over)sight that the colonizer arrogates to himself and that is the bearer of multiform violence" (5). Like Napoleon at Cairo, the imperial subject surveys the colonial object from a position of metahistorical superiority that assumes its transcendental status over the field of the colonized culture. The colonialist gaze is thus predicated on the construction of a privileged point of pure vision, located outside the

explicit field of observation and occupied by a voyeuristic viewing subject, that allows the subject as colonial administrator or tourist to scan at will and thereby master the colonized as an object of perceptual interrogation. The panoptic eye of the imperialist, masquerading as ethnographer or Orientalist, asserts the hegemony of the dominant culture by the right it assumes of positioning the other in a field of sight that is also and always a field of power. In opposition to this hegemonic posture, Alloula proposes to turn this gaze around, to invert the structure of perception, and by mirroring that gaze, cause it to reflect upon the viewing subject. The project Alloula engages, like that undertaken here, is that of seeing the West in the eye of its Eastern other, and, in the absence of a true "confrontation of opposed gazes" between colonizer and colonized, to force the colonizer's perceptions to disclose their penumbra of sexualized violence.

His metaphor for this project is the magical conjuration against the evil eye. "Among us," Alloula writes, "we believe in the nefarious effects of the evil eye (the evil gaze). We conjure them with our hands spread out like a fan. I close my hand back upon a pen to write my exorcism: *this text*" (5).

Oddly enough, a precisely similar usage of the trope of the "evil gaze," deployed this time from a position clearly within the literature of dominance, occurs in Byron's *The Giaour*. Commonly considered merely a vehicle for its tortured hero, the "Giaour" (or "heretic") who is a Romantic outsider in typically Byronic style, this text merits reconsideration both as a format for Byron's Napoleonic self-fashioning and as representative of Romantic Orientalism. The plot of *The Giaour*, which is presented only indirectly through multiply fractured and discontinuous narrative fragments, centers upon the love rivalry between the Giaour, a renegade Venetian and apostate Christian, and "Black Hassan," the harem master and stock Oriental despot-figure whose wife Leila becomes the Giaour's adulterous lover and thence is drowned for infidelity. Byron's text thus reproduces the story of Napoleon's harem girl in a narrative that hinges, finally, on a moment of world-historical confrontation between the Giaour, as representative of the West in its assumed role of liberator of Eastern women, and Hassan, the figure of patriarchal power who stands for Oriental oppression in the thinly veiled political allegory of Byron's text. At a crucial moment in the narrative, the Giaour and Hassan face off preparatory to their

climactic battle-to-the-death. The Giaour has ambushed Hassan and his entourage in a treacherous mountain pass, when the embattled Hassan espies his foe on horseback and exclaims,

> 'Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now,
> I know him by his pallid brow;
> I know him by his evil eye
> That aids his envious treachery;
> I know him by his jet-black barb,
> Though now arrayed in Arnaut garb,
> Apostate from his own vile faith,
> It shall not save him from the death;
> 'Tis he! well met in any hour,
> Lost Leila's love, accursed Giaour!
>
> (610–19)[10]

In the battle that ensues, the Giaour predictably wins against superior numbers and slays his rival in a struggle whose outcome is as ideologically inevitable as was Napoleon's victory at Cairo. Yet after this abbreviated cultural (psycho)drama of the triumph of East over West has been played out, there occurs a curious reversal: in death, it is Black Hassan's opposing eye that fixes the Giaour in its cold dead stare, while the Giaour takes on the racial traits of his slain adversary.

> His back to earth, his face to heaven,
> Fall'n Hassan lies–his unclosed eye
> Yet lowering on his enemy,
> As if the hour that seal'd his fate
> Surviving left his quenchless hate;
> And o'er him bends that foe with brow
> As dark as his that bled below.
>
> (668–74)

In this scene of dramatic cultural (role)reversal, the implicit distance that separates the colonizer from the colonized, the imperial subject from the colonial object, seems to collapse into a moment of covert identification between the Oriental despot and the Napoleonic invader who usurps the despot's right of patriarchal supremacy in the narrative of colonial subjection. It would no doubt be overstating the case to see in this scene any real overturning of the structure of dominance, any real "confrontation of opposed gazes." Byron's text is too plainly a paean to militant Hellenism and to the hegemony of West over East to sustain such a reading. But in the absence of accessible texts written from a non-hegemonic perspec-

tive, I would like to allow these opposed gazes—Byron's and Alloula's, if you will, or Napoleon's and the Egyptian authorities'—to confront each other across the space of their respective texts in order to open an inquiry into the field of power that is constructed around the colonialist gaze which is fixed upon the figure of the racial/cultural other in Romantic narratives of the colonial encounter.

This scene serves as a *mise en abyme* of Byron's text to show the power of the colonialist gaze, which is covertly backed by the directly military force it focuses and reflects. Byron's text, Watkins comments, "projects a politics of violence" in which the monopoly on violence that is exercised by the social order "as a legitimate means of social control" (46) is confronted by a reciprocal violence which purports to contest that order through mirroring and returning its covert effects. In this confrontation of escalating aggression, the "evil gaze" serves as the medium of exchange for the transaction of opposed powers. The potential for eroticized violence accessed by the gaze can scarcely be deflected from its object. Instead, the evil gaze is enacted as a specular transaction or mirror stage that captures both subject and object, viewer and viewed in a mutual interchange of potential (self)destruction.

Byron acknowledged in a note that although he regarded the "evil eye" as a "common superstition," "the imaginary effects are yet very singular on those who conceive themselves affected" (*Works*, 3:419). Just as the text seduces the reader through the device of a superstition that it serves to exorcise, so in a similar context the agents of imperialism would employ the myths of the colonized for their own purposes. While assuming the guise of the Western demystifier of Eastern superstition, Byron allows himself to endorse, if only as a narrative image, the efficacy of the colonialist gaze on its object. If the power of that gaze persists to this day in forms displaced from the original object, it remains for critical analysis to exorcise its effects on the living.

Byron's is not the only text of Romantic Orientalism to employ the metaphor of the "evil eye" as a central textual trope. In fact, Byron more likely derived the "superstition" from textual sources than encountered it in his own travels in Turkey. Beckford's *Vathek*, recited by Byron as an intertext, makes explicit if ironic use of the "evil gaze" as a trope signifying the power of its central despotic subject.

> Vathek, ninth Caliph of the race of Abassides, was the son of Motassem, and the grandson of Haroun al Raschid. From an early accession to the throne, and the talents he possessed to adorn it, his subjects were induced to expect that his reign would be long and happy. His figure was pleasing and majestic; but when he was angry, one of his eyes became so terrible, that no person could bear to behold it; and the wretch upon whom it was fixed, instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions and making his palace desolate, he but rarely gave way to his anger.[11]

Vathek is by no means the first of a long line of "Oriental despots" to appear in European literature; nor is Beckford's deployment of the trope of the "evil gaze" to be accorded an inappropriate seriousness. Beckford ironizes what Byron takes more literally; and, in writing himself into the Orientalist text, he assumes a position that is ambiguously mixed in its racial/cultural affiliations. Yet in the shifting terrain of Romantic Orientalism, it is difficult to characterize the attitude of either writer toward the trope he employs, just as it is difficult to fix the relationship between "author" and "persona," or between the Romantic poet (Coleridge is a case in point) and the Oriental despot (Kubla Khan) who serves as an inverse figure of his imaginary desire. Byron was prone to cultural cross-dressing; and Robert Kiely points out that Beckford was personally invested in the figure of Vathek, who provides "an oriental disguise" for Beckford's self-representation as "the absolute egoist."[12] Similarly, Napoleon in Egypt, like Byron in Turkey, felt the need to appropriate the culture of those he set out to conquer by dressing himself in an Oriental turban and robe, although the laughter of his staff at the prospect of the general in native drag was such that he wore his disguise for only one day (Castelot, 114). But the power of transference in *Vathek* allows Beckford effectively to assume not only the garb but the guise of the colonized, so that his penetration of the colonial culture is that much more total. As imitation is appropriation, so identification is a form of the cultural imperialism that it seems to occult in the duplicitous gestures of Orientalist discourse.

In any event, the trope of the "evil gaze" plays a role in *Vathek* that exceeds the Voltairean skepticism of the text's narrator, thus indicating that its power is greater than Beckford might consciously authorize. To add a final irony to the matter, the only character in *Vathek* to successfully withstand the Caliph's gaze is a figure named "the Giaour," who is "so abominably hideous" that "the

Caliph himself appear[s] startled at so horrible a visage" (5). "The man, or rather monster," the narrator observes of the Giaour, is "blacker than ebony" (6); but his otherness in relation to Vathek is more than racial. The Giaour's function in Beckford's text is to embody the East as the irreducibly other, as that which defies decipherment or fixation by the strategies of Western power and so presents itself, in the persistent trope of ethnography through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as *monstrosity*: as that which can only be represented as effacement and disfiguration.[13]

But again, the figure of the Giaour focuses an ideological contradiction. Despite his horrific appearance, the Giaour comes bearing "beautiful commodities" (6), signifying his ambivalent function in the economy of Western commodity fetishism that is fixated upon the image of the East as a source of wealth and as a decadent utopia. Vathek attempts to master the Giaour, to delimit his meaning and make him speak, thus to compel him to reveal the secrets of the riches of the Orient. The Giaour, however, remains silent, refusing the efforts of Vathek to reduce him to meaning in the linguistic economy of Western logocentrism. When the Giaour persists in withholding his speech, Vathek threatens to " 'make him rue his pertinacity' ": "this menace was accompanied by one of the Caliph's angry and perilous glances, which the stranger sustained without the slightest emotion; although his eyes were fixed on the terrible eye of the prince" (6). Again, the colonial encounter becomes a mirror stage of gazes exchanged and refused in a specular structure of opposed powers. Beckford's text thematizes the resistance of the East to colonization. Yet in the end, *Vathek* testifies to the Faustian obsession of Western man with the project of fixing the Orient in his gaze, with deciphering its secrets, possessing its riches, and making it yield its meaning. The legibility of the East as text is a central conundrum of *Vathek*; and the attempt to fix the Orient in the authorial gaze is linked to the repeated decrypting of texts whose meaning is effaced in the act of reading.[14] The specularity of reading in *Vathek*, however, is not simply an aporetic structure, but rather mirrors the larger effort of Orientalism to perceive in the other the image of its reflected desire and to penetrate the significance of the other through the projection of the colonialist gaze.

Similarly, both Vathek's passion for the Eastern girl Nouronihar—who is described in relentlessly scopophilic terms—and the many subpornographic harem episodes that punctuate the text,

serve to solicit the gaze of the reader toward an Orient that is conceived as a feminine *space* of languid sensuality and riotous passion. The Orient is thus (re)figured as the harem fantasy of a militant European imperialism that places "the East" as the obscure object of Western desire. Vathek's long and rather aimless quest into the mysterious lands of the East in search of nameless gratifications is a displaced version of imperial travel narratives and the accounts of missionary colonialism; and, like these generic equivalents, the narrative structure of *Vathek* positions the Orient as a feminized space invaded by the masculine subject, one who undergoes the risk of being feminized by the experience, of "going native" when subjected to the sensual lures of the East.[15] The structure of narrative in *Vathek* thus closely approximates Teresa de Lauretis's Oedipal paradigm, although with a more obviously politically overdetermined subtext: the Orient becomes a feminized, passive object that is subject to male desire in a narrative economy prescribed by the reconfiguration of gendered binaries in the service of the basic East/West dichotomy.[16] The thrust of narrative, then, enacts the colonization of the Orient, as the imperious male European ego penetrates the feminized *space* of the East; and the subjection of the veiled feminine other becomes an image of the submission of the Oriental to the Occidental principle. Considered as a single metagrammatical sentence, the ideological syntax of the narrative of Romantic Orientalism might be reduced to the structure of Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, in which the West as subject defeats the East as object in the battle for world-historical ascendancy. The narrative structure of Romantic Orientalism in its paradigmatic form is thus an Egyptian campaign that acts out the imperial motive in the displaced modes of sexual conquest and personal combat.

A notably similar structure underwrites Byron's narrative production in *The Giaour*, albeit with rather different subtextual motives. Just as the overt mission of Napoleon's Egyptian campaign was covertly doubled by his harem fantasy of Oriental pleasure, so Byron's narrative production is dually motivated by the logic of (masculine) combat and (feminine) desire. The explicit action of the text that constitutes its overt narrative describes the Giaour's single combat with Hassan as a version of the world-historical victory of West over East, with the two major characters standing in as Hegelian "national geniuses" or collective subjects typifying the his-

torical conflict between Greece and Turkey. But the covert action of the Giaour's penetration of the feminized space of the harem and the subjection of the Eastern female to the Western will is cast as a pretext that predates its insertion into the literal narrative. The aggressively sexual aspect of the European harem fantasy is thus, like Leila herself, conspicuously absent from the explicit text, and is instead displaced to the preconscious level of an internalized subtext that must be brought to consciousness and reconstructed by the reader, in collaboration with the implied author. While diverting the attention of the reader away from the absence of its assumed motive, Byron's text focuses instead on an overt narrative that is precisely the *negative mirror image* of its buried subtext: the love conquest of Leila by the Giaour and the subsequent drowning of Leila by Hassan. This (mis)recognition is achieved by a sustained (re)doubling of events as seen in the multiply diffracted images that are reflected in the viewpoints of the text's disparate "narrators" (such as the Byronic persona, the Moslem fisherman, the Giaour), who articulate the complex structure of the whole of Byron's Orientalist ideology. Taken together, then, the twinned subnarratives of *The Giaour* enact as a *mise en abyme* or narrative image the specular structure of opposed gazes that dominates the text. The intertwining of narrative paradigms—one overt, one covert; one conscious, one preconscious; one legible, one illegible—demonstrates the interimplication of coproductive narrative structures in the instantiation of the ideology of dominance, and testifies to the protean quality of that ideology in its ability to permeate the field of power and recuperate contradictory motives toward a single political object: the maintenance of relations of power in the (inter)cultural sphere.

This omnific capacity to saturate and penetrate the cultural field is built into Byron's text as the narrative syntax of a transformational system that decomposes and recomposes the essential semantic elements of cultural narratives into different configurations. Spivak has documented how cultural narratives work to (re)enact the "justification of imperialism as a civilizing mission" by recasting the relations between dominant and dominated cultures into a single metagrammatical sentence, as "a case of 'White men saving brown women from brown men' " (297). Byron's *The Giaour* reproduces a similar syntactic structure, although in displaced forms that allow him to ring changes on the basic semantic elements. "White men

saving brown women from brown men" becomes, in the language of Byron's "Advertisement" to the text, "the story . . . of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion" (*Works*, 3:39–40). Watkins has noted how Byron's backgrounding of the narrative in a world-historical context serves to place the violent conflict of the text in a frame which emphasizes that that violence is a product of social conditions (35–36). Byron thus historicizes the narrative paradigm uncovered by Spivak, revealing its implication in political assertions of cultural identity that are staged in Philhellene terms in the battle of West against East over the Hellenic ideal extolled in the opening stanzas of the text and embodied in the person of Leila. At the same time, Byron gives the structure of the cultural narrative a negative twist by casting the drowning of Leila as prefatory to the "present" action, thus rendering the narrative fatally ironic and enabling its negation or displacement.

But before crediting Byron with deliberately subverting the cultural paradigm, it is important to observe that the text preserves the fundamental triadic structure of the form ("white men" saving "brown women" from "brown men," which is transposed into the closely related form, "white men" saving "white women" from "brown men," its common ideological variant), which corresponds to the "erotic triangle" of René Girard's *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*. Even in refiguring this structure, Byron's text merely reveals what, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick points out, was implicit in the triangulation all along: "The use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing bonds of men with men."[17] Hence the elision of the material presence of Leila from the text and her subsequent conversion into a sign is in keeping with her status as symbolic capital used to motivate the exchange between the two male figures, while her function in the world-historical mechanism of the narrative casts her as the ground or site upon which the male actants act out their struggles for cultural hegemony.

Attribution of a homosocial motive in the text might also go some way toward explicating such obtrusive passages as that describing the combat between the Giaour's men and Hassan's Turks:

Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress;
But love itself could never pant
For all that beauty sighs to grant,
With half the fervour Hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold;
Friends meet to part—Love laughs at faith;—
True foes, once met, are joined till death!

(644–54)

Violent combat is here (re)figured as an element in the homosocial economy of exchanges that encodes dominance as a libidinal cathexis. Further polymorphously perverse implications linger over the initial invocation of "Greece" ("He who hath bent him o'er the dead, / Ere the first day of death is fled" [68–69]) which betray a necrophiliac motive, as well as over the "Vampire curse" section (747–86) and the final appearance of Leila as a spectral double (1271–1318), which merely reconfirms her effective absence from the text. As in the case of Napoleon's harem fantasies, the actual presence of "Asian women" disrupts rather than consummates the sexual aura of the Orientalist mirage, and physical possession of the desired object is displaced to a level of abstraction that averts the disturbance of the ideological phantasm by intrusive sexual elements. But more important than the erotic implications that haunt the text is the sense that Byron's narrative, despite its rhetoric of heterosexual love, actually reproduces a patriarchal economy in which the only important relationships are between men, and libidinal motives only serve to focus struggles for dominance. What is really acted out in the text, then, is the battle between Hassan and the Giaour as world-historical agents of East and West, which is why the "Battle of Giaour and Pascha" is generally seen (as in Delacroix's paintings) as the central narrative image, enacting in the seeming fusion of opposed forces the establishment of binary relations of hegemony that emerge from the visual/textual field.

In any event, it remains useful to regard Spivak's imperial sentence as the ideological deep structure of Byron's text, even though the narrative foregrounds the surface variants that are generated from this basic paradigm. Schematic renditions of narrative grammar can be at best approximations of a structure that is transformationally (re)produced in text production. Thus models of narrative generation need to allow for the production of a number of non-

identical textual overlays from a single deep structure to account for the generative capacity of ideology and its productive function in semiosis.

So in *The Giaour* the reader is presented with a number of branching narrative "versions" of the essential plot and forced to (re)assemble those fragmentary substructures in accordance with a hermeneutic template that composes those differential micronarratives in disparate ways. The "Advertisement" of the text asks the reader to reconstruct the narrative politics in line with the ideology of contemporary "Hellenomaniacs," and represents an attempt by Byron as author-function to impose structural coherence on the text. But the supposed unity of the text is belied by the disjunctive quality of the narrative it contains, which decomposes and recomposes the basic plot in ways that leave its structural integrity in question. In fact, the text openly calls into question its own interpretation of events in mid-narrative, leading the reader to reflect on the nature of narrativity as (re)construction, and on the groundlessness of signifying process as a social practice of meaning-production. Interrogating the truth status of the tale, the narrator queries,

> Doth Leila there no longer dwell?
> That tale can only Hassan tell:
> Strange rumours in our city say
> Upon that eve she fled away;
> . . . . . .
> Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
> Who did not watch their charge too well;
> But others say, that on that night,
> By pale Phingari's trembling light,
> The Giaour upon his jet black steed
> Was seen—but seen alone to speed
> With bloody spur along the shore,
> Nor maid nor page behind him bore.
>
> (445–48, 465–72)

Once again the narrative focuses on the indeterminate presence/absence of "Leila" as a sign of its incommensurability. The "fact" that the reader has earlier been presented with a different version of this scene does not foreclose its unsettling quality, but instead calls into question the status of objective narration and problematizes the production of ideology in narrative. Although the various

subnarratives are potentially recuperable into a single coherent design by an act of interpretive will or discursive authority (as indeed most critics attempt to coerce the text into a synthetic unity even while differing substantively from each other about how that act is to be managed), nevertheless the fragmentary and disruptive quality of the text prevents the narrative from reaching fully realized closure, thus opening the text to hermeneutic reconstruction.[18] Presented with conflicting accounts of the central plot, the reader must (re)assemble the tale from the fragments presented by the text. The final coherence of the narrative is left questionable, and the text concludes: "This broken tale was all we knew / Of her he loved, or him he slew" (1333–34).

Thus even at the literal level, Byron's text refuses the desire of its assumed author to anchor its truth claims in a plot structure that is validated by self-referential confirmation. *The Giaour*, with its related textual apparatus, unsettles its status as narrative by repeated self-undermining, and in so doing forestalls ideological synthesis. While it is possible to ascertain the basic elements of the plot of the text, it is impossible to fix those micronarratives chronologically in a causal/temporal sequence; and the gaps that intervene between discrete narrative fragments prohibit definitive plot closure. The effect of this stratification of plot substructures that refuse to be reduced to a literal meaning is to reveal the narrative act as the result of the operation of narrativity on a number of discontinuous elements which, while limited and limiting as embedded in the grammaticality of cultural semiosis and the ideology of form, are nonetheless not fixed but unstable and transposable, if not inherently (self)deconstructing. The disposition of narrativity thus allows the reader to deconstruct and reconstruct the cultural narratives that inform the text and so to gain that "*internal distantiation* from the ideology from which [the text] emerge[s]" that enables the subject to " 'perceive' (but not know) in some sense *from the inside*, by an *internal distance*, the very ideology in which [it is] held."[19] This metanarrative capacity, which allows the textual subject to constructively decompose and recompose cultural narratives to determine the conditions of his cultural production, provides an opposing perspective on the text from that of the imperial subject. By operating within the ideology that it renders intelligible, the metanarrative propensity opens the cultural text to contestation and enables its deconstruction.

Nor does the process of multiple narrative displacements and metagrammatical transpositions in Byron's text end there. After Byron had published the tale, public rumor about his implication in the affair it records prompted him to request a certain Lord Sligo to substantiate his relation to the story. Sligo replied with this account:

> The new governor [of Athens], unaccustomed to have the same course with Christians as his predecessor, had, of course, the barbarous Turkish ideas with regard to women. In consequence, and in strict compliance with the letter of the Mohammedan law, he ordered this girl to be sewed up in a sack, and thrown into the sea. . . . As you were returning from bathing in the Piraeus, you met the procession going down *to execute the sentence* . . . [You] immediately interfered; and . . . succeeded . . . in procurring her pardon, on the condition of her leaving Athens. (*Works*, 3:414, italics mine)

Here the essential lineaments of the narrative grammar begin to emerge with more clarity. To "execute a sentence" is not only to follow the symbolic "letter of the law," but also to translate a grammatical practice into action. Byron's quasi-autobiographical intervention in his text thus transposes its underlying "sentence" into a permutation of Spivak's imperial narrative. Yet while one might be tempted to regard this account as the definitive, literal version of the story and so as a finalized "deep structure," the continued proliferation of narrative surfaces still refuses to be resolved into a single construction. Sligo's account remains merely the pseudo-objective report of an "outsider" to the events of the narrative which is contradicted by other versions of the Byronic text. Thus released to the general circulation of meaning-production in the social text, Byron's narrative comes unmoored from any strictly referential signification and is submitted to cultural (re)construction.

One might read Byron's intervention in his text to prevent the "execution of a sentence" as the interdiction of one narrative paradigm by another. But the further implication of the aporetic structure inherent in narrative is that these disparate structural paradigms are coproductive, transformationally related to each other in the "dialectically interlocking structures" of (post)colonial ideology. Spivak transcodes these ideological forms as two mutually determinate syntactic structures, which are further reflected in two related "sentences": on the one hand, the justification generated by the apologists of imperialism for intervention in colonial affairs

under the guise of liberation, as "white men saving brown women from brown men"; on the other, the "nativist" argument propounded by mystifiers of the precolonial past, who insist that "the women wanted to die" (297). Faced with two opposing and mutually unacceptable versions of the same sentence, one ceases to look for a predeterminate deep structure that generates these surface aporias but instead begins to plot a history that locates the source of the operations of hegemony staged in narrative not in an underlying textual substructure but in the double binds of imperial ideology and its proliferation of specular doublings which enable the figures of resistance to serve as inverted images in the eye of the dominant culture. The Oriental despot, with his paralyzing gaze, and the Napoleonic conqueror, with his panoptic world-historical vision, merely reflect, in inverse mirrors, a single specular structure from which the mutually mesmerized protagonists find it impossible to extricate themselves. And between them, caught in the conflicting field of opposed gazes, is the colonial woman whose fate it is to be destroyed by the redoubled violence of the male antagonists.

Interestingly enough, in a strange misogynist irony that is rooted in the phantasm that suffuses the colonial harem, a later version of Byronic autobiography records an account of the tale that reproduces both of the structures narrated by Spivak in the attempt to account for the logic of the imperial plot. It was an older and rather more garrulous Byron who in offering this account to Thomas Medwin wrote himself even more definitively into his narrative:

> When I was in Athens, there was an edict in force similar to that of Ali's, except that the mode of punishment was different. . . . I was fond at that time of a Turkish girl—ay, fond of her as I have been of few women. . . . we had not met for several days . . . when, as ill fate would have it, the means I took to effect [our liaison] led to the discovery of our secret. The penalty was death. . . . A mere accident only enabled me to *prevent the completion of the sentence.* I was taking one of my usual morning rides by the sea-side, when I observed a crowd of people moving down to the shore. . . . My curiosity was forcibly excited. . . . What was my horror to learn that they were carrying an unfortunate girl, sewn up in a sack, to be thrown into the sea! . . . Suffice it to say, that my intervention with the chief magistrate, backed by a heavy bribe, saved her; but it was only on condition that she should immediately quit Athens, and be sent to her friends in Thebes. There she died, a few days after her arrival, of a fever—perhaps of love.[20]

How eminently gratifying to the imperial ego to save the submissive colonial "girl" from the barbarous despotism of Oriental law, only to have her voluntarily immolate herself for sheer love of her dashing white savior! Here Byron's text merely displaces the fate reserved for Napoleon's harem girl by suggesting that the woman's death is self-willed, thus again reproducing, in inverted form, the alternative sentence of Spivak's paradigm of imperial ideology: "The women wanted to die." Again it is the woman who suffers the fate incurred by her cooptation in the acts of men, and the colonial other who bears the destructive effects of collaboration with the imperial program. Positioned between two equally untenable versions of the execution of a sentence, the Byronic narrative of displaced specular self-fashioning continues to solicit interest in the "ill fate" of the colonial woman even as it produces permutations of hegemony from the gaps and contradictions of the ideology of dominance that it articulates. Yet the non-confirmative and interruptive quality of Byron's text allows the reader to see through the ungrammaticality of its explicit narrative, and thus to liberate a rather different subtext. Byron's text unwittingly discloses the willful erasure of the "sentence" of woman in the patriarchal economy of the imperial narrative, thus allowing the deconstructive reader to see through the text's overt surface and perceive the concealed figure of the feminine other beneath the veil of Orientalist ideology.

But despite the arguably deconstructive propensities of Byron's text, *The Giaour* remains a fundamentally hegemonic narrative, centered on the extension of Western cultural superiority over the East in an agonistic struggle of dominance contested and (re)confirmed in the dramatic battle of Giaour and Pascha. Thus the observation that potentially deconstructive moments can exist within the speculative structure of the dominant ideology without thereby deconstituting that ideology might lead to a more complex consideration of the tenaciously doubled and (re)doubling quality of the imperial narrative, which is generated in Hegelian fashion out of a dynamic of internal contestations and displacements, of potential overturnings that are finally recontained within the larger structure of dominance.

Although this might seem a decidedly negative judgment, such observations merely make more pressing the project proposed by the Moroccan critic Abdelkebir Khatabi: the "decolonization which would be at the same time a deconstruction of those discourses which participate in various, more or less dissimulated, ways in

imperial domination."[21] The danger lies in allowing deconstructive tactics to be recuperated into a sterile dialectic of challenge and containment that merely recapitulates the strategies of consolidation of power deployed by cultural authority. Like Giaour and Pascha locked in a specular structure of opposed powers, deconstruction and the hegemonic ideology it contests can become fixated in a posture of mutual (mis)recognition that simply (re)enacts the paradigm of conflict written into the dominant discourse. What is needed in this effort, then, is an account of the subtly transformative and internally fractured nature of imperial ideology that allows it to pervade the field of power invisibly and penetrate the colonial terrain in ways that mask its operative capacity to displace potentially subversive moments and reproduce itself from the very dynamic of contestation that might otherwise deconstruct it.

A model for such operations can be found in Hegel's account of the Master/Slave relationship, which serves as a description of the internal dynamic of the dominant ideology, as well as of the narrative logic of many Romantic texts, including *The Giaour*. The Hegelian paradigm of sovereignty describes the stance of the imperial subject in its relation of assumed superiority to the colonial other, while the figure of the slave typifies the subaltern consciousness that must prove itself on the terms of the culture it contests.[22] Facing off against each other in a dramatic encounter that (pre)figures the relation of the West to its Eastern other, the Giaour and "Black Hassan" enact a dynamic transaction that is precisely analogous to Hegel's description of the battle-to-the-death of two opposed self-consciousnesses, cast as the (re)doubled relation of each to its projected other. The specularity of Hegel's construct reveals its implication in the dominant ideology that mirrors and inverts real relations of power in order to effectively recontain the negative moment that is generated within it. In the Master/Slave relationship, Hegel writes, each individual consciousness "finds itself as an *other* . . . for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other." Each "must cancel this its other," and "thereupon proceed[] to sublate (*aufhebung*) its own self." Locked in an agonistic struggle of mutual dialectical (self)destruction, the two individual (self)consciousnesses engage in a bitter "trial by death" that threatens both with negation and annihilation.[23]

But the real irony of the metaphysic of aggression recorded in Hegel's account is that "this trial by death, however, cancels both the truth which was to result from it, and therewith the certainty of

self altogether" (233). This "blind spot of Hegelianism," comments Derrida, "is the *point* at which destruction, suppression, death and sacrifice constitute so irreversible an expenditure, so radical a negativity . . . that they can no longer be determined as negativity in a process or system" which can then be economized in the self-regulating logic of Hegelian discourse.[24] What intervenes, then, is a deconstructive moment in Hegel's master narrative that threatens to collapse the basic dichotomy on which it is erected by destabilizing the terms of the dialectic and revealing the ultimate *groundlessness* of Hegel's metaphysical superstructure. Because the binary terms of the dialectic do not reach synthesis but instead "cancel themselves and are sublated as terms or extremes seeking to have existence on their own account" (233), Hegel confronts the "abstract negation" (234) of the premises of his narrative system and the deconstructive aporia over which the ideology of sovereignty is built.

Hegel's account incisively theorizes the dynamic of Byron's text, which similarly centers on the "trial by death" of two embattled self-consciousnesses locked in a conflict of mutually opposed negations that defy simplistic binary analysis. Although the battle is clearly pivotal in instating the ideological plot-scheme of West versus East, yet the coherence of that ideology is called into question by the unsettling propensity of distinctions between the two characters to blur, break down, and to reverse the terms of the dialectical polarities that underwrite them. Thus in the moment of slaying Hassan, the Giaour takes on the traits of his racial/cultural adversary and so *becomes the other*: once "young and pale" with "sallow front" (194), he becomes instantly "dark as [him] who bled below" (674), so that years later the Muslim fisherman can recognize him by his "dark spirit" (796), while the Anchorite monk remarks his "dark and unearthly . . . scowl" (832). Locked in "the last embrace of foes / When grappling in the fight they fold / Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold" (650–52), the ambiguously in(ter)determinate relationship between the two characters finally becomes so complex that even the Giaour himself seems to have a difficult time discriminating (him)self from the other. Making his final confession, the Giaour asks his listener:

> Still, ere, thou dost condemn me—pause:
> Not mine the act, though I the cause;
> Yet did he but what I had done
> Had she been false to more than one;

Faithless to him—he gave the blow,
But true to me—I laid him low;
Howe'er deserv'd her doom might be
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which tyranny can ne'er enthrall;
But I, alas! too late to save,
Yet all I then could give—I gave—
'Twas some relief—our foe a grave.

(1060–72)

The sheer incoherence of the text's ideology here might lead some exasperated readers to consider this simply a classic statement of the patriarchal double-standard. But the passage is more usefully theorized as an ideological double-bind that collapses the thematic of the text into interlocking deconstructive binaries. Such is the power of negation in the text that Byron comes close to collapsing the entire narrative into the bleak truth of Hegel's dialectical impasse: that "death is the natural 'negation' of consciousness, negation without independence, which thus remains without the requisite significance of actual recognition" (233). Read this way, the passage opens up an internal (self)deconstruction of the binary system that produces the text's ideology of dominance and offers a way out of the metaphysic of aggression that it perpetuates.

The problem with such simplistically deconstructive readings of Byron's text, though, is that in focusing on ideological incoherence, critical analysis ignores the covert power of the hegemonic ideology to recuperate such protodeconstructive ploys. The dynamic of subjection reconfirms the ability of the sovereign subject to (re)constitute itself upon the threat of otherness that might otherwise negate the movement of subject-formation. Even the inversion or overturning of grammatical positions in narrative, in which subject and object, Master and Slave switch polarities, does not deconstruct the ideological structure but rather transposes the terms that reconstitute that structure at another level. The Giaour's symbolic assimilation of the racial/cultural traits of Hassan, his becoming the other, is yet another form of cultural cross-dressing that subl(im)ates the other into the sovereign self and thus celebrates the power of the dominant to annihilate and/or assimilate alterity and opposition. The dialectic of self and other that is inscribed in the text, then, (re)figures a potential threat to cultural identity by introjecting and assimilating the other in a process of specular identification-in-difference. Thus whatever the deconstructive tendency of the

encounter, the Giaour finally proclaims his victory over Hassan and over the abstract negation of death. "I knew but to obtain or die," he insists,

> I die—but first I have possest,
> And come what may, I *have been* blest;
> . . . . . .
> So would I live and love again.
> I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
> For him who dies, but her who died.
>
> (1113–15, 1120–23)

The Giaour's claim to have achieved triumph over death as a sovereign subject in possession of his introjected object reconfirms the structure of lordship and bondage it seems to overturn; and despite the assumed marginalization of the Giaour after his battle with Hassan, the final scenes of the story take place in a monastery, thus reasserting the ideological centrality of Western culture and recontaining the subversively antisocial violence focused in the Byronic figure and his dark double.

Just as constructions of subjectivity are built upon the dialectical interplay of self/other, subject/object, inside/outside, identity/difference, so cultures constitute themselves on and against a defined Other that is both fearful (Hassan) and fascinating (Leila), alien/familiar, dangerous/attractive and so forth, in a process of projection and introjection that enables cultural identity to be defined simultaneously by what it is and is not, and that interpellates centrality in relation to what is expelled as marginal and marginality in relation to the introjected center. So too, literary texts, like other cultural narratives, confirm their status as authoritative constructs by enacting a specular encounter with what is banished to the margins of the social text and constructing a dramatic confrontation with otherness in which the other is assimilated and/or annihilated. In this sense, then, the fact that the Giaour symbolically becomes the other does not deconstruct the textual subject but reconfirms its hegemony over internal incoherences. *The Giaour* enacts the sub-l(im)ation of a threat to the dominant ideology in order to reaffirm the power of that ideology to internalize and contain threats to its authority. Considered in relation to the totality of cultural production in the contemporary context, as a (sub)version of the master narrative of European imperialism in its dynamic, expansionist

phase, then, *The Giaour* is a (re)production of a larger and more inclusive ideological construct that is the imperial narrative. At its broadest semantic horizon, the imperial narrative inscribes a Napoleonic viewpoint on universal history that locates the sovereign subject in a position of mastery over the conflicts and contestations of material events and identifies the actions of that subject with the workings of world-historical process. By providing a total, global master narrative in which to insert the diversity of nations and cultures within a narrative structure centered on the West as a collective agent, the imperial narrative provides an all-inclusive "strategy of containment" that renders world history intelligible by circumscribing it within the purview of the panoptic gaze of the sovereign European subject.[25]

Thus deconstruction as a practice and the cultural processes of subversion and containment that it mimes in intertextual terms operate within the total economy of a cultural master narrative whose logic is described in the Hegelian/Marxist paradigm of universal history, which provides a functional model of the dominant ideology in its capacity to produce hegemony from the dynamic of contestation that enables its production. At issue here is a necessary distinction between the practice of deconstruction and the dialectic, in which the overturning of structural binaries produces not transgression but rather reconfirmation of the identity of identity and non-identity in a synthetic unity-through-negation at a higher level. The dialectic is constituted through a dynamic of sublation (*aufhebung*) in which the construction of identity (thesis: $A=A$) produces by inversion a construction of otherness (antithesis: $A\neq B$) that is in turn reconstituted through a further negation that simultaneously reaffirms identity at another level of abstraction (synthesis: $A=^{A}/_{B}$).[26] This dynamic not only corresponds to the internal logic of Romantic texts like *The Giaour*, but also describes the workings of ideology at large in producing and containing subversion and threats to cultural authority within a larger structure of dominance. On a more localized level, this model reproduces the internal functioning of Romantic Orientalism as a manifestation of developing European cultural imperialism, which projects a phantasm of "The East" as an object of ambiguous desire/aggression, only to reassimilate that mirage of otherness into a reconfirmation of Western ("Hellenistic") identity. As a negative moment within the instantiation of this larger cultural narrative of hegemony, *The*

Giaour offers a deconstructive insight into the construction of the imperial narrative that underwrites much of nineteenth-century European cultural production, as the legitimating ideological infrastructure that validates the more literal imperialist ventures of the age.

The Giaour is centered on the construction of the colonial encounter as a visual transaction occurring in a scopic field that positions speculating subjects relative to each other in a configuration that defines relations of power and dominance. In thematizing the "colonialist gaze" as the "evil eye" of the Giaour, the text records the influence of that gaze as a vaguely defined threat to the visual object. But despite the illusion of transparency that cloaks the dominant ideology, Byron's text conceals neither the sexuality nor the violence that are invested in that gaze as directed toward the colonial other. Instead, the text remains haunted by the spectres of the repressed, both in the figure of feminine desire sublimated in the form of Leila, around whose "eye's dark charm" (473) the gaze of the narrator frequently dilates; and in the figure of "Black Hassan," whose "unclosed eye / Yet lower[s] on his enemy" (669–70) even after death as if to position the Giaour, too, in the focus of the relentless gaze. The text thus is spatialized around gazes exchanged and returned, battling for control of a scopic field that is centered on the panoptic positioning of a presumed "omniscient" narrator who asserts control over the multiple internal fracturings of that field by, in Alloula's words, "the practice of a right of (over)sight" that establishes the conditions of dominance of the sovereign subject over all others.

But despite the assumed omniscience of that eye of power, there are distinct moments in Byron's text when the structure of the gaze breaks down, reverses, and becomes the mirror of a subject *seeing itself seeing itself* in the eye of the other. The inherent specularity of the "*structure of misrecognition*" that is constitutive of ideology is unmasked in the text, and the phantasm of the Orient that is projected by Romantic Orientalism revealed as the imaginary projection of a will-to-power that it attempts to conceal and legitimate.[27] Although Byron's text falls short of the self-unmasking of ideological demystification, it nonetheless records a "confrontation of opposed gazes" that provides the oppositional reader with opportunities for a subversive rereading of the colonialist text.

An oppositional reading of Byron's text, then, suggests that it is possible to read even the most hegemonic texts as structured

around dynamic attempts to confront and subl(im)ate what they repress; and that within the seemingly seamless field of power that produces the literature of dominance are inscribed moments of transgression which subvert or at least complicate the assertion of that power. Which is to say that the imperial narrative of Romantic Orientalism contains the terms of its contestation and displacement, despite the attempts of the explicit author(ities) to recuperate those moments into further affirmations of dominance. Similarly, against accounts of the scopic field that see "the gaze" as monolithic, totalized, and inescapeable, Byron's text implies a more complex model of the positioning of subject(s) and object(s) in the visual spectacle that allows for the inversion of power relations and the overturning of dominance as it allows for more complicated transactions of alternate negation and identification within the dual mirrors of the eye. Further, while the colonial encounter is doubtless overwhelmingly uneven as a conflict of opposed powers, yet there exist within the literature of dominance "traces of the gaze of the colonized upon the colonizer" that allow the reader to reverse the terms of reading that literature, to find inscribed within it a more contestatory "confrontation of opposed gazes." Such readings not only deauthorize the dominant texts as sources of cultural authority, but also empower the marginal figures positioned within those texts and liberate the suppressed subtext they contain, thus allowing the possibility that oppositional voices might speak and alternative points of view be seen. Of course, such readings risk ceaselessly reconfirming the dominant ideology they contest by reinscribing the same paradigm of contestation and containment. But unless critical practice assumes that there exist effective positions of opposition within the dominant culture, it will simply reaffirm its powerlessness in respect to the authoritarian structure by positioning itself once again within the field of the omniscient eye of power.

Such oppositional practice might be predicated on the formation of an alternate subjectivity, in contrast to that of the sovereign subject, which is able to resist fixation within the reified structures of lordship and bondage and to escape positioning within the polarized field of power. The metanarrative capacity to transformationally decompose and recompose cultural narratives according to the logic of desire might correspond to the mode of construction of a metasubject that is able to (re)constitute itself within the gaps and interstices of the field of power and thus convert the blind spots and

double binds of the structure of dominance into the grounds of its (self)transformation as an agent of negation and positive dialectical change. By abjuring the posture of mastery that is characteristic of the imperial subject, the subject-in-process assumes a more fluid, less centered or confrontational posture that is able to move freely through the cultural field and assume strategic positions of intervention into the structure of dominance that elude (re)inscription within the narrative of sovereignty and subjection. Of course, such a posture is always potentially recuperable by the dominant ideology, as yet another ploy by which power reasserts itself at the micrological level within the mobile system of (self)overturnings and dynamic dialectical transactions that insert dominance within the very conditions of subject-formation. But if in fact "power is everywhere," as Foucault insists, as "the moving substrate of force relations which . . . constantly engender states of power," nonetheless "the latter are always local and unstable" and so can become the condition for "a multiplicity of points of resistance" that "can only exist in the strategic field of power relations."[28] By working within and through the ideological matrix in which it is constituted, then, the subject-in-process might be able to function constructively within the system of power relations as an agent of historical change by utilizing the dynamic capacity of that system against itself to provoke further reversals and dialectical overturnings.

This is not, of course, to suggest naively (as in some versions of poststructuralism and feminist deconstruction) that it is ever possible simply to elude the *forms of subjection* that structure the cultural field through some schizophrenic condition of psychic dispersal that dissolves the ego into a flux of decentered sensations and libidinal flows. The individual can only exert agency as a subject from *within* the cultural narratives that frame him or her; and as a *subject of history* the individual is always positioned within an unstable grid of force relations that is in the last instance materially conditioned by the modes of production of power/knowledge that are operative in a given social formation. But by strategically utilizing the transformative capacity that is written into the cultural narratives through which power is mediated to individual subjects, critical practice might open a space for agency in the cultural field that mobilizes subject-formation toward more positive social ends.[29]

In Byron's text, the potential for such a "new subjectivity," as Christensen argues, is written into the narrative in the radically

unstable series of dialectical (re)constitutions of the textual subject that take place in the dynamic transactions between the Giaour, Hassan, and Leila, as each of these figures serves as a bearer of the (re)production of (cross)cultural ideology.[30] By focusing not on the characters themselves as fixed subject positions that are locked into structures of sexual conquest and violent confrontation, but rather on the shifting network of relations that subsists between those characters and undermines the rigidified form of the sovereign textual subject, particularly as that (inter)textual grid intersects in the (absent) site of the feminine other (Leila) that it describes, an oppositional reading might discern a position for the subject that more closely approximates the figure(s) of desire that it articulates. By reading the narrative(s) of Romantic Orientalism through the eye of the Eastern other who is constituted as the obscure object of Western desire, then, one might begin to define the position of opposition that allows for an effective deconstruction of the overbearing structure of dominance.

As a final ironic gesture with which to recapitulate this tour through the ideological hall of mirrors of Romantic Orientalism, then, I would like to conclude my discussion by pointing out that the same metagrammatical elements that emerge from the narrative unconscious of *The Giaour* reappear, albeit once again transformationally recomposed, in the central cantos of the major Byronic epic, *Don Juan*. The irony is that the plot of cantos 5 through 8 of *Don Juan* is precisely the negative mirror image of the narrative of *The Giaour*, which is once again specularly refracted through the lenses of Byron's many (mis)recognitions and (self)(mis)representations. In once again definitively rewriting the imperial sentence of Romantic Orientalism, Byron reverses the direction of that narrative to recoup his ideological losses, thus inadvertently revealing the hegemonic motives that were encoded in the earlier text and reencoding them as differential figures in a more developed ideological matrix. Yet as "traces of the gaze of the colonized upon the colonizer," these elements allow the reader to track the imperial narrative through its diverse permutations in the ideology of dominance and reveal the concealed motives that underwrite its inscription in literary texts.

At the end of canto 4 of Byron's epic, the captive Juan is sold into slavery chained to a dark female "Romagnole," who despite her "eyes that look'd into the very soul" (747) is unable to move Juan's passion. Juan is still in mourning for his lost Greek lover, Haideè,

who perishes, in the now-familiar Byronic gesture, of love for Juan. In canto 5, Juan is placed on the block in the slave market of Constantinople, a city, Byron's narrator comments, where the "European [meets] with the Asian shore" (17) and "Asian pomp" (51) replaces Hellenic classical beauty as the dominant cultural mode. In reversing the direction of the world-historical narrative of Romantic Orientalism, Byron embarks on a Greek War of Independence in reverse that achieves its political imperatives not through the logic of violent conquest, but through the more covert process of penetrating the colonized culture in order to subvert it from within. The slave market of Constantinople serves in Byron's text as a site of racial/cultural intermixing, a *heterotopia* in which cultural interchange takes place, although one senses Byron's uneasiness with such promiscuous miscegenation in the stark binary rigidity with which he schematically represents the slave market as "a backgammon board . . . dotted / With whites and blacks in groups on show for sale, / Though rather more irregularly spotted" (73–75). Nonetheless, the Turkish city serves as a liminal point in Juan's transition from Greek liberty to Oriental slavery, and as a site of transgression in which strict binary distinctions between races and cultures (and later sexes) break down. The infraction of racial/cultural barriers thus initiates the subl(im)ating movement of narrative ideology that will eventuate in the reinstatement of the structure of dominance in Byron's text; but it also opens a space for the possibility of an alternative subject-formation and a cultural cross-fertilization that eludes such reinscription in the received cultural narratives of Romantic Orientalism. Byron's text thus pivots on a point of ideological transgression from which it is produced and which it attempts to foreclose in the course of narrative production.

On the slave block, Juan is purchased by a "black old neutral personage / Of the third sex" (201–2), the eunuch Baba, and forced to serve, with fine Byronic irony, as a pleasure-slave in the harem of a Turkish despot, in a concealed attempt to satisfy the neglected desires of the sheik's fourth wife, Gulbayez. In order to penetrate the sacrosanct *space* of the harem, however, Juan is forced to "unsex [his] dress" (598) by adopting veiled Oriental garb and being "femininely all array'd" (633) as the now feminized "Juanna." Susan Wolfson observes of the politics of cross-dressing in *Don Juan* that "signs that seem clear markers of difference can become agents of sexual disorientation that break down, invert, and radically call

into question the categories designed to discriminate 'masculine' and 'feminine.' "[31] But Byron's use of gender categories here is less a matter of sexual identity than a means of fixing relations of power between cultures in terms of constructs of sexual difference. Gender dynamics serve to (re)encode unstable racial/cultural distinctions as "natural" categories that can be transgressed only artificially, through "the black enchanter" Baba's magic art. The equivalence of gender and racial/cultural difference is affirmed in Juan and his companion Johnson's shared (mis)recognition of the "metamorphosis in view" that is attendant on entering the domain of the harem: " 'Farewell!' they mutually exclaim'd: 'this soil / Seems fertile in adventures strange and new; / One's turn'd half Mussulman, the one a maid / By this old black enchanter's unsought aid' " (661–64). The transcription of unstable racial/cultural binaries in gendered terms thus serves to locate and (re)inscribe the potential infraction of ideological barriers in a binary structure that prevents rather than enables any dialectical interplay between opposed subject positions and recuperates difference within the economy of identitarian narrative.[32] As a cultural narrative that is motivated by the logic of identity contested and confirmed through the confrontation with otherness, Byron's plot is produced from a transgression of binary structures that threatens to subvert the dominant paradigm only to be (re)contained within the form of imperial narrative, thus again establishing the power of that narrative to produce resolution even from threats to its authority and to reinstate the dominant structure even while allowing its provisional deconstruction.

Thus although Byron's text betrays a strong castration anxiety at the prospect of racial/cultural cross-mixing (evident in the discussion of circumcision in stanzas 69–72) and a mixed homophobic/homophilic motive in response to the image of Juan in drag (stanza 82), Byron, like Beckford before him, obviously takes great delight in acting out through the figure of an ambiguously gendered male protagonist his own displaced self-invention as the negative mirror image of the usually hyperpotent Byronic hero. In more positive terms, Juan's feminization is a condition of his infiltration of the feminine *space* of the harem, and provides Byron with a motive for penetrating the veil of the Oriental phantasm, thus allowing him to get inside the alien culture in order to colonize it from within, just as British administrators in India and Napoleonic officials in Egypt would develop a vast apparatus of Orientalist lore to enable them to

penetrate the alien Eastern world and render it subject to the European will. Through Juan, Byron's narratorial gaze can invade the interior of the harem that remained opaque in *The Giaour* and open that space to an intrusive scrutiny. Yet as in Beckford's text, once again the sovereign subject risks being feminized by the seductions of the harem, or "going native" when subjected to the wiles of the captivating East. Such dangers are faced by Juan/na with a narratorial irony that belies the power of the Orient to call into question the terms of the imperial discourse and that maintains a position of implicit mastery even in a situation of potential overturning of the gendered binaries of the Orientalist construct.

The Oriental harem presents itself to Juan as a vast, self-contained and vividly sensual space like Coleridge's Xanadu, a space "haughty and huge" (677), pervaded by "rich perfume" (678) and full of "glittering galleries" (675) that lead into an endless succession of undifferentiated rooms and cabinets which provide a spatial equivalent to the ideological hall of mirrors of Romantic Orientalism as reflected in narrative. The central chamber of this heterotopian space is Gulbayez's "imperial hall" (753) in which "rich confusion form'd a disarray / In such sort, that the eye along it cast / Could hardly carry anything away" (740–42), thus again thematizing the resistance of the Orient to the colonialist gaze. But European commodity fetishism is entranced by the dizzying vision of "a dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter, / Magnificently mingled in a litter" (743–44); and the allure of the Orient as decadent utopia finally exceeds its threat as a space of potential cross-cultural intermixing. The utopian content of Romantic Orientalism emerges in ideological form as a topos of illusory surplus value that suffuses the Oriental phantasm with an aura of unreal wealth, thus evoking a "*narrative luxury*" of detail in excess of the symbolic economy of the imperial narrative while at the same time reinscribing that superfluity within the terms of the conventional Orientalist paradigm.[33] Hovering between sexual fetish and pure commodity form, the Orient appears once again as a figure of desire that is deflected from its object and arrested in forms of purely fantastic substitute gratification that erase all traces of material determination and sublimate or displace any actual physical sexual manifestation. Juan's Oriental pleasure dome recedes into a virtual image even in the moment of seeming plenitude, thus revealing its presence to be merely another version of the Orientalist mirage while

providing a specular image of the projection of colonial desire to the eye of the imperial subject.

The entrance to this richly sensualized space is guarded, however, by "two little dwarfs" (690) of indeterminate origins, "whose colour was not black, nor white, nor gray, / But an extraneous mixture, which no pen / Can trace, although perhaps the pencil may" (700–702). Byron's rather anxious attempts to fix the character of these "monsters, who cost a no less monstrous sum" (704) again reflects the uneasiness of the Eurocentric imagination when confronting the irreducibly other, which collapses racial/cultural discrimination and defies the attempt to fix its meaning. These mutes, who "spoke only by signs—that is, not spoke at all" (713) resist both linguistic interrogation and the perceptual scrutiny of the colonialist gaze, and in fact specularly reflect that gaze back on its bearer with all the force of the proverbial evil eye. Byron records that

> it scared
> Juan a moment, as this pair so small
> With shrinking serpent optics on him stared;
> It was as if their little looks could poison
> Or fascinate whome'er they fixed their eyes on.
>
> (716–20)

Byron's irony seems a bit thin when forced to confront the effects of the "evil gaze" that are focused in the twinned figures of monstrosity. Again the contradictory fear and fascination of the Eurocentric imagination when faced with an Orient constructed in the image of its own ambivalent projections and fantasies of domination is (re)doubled in the spectral effects that surround the colonial harem, mirroring and inverting the desire of the imperial subject in a specular structure of (mis)recognition that betrays its own ambiguous motives.

Given the covert imperial motive that informs Byron's Orientalism, then, it is not surprising that the narrative of canto 5 of *Don Juan* should climax in an erotic encounter that is also a gender-coded battle for dominance between Juan/na and Gulbayez, the female equivalent of the Oriental despot who is rendered all the more dangerous by her incorporation of the languid sensuality of the Orient with the despotic will of the Eastern ruler. "Her form," the narrator comments, "had all the softness of her sex, / Her features all the sweetness of the devil" (865–66); and again it is this

infraction or transgression of binary differentiations that is most disruptive of the categories of Byron's narrative. Juan/na's resistance to subjection by the sultana thus becomes a struggle inversely analogous to the central conflict of *The Giaour*, as a Master/Slave relationship that is ambivalently defined by specular reversals and mirror images. "Something imperial, or imperious, threw / A chain o'er all she did," the narrator observes before correcting himself: "That is, a chain / Was thrown as 'twere about the neck of you" (875); and the deliberate (mis)recognition reveals the implicit motive that drives the text: to subjugate the feminized Orient and bring it under the domination of the sovereign Western principle. Juan/na's refusal to "serve a sultana's sensual fantasy" (1008) results, finally, in Gulbayez being "humbled" by "her sex's shame" (1091) and eventuates in her submission to Juan. Yet even that submission becomes a further temptation for Juan that must be avoided. To give in to the sultana's passion, even in its submissive mode, is equated with castration (stanzas 139–40), dismemberment (141), and feminization (142–43). Only when both the sensual lures of the East as well as its more aggressively threatening features have been brought under the regulation of the economy of discourse can the Western mind rise triumphant over the Oriental will. Thus the imperious queen becomes the Napoleonic harem girl whose subjection to the conqueror is the condition of her abasement on the terms of her own culture as well, as Juan/na's refusal doubles her transgression of gender/racial/cultural boundaries and renders her not only outcast from the Oriental harem but unassimilable to the colonial culture whose intrusion motivates her initial infraction. Positioned between the double binds of Orientalist ideology, then, the "Asian woman" is once again effectively removed from the narrative as an active agent, as her fate is dictated by her submission to the actions of men.

In canto 6, the symbolic conquest of the East is confirmed when "Passion" overthrows the throne of Gulbayez's imperial rule and she submits to her irrational desire for Juan/na. But meanwhile Juan/na, whose "gender still [is] Epicene" (458), has penetrated into the harem in native drag and bedded Dudu, whose "Attic forehead" and "Phidian nose" (332) identify her allegorically with Greece as "a soft landscape of mild Earth" (417) to be claimed by the triumphant Juan/na. Once again the political subtext is glimpsed beneath the veils of ideological mystification to reveal the

hidden workings of the world-historical mechanisms of the narrative: the battle of East and West over the Hellenic ideal is consummated in Juan/na's sexual conquest of the compliant Dudu, which reconfirms both Juan's potency and his cultural identity as a figure for the imperial subject. Gulbayez, of course, is rendered "*all amort*" (845) by the discovery of Juan's infidelity, and, in despotic mode once again, dooms Juan/na and Dudu to be sewed in sacks and drowned by the eunuch Baba. It is worth belaboring the point: Juan/na's fate here recapitulates *in reverse* the fate of Leila in *The Giaour*, and demonstrates Byron's effective (re)appropriation of the sentence of woman in the economy of narrative. Byron has succeeded in writing himself definitively into the completed sentence, in which he now occupies in the guise of the narrator both subject and object positions. The imperial narrative comes full circle to mirror its production in the negative image of a death that is and is not death, a victory that is also a defeat—or rather, a victory that is achieved not overtly and violently but vicariously through the agency of narrative and the efficacy of the colonialist gaze.

At this point in Byron's epic, Juan abruptly drops out of sight, and Byron launches what seems a digressive description of the Siege of Ismail and the defeat of the Turks by the Russians. This would seem a gross incongruity and radical narrative disjunction if the reader did not already recognize the implications of this strategy from the maneuvers of *The Giaour*. Once again, narrative diverts attention from ideological production by eliding essential plot elements and deflecting the gaze of the reader toward a more overt motive. Yet by a different narrative logic, the perspectival shift works precisely to demonstrate that Juan's penetration of the Oriental harem and triumph over the despotic Eastern will accords with the world-historical triumph of the West over Oriental despotism and barbaric irrationality. Once again the narrative unconscious (re)produces the central Hegelian plot-scheme of universal history that interdicts all subversive variants and submits the subsidiary history of the Orient to the regulation of the imperial discourse.

It is no coincidence either, then, when at the end of the siege, who should emerge from the narrative unconscious but "Leila," reincarnated in canto 8 of *Don Juan* as the female child saved by Juan from the ravages of conquest whose "large eyes" (760) captivate Juan in turn in yet another series of specular exchanges:

> At this instant . . . their eyes were fixed
> Upon each other, with dilated glance,
> In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mixed
> With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
> Unto his protegeè; while hers, transfixed
> With infant terrors, glared as from a trance
> A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face.
>
> (761–68)

Juan claims that the child, whose fate had nearly been "that of all her race" (755), is "parentless and therefore mine" (800); and the "Moslem orphan," "homeless, houseless, helpless," becomes the ward of "her protector" (1121–22), the Western savior, Juan. Leila's return and submission to the will of Juan/Giaour thus represents the (re)inscription of the elusive sentence of woman within the narrative of male subjection, and reverses the terms of the earlier text to (re)instate the structure that was deconstructed in the prior grammatical order.

Meanwhile, the last Turkish "Pacha" (954) has perished in battle by voluntarily immolating himself on the sword of Western conquest, despite the exhortations of his "deliverers" to save his life. Again, this willed (self)immolation reverses the terms of the earlier formation as it transcodes the prior narrative sentence ("the women wanted to die") into a version that transposes subject and object positions. The imperial narrative thus achieves closure by resurrecting and reenacting in reverse the subtext contained in the earlier text, and in so doing affirms the triumph of author(ity) over the discontinuities and incoherences of narrative production. Once again, the dominant plot is (re)doubled by a buried subnarrative that mirrors and inverts the explicit text, thus diverting attention from the real object of the plot: the imposition of coherent relations of power between agents positioned in the ideological field. The power of the dominant ideology is thus established by duplicity, which works as much in absence as in presence and operates by multiple displacements and inversions that elude transcription by conventional hermeneutic categories.[34] The (self)transformative capacity of ideology, which works effectually as a double absence both within and without the text, can only be unmasked by a critical practice that is willing to utilize the strategies of the hegemonic power it contests in order to turn those practices against themselves, to read them against the grain and force them to reveal their complicity in the imperial project.

Rendered transparent to the colonialist gaze, the Eurocentric phantasm of the colonial harem is stripped of its veils and delivers up its secrets, as it pays its tribute of captive women and appropriated riches to the victor. Yet the very duplicity through which this ideological victory is achieved becomes the grounds of its overturning, as the hegemonic construct itself provides the tools with which the critical reader can dismantle its aporetic structure, and in learning to recognize its traces and track its movement through narrative can come to perceive the significantly different other that haunts it. Because what is reflected in Orientalist constructions of the colonial harem is not the figure of the other as such, but rather the specularly inverted and effaced image of the imperial self, the gaze that purports to penetrate the space of otherness is refracted back on the beholder, becoming the mirror in which can be discerned the lineaments of the viewing subject. The (mis)recognition upon which ideology is erected is a displaced and deferred (self)perception that inevitably bends back on itself and sees through, albeit belatedly, its blindness in producing the insights that underwrite it. The eye that sees and the eye that is seen are one in the dual mirrors of ideology, which stages history as the condition of our subjection and the ground of our (self) (de)mystification even as it averts our gaze from the supposed object of sight. What we see when we look at the other, then, is our own disfigured image as it is revealed in the blind spots of our cultural field of vision, its incoherences, its contradictions, and its two-facedness in (mis)perceiving its veiled imperial desire. Once we recognize that we are always inside ideology, we can begin to define the conditions of a practice that might render that ideology visible: not that we might see through it, but that we might simply learn to see it as it appears in the eye of the other.

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NOTES

[1] André Castelot, *Napoleon*, trans. Guy Daniels (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 108. Hereafter cited in the text. Although this particular Bonapartism is perhaps spurious, it is in keeping with Napoleon's general level of discourse, in which he persistently (self)dramatizes his exploits as being of world-historical significance. At Abukir, for example, he is documented to have announced that "this battle will decide the fate of the world" (122).

[2] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 95, 40, 86.

[3] See Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. Hereafter cited in the text. See also Rajeswari Sunder

Rajan, "The Subject of Sati: Pain and Death in the Contemporary Discourse on Sati," *The Yale Journal of Criticism* (1990): 1–23.

[4] Daniel P. Watkins, *Social Relations in Byron's Eastern Tales* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1987), 20. Hereafter cited in the text.

[5] Jerome Christensen, "Byron's Career: The Speculative Stage," *ELH* 52 (1985): 73. Hereafter cited in the text. See also Christina M. Root, "History as Character: Byron and the Myth of Napoleon," in *History and Myth*, ed. Stephen C. Behrendt (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1990), 149–65.

[6] William St. Clair, *That Greece Might Still Be Free* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 51, 52. On Byron, see esp. 173–80. St. Clair's even treatment of the material makes it clear that the Philhellene myth failed to correspond to historical reality, which was a matter of massacres and bloodbaths on both sides. On "Hellenomaniacs" and Philhellenism as an intellectual construct, see Martin Bernal, *Black Athena* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1987); esp. 281–308. Briefly, Bernal argues that "Hellenism" is a Eurocentric construct that was conceived in reaction to the perception that the roots of Western civilization are actually Afro-Asiatic rather than Indo-European. Hellenism is thus an attempt to preserve the racial and cultural "purity" of the ideological conception of "Western civilization" against the intrusions of "others"—specifically Egyptians and other "dark" people of the Middle East who influenced Greek civilization in its formative stages—into the historical narrative. Bernal's description certainly holds true of Romantic Orientalism, especially in its Germanic form (Winckelmann, Goethe, etc.); and Byron's militant Hellenism is shadowed by this culturalist impulse.

[7] See Byron's journal entry of 19 June 1823, in which he observes that "all foreigners that I have hitherto met with from amongst the Greeks are going or gone back disgusted" by what was actually happening in Greece, and he cautions that "whoever goes to Greece at present should do it as Mrs. Fry went into the Newgate—not in the expectation of meeting with any especial indication of existing probity, but in the hope that time and better treatment will reclaim the present burglaries and larcenous tendencies which have followed this General Gaol delivery." Byron reconciles his Philhellenism with the realities of the Greek War by suggesting that "the Saturnalia is still too recent to have converted the Slave into a sober Citizen." But some of his disillusionment is apparent in his remark that "I did not come here to join a faction but a nation" (Byron, *Letters and Journals*, in Byron's *Works*, ed. Rowland E. Prothero, 13 vols. [1901; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1966], 6: 246–47). Like many Europeans, Byron cast the Greek War in the frame of the nineteenth-century European revolutions of national liberation, and he expected to find in the Greeks a people like the French who were unified behind a national ideal. But as St. Clair (note 6) points out, "most Greeks in the Ottoman Empire had no comprehension of that complex of ideas relating to territorial boundaries, and cultural and linguistic uniformity which makes up the European nation-state"; and it was only the emigré "overseas Greeks" like Mavrocordatos (who was Byron's and Shelley's source of information about the struggle) "who first conceived a Greek revolution as a nationalist movement on the European model" (8,9). But the Hellenic idealists were unsuccessful in imposing this ideal over the bloody reality of war, and the fighting devolved into factional infighting based on religious and racial/ethnic differences. Byron himself seems to have been aware that outside of such idealist motives, the war would merely tend to open Greece and the Near East to British economic imperialism, as when in his address to The Greek Committee he adds that "I need not suggest to the Committee the very great advantage which must accrue to Great Britain from the success of the Greeks, and their probable commercial relations with England in consequence" (*Letters and Journals*, 6:210). Yet it would surely be unfair to attribute any consciously imperialistic motives to Byron's involvement in the cause. Rather, such impulses inhabit the political unconscious of

the period, and are expressed only indirectly in the texts and lives of subjects like Byron.

[8] Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), 124–25.

[9] Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Wlad and Myrna Godzich (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), 5. Hereafter cited in the text.

[10] All citations from Byron's text are from *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986). Citations from *The Giaour* are from volume 3, those from *Don Juan* are from volume 5, and both are cited by line number. References to the textual commentary and apparatus are cited in the text as *Works*.

[11] William Beckford, *Vathek, An Arabian Tale* (1786; reprint, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 1. Hereafter cited in the text.

[12] Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), 44, 47.

[13] The trope of monstrosity in travel literature and later in ethnographic discourse initially stood as a generalized figure for alterity. But as European colonization of the East in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries increased the amount of intercourse between radically different cultures and races, the attribution of monstrosity shifted. On the one hand, monstrosity was commonly applied to denote the presumed degeneracy of a given race or culture when seen in relation to and as a deviation from the "pure" Indo-European prototype. At the same time, monstrosity also came to signify an ethnographic transgression of the firm lines of distinction between "races," as enacted in miscegenation that resulted in "monstrous" hybrids of indeterminate racial/cultural origins. In this latter tradition, see Georges Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon's *Natural History* (translated into English and published in Edinburgh in 1780 under the title *Selections from Natural History General and Particular*). Beckford's, and later Byron's, employment of the trope betrays a similar anxiety about otherness and an ambiguous attitude toward racial/cultural cross-mixing.

[14] The textuality of the Orientalist construct is evident in the discursive apparatus that Beckford's English editor Henley attached to *Vathek* on publication, which establishes the authority of the text as a document with references to the expanding archive of encyclopedic and bibliographic materials relating to the East compiled in the early years of imperialist expansion. The archetypal text in this tradition is Barthelemy d'Herbelot's *Biblioteque orientale* (Paris, 1781–83), aptly subtitled *ou, Dictionairre universal, contenent tout ce qui fait connoître les peuples de l'Orient*, which was Beckford's primary source of information about the Orient. Napoleon's expedition in Egypt, which was attended by a "living encyclopaedia" of orientalists and scientists, considerably augmented this stock of Orientalist lore, and resulted in the publication of the *Déscription d'Egypte* that revealed Egyptian antiquities to the West. Champollion, who first deciphered the Egyptian hieroglyphs, was a member of Napoleon's expedition; and the Rosetta Stone that made his work possible was discovered during the Egyptian colonization effort.

But the topos of the Orient-as-text is of course not only literal, but also figurative, as the fascination of early linguistic theorists with hieroglyphics indicates. The attribution to the Orient of a form of writing presumed more "primitive" and less transparent than the European phonetic system is a gesture that places the Orient in a subsidiary position to the West in the world-historical narrative of cultural development, and partakes of the entire complex of strategies identified by Jacques Derrida under the rubric of "phonocentrism." See his *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976), esp. 280–302.

[15] For an example of the adaptation of the form of missionary travel narrative to the uses of Orientalism, see Lady Morgan, Sydney Owenson's novel *The Missionary* (1811; reprint, Delmar, New York: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1981), which

centers on an encounter between the missionary as a representative of Western cultural imperialism, and Luximia, the stereotypic "Indian Maid" whose sensual wiles nearly bring about the missionary's downfall and reverse conversion. The crucial episode in Owenson's text, which renders the gender dynamics of the colonial encounter with particular clarity, should be read with and against the inverse moment in *The Giaour*: "Silently gazing, in wonder, upon each other, they stood finely opposed, the noblest specimens of the human species, as it appears in the most opposite regions of the earth; she, like the East, lovely and luxuriant; he, like the West, lofty and commanding: the one, radiant in all the lustre, attractive in all the softness which distinguishes her native regions; the other, towering in all the energy, imposing in all the vigour, which marks his ruder latitudes: she, looking like a creature formed to feel and submit; he, like a being created to resist and to command: while both appeared as the ministers and representatives of the two most powerful religions of the earth; the one no less enthusiastic in her brilliant errors, the other confident in his immutable truth" (149–50). The structure of Owenson's narrative takes the form of an arrested male quest into the feminine East that ends with the missionary in a state of partial regression to the condition of his Oriental convert.

Compare also the episode of the "Indian Maid" in Shelley's "Alastor" and the story of Felix and Safie in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* for Orientalist interludes that reproduce the paradigm of gendered narrative described here.

[16] Teresa de Lauretis, "Desire in Narrative," in *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1984), 103–57. Briefly, de Lauretis argues that the subject of narrative, like the gaze, is always male, its object always feminine, and the movement of narrative involves the penetration of feminine space by the male.

[17] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985), 25–26.

On Byron's own homosociality and the text of *Don Juan*, see Cecil Y. Lang, "Narcissus Jilted: Byron, *Don Juan*, and the Biographical Imperative," in *Historical Studies and Literary Criticism*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 143–79. Lang's analysis centers on an alleged incident involving Byron, Hobhouse, and Ali Pascha in certain "monstrous sexualities" practiced in Ali's harem during Byron's visit to Albania in 1809. Lang interprets Juan's feminization in cantos 5–9 in light of residual psychological ambivalence in Byron's response to the incident. Although my own analysis of Byron's gender politics in *Don Juan* is less directly biographical, Lang's hypothesis would support the attribution of ambiguously sexual motives of alternate attraction and repulsion between author/persona and "Oriental despot" ventured here.

[18] See for example Jerome McGann's reading of the text in his *Fiery Dust* ([Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968]: 141–48), which invokes the presence of a hypothetical oral-formulaic storyteller in a coffee house in the Levant who is supposed (in one of Byron's accounts of the origin of the tale) to have recited the poem to Byron, in order to give a projected unity to the tale's many "voices"; and Robert Gleckner's reading of *The Giaour* in his *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise* ([Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1967], 91–117), which reinstates the Byronic author-function by hypostatizing the poet as conscious agent giving experimental expression to a many-faceted subjectivity through the controlled medium of discontinuous narrative. In the same vein, Frank McConnel goes to some length in his Norton edition of *Byron's Poetry* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978) to identify the various "voices" of the text as aspects of a controlled authorial intent to create a "deliberately fragmentary narrative" (84), in the process invoking even more numerous speakers and personae in the text than either McGann or Gleckner. This approach sounds a reprise in Frederick Garber's *Self, Text, and Romantic Irony*

(Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1988) when Garber argues that Byron "is a maker who knows all the intricacies of his position and knows precisely what he wants to do with his text" (69)—a critical stance that begs the question of why Byron put out numerous and substantially different versions of the text before abandoning it in its present form. These conservatizing readings are best seen as reactions to the perception of the fundamental incoherence of the text that attempt to reconstruct the narrative to recontain its many gaps and aporias, thus acceding to the desire of the text for authorial control rather than recognizing the erosion of that intention in narrative.

[19] Louis Althusser, "A Letter on Art," in *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 223–24.

[20] Thomas Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Ernest J. Lovell (1824; reprint, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986), 86–87.

[21] Cited in Alloula (note 9), xxii.

[22] On the master/slave relationship as a paradigm of the relations between "First World" ([post]imperial and "Third World" ([post]colonial) cultures, see Fredric Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (1986): 85. Jameson's conception of "national allegory" as a narrative in which individual subjective action is always an allegory of collective national destiny, while clearly itself informed by residual Hegelian notions of collective agency, is of central relevance to Romantic texts like *The Giaour*, and forms the basis of the mode of reading practiced here. In fact, Jameson's concept is probably more directly relevant to European literature of the nineteenth century—the age of the great national imperialisms—than to Third World literature per se, which has emerged from the colonial situation by appropriating these imperial paradigms and refashioning them for the uses of national reinvention under the pressures of modernization. Jameson's extrapolation of the form of Hegelian historiography to (prose) epic nonetheless accurately describes the structure of the Romantic epic as a narrative centered on the actions of collective subjects who stand in as agents of world-historical process.

[23] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 232–33; hereafter cited in text.

[24] Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism Without Reserve," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), 259. I would argue, however, that Derrida's semiotic approach underestimates the recuperative capacity of the Hegelian system as a model of ideological process to economize negation within a larger system of regulated exchanges that eludes facile deconstruction on the level of dematerialized signification, just as any deconstruction that refuses materialist analysis risks reinscribing its transgressive capacity on the grounds of the Western metaphysical closure it seeks to escape.

[25] On "strategies of containment," see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 52–54. The notion of the "imperial narrative" advanced here resembles Jameson's concept of "history" as the ultimate horizon of all literary and cultural hermeneutics, which itself invites consideration as a strategy of containment that reifies nineteenth-century historiography as a categorical imperative. Jameson's conception is a version of the Hegelian/Marxist paradigm of history as a narrative of collective development raised to the status of an absolute, although Jameson modifies this idea dialectically with reference to Althusser's structuralist notion of history as a "process without subject or goal." But as Jameson observes elsewhere, the production of totalized historical narratives is indigenous to "the period of the bourgeois revolutions and the constitution of the bourgeois nation-states . . . a period also in which a new global imperialism begins, with the British colonisation of India (the 'discovery' of Sanskrit by Sir William

Jones in 1786) and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt (the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799)." This construct of universal history fosters "a sense of global development, in which the various European nation states and their national literatures are read as so many structural variants of the development of national capitalism, and in which the colonial and postcolonial cultures are analyzed in terms of the dynamics of dependency and resistance, exploitation and internal development." As Jameson rightly observes, this world-historical narrative is "organized *from the point of view of* the First World, the coloniser, the unifying force of global capitalism, etc." (See "The State of the Subject (III)," *Critical Quarterly* 29[1987]: 17, 23). In his later book on Adorno, Jameson finds a way out of this quandary by arguing that "there are no Hegelian master narratives" because the "structural ambiguity" between the narrative of universal history and "the multiplicity of nations and peoples" forecloses the Hegelian mediation and prevents the linkage between national narratives and the world-historical master-narrative (*Late Marxism* [London: Verso, 1990], 92. On this point see also Jean-Francois Lyotard, "The Sign of History," in *The Differend*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele [Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988], 151–81.) But this argument seems rather to beg the question of the historical convergence between the construction of Romantic or Hegelian historiography and the emergence of the world-imperial order. My point is that the relationship between European imperialism and the construction of the world-historical narrative of history is not contingent but overdetermined. The development of a world-imperial order is the material precondition for the construction of universal history, which in turn provides the ideological superstructure that legitimates the imperial order under the guise of a narrative of world-historical process.

[26] My discussion of the dynamics of subl(im)ation in the process of the construction of cultural identity here is indebted to Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1986), esp. 1–26, 191–202.

[27] Louis Althusser, "Freud and Lacan," in *Lenin and Philosophy* (note 19), 219.

[28] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 93, 95, 96.

[29] My criticism of poststructuralism and feminist deconstruction is here meant to target the tendency of certain forms of these practices to recede from material determination and political commitment into a vaguely defined textual play or *jouissance* through which the subject purports to elude positioning through the hypostatization of indeterminacy or the fetishizing of the pre-symbolic. This critique is not, however, meant to dismiss the work of Irigaray, Cixous, Barthes, Derrida and others out of hand, but rather to insist that deconstructive strategies need to be submitted to materialist contextualization and ideological analysis to retain their critical force. For an attempt to mediate deconstruction through a more materialist framework that pivots on the concept of the "subject-in-process" as deployed here, see Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1984).

[30] Jerome Christensen, "Perversion, Parody, and Cultural Hegemony: Lord Byron's Oriental Tales," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88(1989): 581. Christensen argues that although "Byronism . . . imperializes nineteenth-century European culture by virtue of its exemplary inability to complete the narratives it has launched (or to put it inversely, its ability to serialize the narratives it continually begins)," yet "*The Giaour* is the harbinger of a new form of subjectivity" that "do[es] not project the fantasy of an epic body" but "induce[s] identification with a series of fragments" (577, 581). While I find Christensen's argument congenial and compelling, I would respond that nonetheless seriality lends itself to the transpositions in the imperial narrative that I have tracked here, thus allowing *The Giaour* to be recuperated by

what Christensen rightly calls "the ruling premise of British imperialism that what is foreign is precisely that which can and needs to be translated" (581).

[31] Susan J. Wolfson, " 'Their She Condition': Cross-Dressing and the Politics of Gender in *Don Juan*," *ELH* 54 (1987): 585.

[32] On identitarian discourse as a mode of construction of cultural identity that "gives rise to semi-official narratives" whose function is "to interdict, marginalize or criminalize alternative versions of the same history" while reinforcing the "stable identity [that] is rendered by such affirmative agencies as nationality, education, tradition, language and religion" against the threat of the external other, see Edward Said, "Identity, Negation, and Violence," *New Left Review* 171 (September/October 1988): 55, 58. Said's thesis that the image of terrorism in the Middle East constructed by First World media functions to demonize the East as other and exclude it from the dominant historical narrative might be applied to the metaphysic of violence in Byron's text. In a larger context, the "logic of identity" described by Said is commensurate with the Hegelian paradigm delineated here, while the narrative of universal history constitutes a large-scale master-narrative version of the identitarian narrative as constructed by Romantic Orientalism.

[33] Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 141–42. On the function of excess in the symbolic economy, see Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988). Bataille emphasizes the transgressive capacity of non-productive excess in the system of exchange while at the same time recognizing the recuperative capacity of the cultural production of value to economize surplus value within a regulated structure.

[34] In Egypt, after issuing a "solemn proclamation" in which he announced his intentions to respect the religion, law, and institutions of the Mamelukes, "Napoleon would frankly acknowledge later [that] this was a form of demagoguery called 'charlatanism.' And he would exclaim: 'One must be a charlatan! That's the way to succeed!' " (cited in Castelot [note 1], 106).