

**Gifford, James. “Mary Stewart’s Greek Novels: Hellenism, Orientalism, & the Cultural Politics of Pulp.” *Greece in British Women’s Literary Imagination, 1913–2013*. Eds. Semele Assinder, David Holton, & Eleni Papargyriou. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017. 99–118. Lang Classical Studies 19.**

**[pre-production draft]**

This chapter makes two critical interventions: one to redirect attention to women’s writing on Greece from a century that was dominated by either a masculine homosocial modernity or Byron’s long shadow in David Roessel’s sense (2002); and two, revising the critical scotoma that surrounds Hellenism as a process of power and style of thought in the shadow of Edward Said’s critical study *Orientalism* (1995[1978]). For the former, even Virginia Woolf’s Jacob orients himself around a self-discovery that takes place amidst male heteronormativity. For the latter, Said’s work shaped a generation of scholars by extending the 1950–1960s Marxist discourses of decolonization beyond the materialism of Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon to include foucauldian approaches to institutions like the university, the operations of power on styles of knowledge, and the biopolitics of colonialism. However, Said did so while opening Orientalist Studies as a disciplinary field, a discourse, and a participant in institutions to an ideological critique while in the same breath excusing Hellenic Studies as an acceptable, naturalized, and neutral exercise of power-knowledge. Likewise, the rise of a critical discourse of decolonization developed into postcolonial theory during a literary moment when the notional understanding of Greece from the perspective of the former centres of global power was moving from a politicized Romanticism to a personalized modernism. Roessel sets the shift in images of Greece to the 1950s, the same moment as the rapid decolonization of Africa and the development of decolonization theory. The modernists and particularly late modernists reconceptualized English literature’s relationship with Greece to shift it away from a recuperation of the ancient world through political revolution—they instead focused on the modernist inward turn that attends to the transformation of the individual. Yet, the renovation of Philhellenism through this inward turn enacted by Lawrence Durrell and Henry Miller (Roessel 2002: 332) does not adequately account for gender, and at the same time the institutional critique of Orientalism as a disciplinary expression of power-knowledge does not sufficiently account for the persistence of Hellenism long after Area Studies displaced schools of Orientalist Studies in the modern university. That is to say, the ongoing racist tropes of the mad, beastly, and childish Greek with paws and pre-

modern tribalism persist without the systematic critique of kindred operations of power in depictions of the Levant, Egypt, and decolonizing North Africa that now permeates literary studies. Mary Stewart, as a popular author writing about Greece across the late 1950s and early 1960s in the midst of these movements draws together these challenges.

In her series of Greek romantic mystery novels from 1959–64, Stewart expresses a female emancipation through personal experiences in Greece. It is much as readers might expect to follow from Miller's and Durrell's impact on philhellenic writing. She knew their works well,<sup>1</sup> and despite her clearly mass appeal and attention to romance writing's stylistic and structural demands, she positions her novels in relation to a literary tradition. As with Miller and Durrell, Stewart's works are a step toward the less overtly political and more emotionally sensuous understanding of Greece that makes uncomfortable bedfellows out of the popular British revival musical-cum-film *Mamma Mia!* set on a Greek island and the political depictions of childish Greeks amidst the European financial crisis in need of neo-imperialist parental supervision. In other words, the reading of her works here positions her as part of wider representations of Greece, the biases of which reflect and support real political conflicts. Concurrently, Stewart bridges female emancipation and Western domination in popular pulp novels by figuring Greece as a space outside of hegemonic norms. The 'Greece' of her novels is then less a real place with real people than it is an English attempt in a moment of cultural rupture to understand itself *through* Greece, and this image of Greece is then torn between the politicized Hellenism of the Romantics and the personal exploration articulated by the late modernists. More specifically, we have early intimations of a third wave sense of feminist emancipation for British women discovering more complex subject positions through travel, but this occurs through encounters with the unequal relations among other subject positions based on race or placement in the Orient/Occident divide. The confluence makes visible the operations of colonial power and thought in depictions of Greece and Greeks despite the inward turn away from politics while also outlining the importance of gender's various formulations to the experiences and locations of colonialism in a moment prior to Feminism's third wave and intersectional theory. This is to say, Stewart's novels act as a nexus of varying forms of gender, race, class, and ethnicity as they emerge from the institutional discourses of Philhellenism and colonial representations of the

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<sup>1</sup> In personal correspondence with the author, Stewart said she was not influenced by either but went on to show deep familiarity with their works.

process of decolonization, and this provokes readers to reconsider Said's insistence that Hellenism and Orientalism are incomparable discourses with unrelated influences on the political world.

## **Hellenism/Orientalism**

Postcolonial theory is an established part of academic work on literature representing Greece, but no companion volume to Said's *Orientalism* has yet taken up the polemical title *Hellenism*. It is intimated. It is gestured to. It has no great book. Katerina Zacharia's *Hellenisms* takes the title and gesture, while Roessel intimates but does not articulate this kind of radically new way of conceiving of the field; however, apart from three very brief references to Said (two of which are in the notes alone), such a connection is not overt in his breakthrough study *In Byron's Shadow* (2002), and *Hellenisms* is not primarily interested in the sweeping cultural critique or foucauldian project that Said undertook. Its closest moment is Zacharia's own chapter on Greek cinema that distinguishes a modernist "Hellenic Hellenism" from the external "European Hellenism and Philhellenism" (2008: 321–2). A more capacious approach to literary and popular depictions of Greece from Britain and America seems difficult to imagine, and Roessel's shadow in criticism will surely impress over time. Nonetheless, the long-simmering dispute between Classics scholars and Said's polemic does not boil over the surface of Roessel's prose. And this surprises. Both Roessel and Said take on representations of 'Hellas' or 'the Orient', respectively, in writings from abroad, and both do so by setting these representations in conjunction with their political import, periods of change, occasionally or often infantilizing tone, and gendered modes of representation. In short, representing the Other (whether Oriental or Greek) is embedded with political operations, popular consciousness, and the mass media's or pulp literature's role in engineering consent—the pulp of genre fiction and the erudition of a university education are both, in this sense, vehicles of manufacturing cultural affect. In a particular sense, Roessel notes that

the Romantic age [broadly] constructed an image of a politicised, female, modern Greece fit for the temple of Apollo. This image dominated representations of Greece into the twentieth century and was eventually transmuted by writers

affiliated with modernism into an apolitical, male Greece in a Dionysian frenzy.

(Roessel 2002: 7)

How these modes of representation relate to the 'Western imagination' (Roessel 2002: 4) seems very much in harmony with Said's parallel contention 'that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self' (Said 1995: 3), although the strong temptation in this moment is to replace 'the Orient' with 'the Hellenic'. After all, in recalling Greek conflicts against Persia as a dividing moment between East and West, the service rendered to national culture in the West is for Britain, not Greece itself. In the same sense that Said points to depictions of the Orient as stabilizing notions of the Occident, Nahum Tate's and John Dryden's 17th century uses of Virgil in the Restoration signal the rise of a new imperial world power: London as the new Rome in their translations of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Indeed, while imaginatively distinguishing itself from the 'Orient,' Said's Occident in large part did so by formulating its own image from its studies in Hellenism without including modern Greeks in this new self-reflection or setting them as poor cousins to their ancient predecessors. By adopting the mantle of empire, such Philhellenic traditions displaced the modern Greeks.

In this sense, and methodologically in a perfect echo of Said, for Roessel if Greece is 'a literary tradition' (2002: 3), then despite its beauties, Hellenism (or in a gestural sense Classics) is a parallel inscribing and defining tradition to Said's description of Orientalism. Of course, Said is also short on his considerations of Hellenism, mentioning it only a handful of times in *Orientalism*, and even then almost exclusively in order to distinguish between scholars: the good and the bad, respectively. For Said, the reader must recognize Orientalism as a discipline and body of scholarship that contributes to an empire-shaping discourse via institutions of power understood through Foucault, which distinguishes his work from the earlier decolonization literatures that focused on Marxist theories of class, such as Frantz Fanon (1952) or Albert Memmi (1952). Where these overtly Marxist studies presented race and decolonization through discourses of class conflict or the accumulation of capital via imperialism, Said's project turns attention to the manufacture of knowledge and the education of future agents of empire through universities as institutions serving national culture. However, the same sense of productive power-knowledge and institutions does not lead Said to take up the parallel readings in Classics.

Surprisingly little dispute has been made over the matter, even as arguments about Classics have been leveraged to critique Said's project.

Bernard Lewis critiqued and mocked *Orientalism* (1982) by ironically castigating Classicists as vicious imperialists defaming ancient Greece, meaning that the ridiculousness of the image disproved in full Said's study. Said responded by invoking elements of the distinction between modes of thought built from social activity versus political action in the world. He only does so, however, in his Afterword to *Orientalism*, which he added nineteen years later in 1995 (his response in the *New York Review of Books* is more spirited but less specific). The crux of his analysis is that 'Orientalism and Hellenism are radically incomparable' (1995: 342) insofar as the former is based on colonial conquest and antipathy while the latter is unrelated to imperialism and is sympathetic to its subject of study: Hellas. The difficulty, however, is that both Orientalism and Hellenism generate comparable modes of representation that contradict Said's immediate follow-on comment that Orientalism relates to contemporary racism and stereotypes against Muslims whereas Hellenism makes 'no attacks on classical Greece' (1991: 342). The rebuttal to Lewis appears entirely accurate even while the elision of modern Greeks is just as entirely inapt—the point would be sound and the fields 'radically incomparable' only insofar as depictions of modern Greece would be absent of racism and stereotypes, which they assuredly are not. In other words, to be plain, Lewis is right in critiquing Hellenism even though his intentions were ironical, and Said's debate with an entire discipline certainly stands, even if he is mistaken in defending it against the sincere irony. But these are scholarly giants on whose shoulders the author would tremble to stand, and the core argument to this chapter is about popular pulp romance novels with a sleuthing plot as a hook for holiday sun-seeking readers... Bridging those two is the challenge. The aim is, then, to show that Stewart's novels prove this 'radically incomparable' situation is *not* the case, and even further, that a great many of the tropes Said rightly critiques as problematic at best or part of a systematic process of domination at worst also recur precisely in depictions of the modern Greek in novels that are quite clearly intended to be philhellenic entertainments for popular and widespread consumption by audiences unlikely to have direct deep experience of the Greek world. And moreover, such depictions carry genuine weight in the popular consciousness that not only permits but comes to expect forms of political domination, such as the trope of thieving or childish Greeks trotted out to media during

the Greek government debt crisis in the aftermath of the American financial crisis of 2008 that led to the subsequent European crisis.

A key part of the challenge is the extraordinary erudition and weight of history in any discussion of Classics. Postcolonial theory is young—reading in Classics is very old. The literary studies of decolonization (and the accompanying literatures of domination) struggle under an Oedipal burden. Yet, the institutional inheritance of Classics is enormous even as the capacity for popular culture to shape popular consciousness and consent for forms of domination at home (and abroad) exceeds it. As Phiroze Vasunia contends for Hellenists and postcolonial theory, ‘few classicists or Hellenists have directly engaged this body of work with an eye to the shaping of their discipline.... [through] the politics of knowledge’ (2003: 88). While Vasunia’s central aim is to consider how such questions might provoke a reconsideration of ancient Greek texts, he does recognize that the study of Classics shaped British imperialism, which in turn set it to new purposes. Specifically, he recalls that

approximately 20% of [Oxford] graduates went on to work in the British Empire outside of the UK. Most of these men read Classics at colleges such as Balliol, Keble, St John’s, and Corpus Christi College. Their influence on such institutions as the Indian Civil Service is staggering to behold. (Vasunia 2003: 94).

Based on this, he then outlines how scholars such as Benjamin Jowett shaped their students’ opportunities to serve the empire abroad and provided a framework for doing so through the study of Classics. Vasunia extends this in his work with Susan A. Stephens in which they both argue the study of Classics was also leveraged to variously promote nationalist culture, or as they pointedly phrase it, ‘Classics had a discernible role to play in endorsing, repudiating, or qualifying the antiquity that many people appropriated in joining the worldwide community of nations’ (Stephens & Vasunia 2010: 3). However, what does not appear in their discussion is the operation of Hellenism as a way of knowing the Hellenic in parallel with Orientalism as a way of knowing the Oriental—crucially, for Said that matter was not merely the academic history of a discipline but the more viscerally pressing operations of political power in the contemporary world. Where Said would see the critical distinction residing in the political power exerted over the Orient, it is difficult not to see a nearly identical form of discourse in his articulation of the matter at hand. The reader can all too easily set ‘Hellenic Studies’ to displace Said’s terms while still making perfect sense:

Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts. (Said 1995: 12)

A more generalized Philhellenism may better suit the diffuse 'distribution' Said turns to here. However, his sense of the entanglement of Orientalism is wide. In the university as an institution in service to national culture (Readings 1996: 14), Orientalism's discourse continued through imperial offices and government dossiers and out into the public awareness of such places built from popular as much as curricular and governmental bodies of work. Power is always productive, and chief among its products is knowledge, all as aspects of cultural hegemony with the activities and products of a people knotted tightly to economic demands and political will. Vasunia's attention to Jowett, when set beside Said's shift, via Foucault, to discourse and power-knowledge, makes it difficult to avoid asking more pressing questions about how Hellenism likewise operates between curricular and nationalist policy, and not only in relation to Greece, since after all it is Aeschylus and Euripides from whom Said draws his instantiation of the Orientalist tradition in relation to biases against modern Muslims.

Said continues the same passage by turning to a sense of cultural hegemony and foucauldian power-knowledge that is largely taken for granted in postcolonial studies, particularly those projects that emphasize the politics of representation and the intersection of colonialism and cultural studies. Said stresses that Orientalism (and we may again read the passage well with the same entanglement of Classics, Hellenism, and Philhellenism in mind) is

above all, a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, text, values), power moral (as with ideas about what 'we' do and what 'they' cannot do or understand as 'we' do)." (Said 1995: 12)

The uneven exchange implies a negotiated choice as in cultural hegemony, and the understanding of colonial discourse here describes the generalized Orientalism of his project just as aptly as it could apply to the more widespread expansion from a study of Hellenism and the academic disciplinary units that house it to popular media and public consciousness. They operate as ways to define Europe and to conceive its various Others, and its discourses in various spheres express European concerns even as those discourses are amenable to a history and analysis.

This is the crux. Depictions of Greece impact the operations of power over Greece. The ready images of childish animality in the popular pulp for British and American readers are the same images that recur today in media reports on Greece's financial crisis in the European Union, and again with real effects on real people. In the Romantic forms of Hellenism, the construction of Europe and Britain in particular as the inheritor of the Classical world while eliding *modern* Greeks from the British is not without material affects, even amidst love for the same modern Greece. If London is the new Rome, and Rome was the new Troy, of what use is modern Greece and how do modern Greeks relate to these inheritors? In tandem, depictions of Greece are a part of the cultural network, and tropes from colonial literatures may infiltrate contact zones that are not subject to European colonization while the discourses of Hellenism provide contents for other fields as well. Although the extreme forms of hateful biases to which Said draws attention do not generally appear in relation to Greeks as it has for Muslim communities in popular representations (as with nearly any decolonizing region subject to racist ideologies, from Africa to Ireland), or as Said stresses Hellenic studies is rooted in a Philhellenism, the extreme forms of prejudice are not necessarily the most important for widespread social affects. The insinuations of paternal control over an infantilized Other breeds contempt for fiscal independence, self-reporting, and national sovereignty just as surely, and the conceptual privileging of the Ancient world can render a *terra nullius* in modern Greece or elide modern Greeks from the celebration of Greek history and culture—while of a different continent, the trope of *terra nullius* or the 'disappearing Indian' in North American indigenous studies has weight. The legal doctrine of discovery does not apply, but the empty land carries a longstanding interpretive figuration (Coulthard 2014: 60).

The nearest approach to rethinking Orientalism and Hellenism with a recognition of the politics of representation comes from Vassiliki Kolocotroni and Efterpi Mitsi's *Women Writing*



*Greece* in which they also present Greece as a liminal space between the two polarities of the Orient and Occident (2008: 6). Importantly, they do so while again signalling gender's role in clarifying the contrast as well as the possibilities for expanded agency in liminal space. Distinct from Vasunia and Kolocotroni and Mitsi, Roessel's emphasis lies in the shift from a Romantic conceptualization of Greece in Byron's shadow versus the late modernist revision enacted by Henry Miller and Lawrence Durrell in the 1940s and after—and this shift is vital. As opposed to the political emancipation of Greece that plays quite well into Said's narrative of an Orient-Occident division from Aeschylus' *Persians* and Euripides' *Bacchae* to the modern world, Roessel's project stresses how through cultural products Miller and Durrell

reinvested modern Greece with meaning by stripping it of all political significance; ironically, in the late 1930s, when both Italy and Spain were engulfed by contemporary political questions, Greece offered "the discovery of yourself," to borrow the words of Lawrence Durrell. (Roessel 2002: 32)

The shift is from a liberation movement based on a Romantic dissociation of the modern Greek from the Classical world as its inferior inheritor (Durrell 2015: 107–21) to what Roessel suggests is a modernist inward turn in a process of self-discovery. He puts it more figuratively and dramatically later in the book to say 'Miller's *Colossus of Maroussi* and Lawrence Durrell's *Prospero's Cell* (1945), along with the Greek poems in Durrell's volume *A Private Country* (1943), invented a new modern Greece, as Edmund Keeley has shown' (Roessel 2002: 276). This re-emergence of Dionysus in Miller and Durrell's late modernism differs from the figuration of Greece in the high modernists, such as Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922) and Hemingway's *in our time* (1924). Miller's and Durrell's invention of 'a new modern Greece' comes through the shaping sensuous self-discovery that followed distinct from their high modernist predecessors, yet in their works this happens even as the Greek himself or herself pressingly plays little role in that sensual experience even while embodying and exemplifying it—sensual experience is not bound up with exploring or colonizing the Greek body in a way akin to other writers on the Orient, and crucially for Miller and Durrell, the modern Greek is celebrated rather than elided, though not without extensive 'distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts' (Said 1995: 12).

The disruptions to stable identities and norms at the same time also permit the exploration to occur for the Western interlocutor who is different from the Greek and therefore outside of traditional internal systems of domination. Furthermore, the discovery of oneself is itself very much a political activity for Durrell and Miller. While their contemporaries went to Spain to serve in the Civil War, most obviously George Orwell while wearing Henry Miller's coat, Durrell instead went to Greece, and Miller later followed not to serve in a war but to avoid one. Durrell even opens his 1937 novel *Panic Spring* with repeated references to 'revolution' across the first sentence and first page (2008: 1) as if to signal the difference—it would be a word and a difference unmistakable to his contemporaries. Miller's anarchism shaped his politics of the unpolitical (in Herbert Read's sense of the concept (1943: 17, 25)) including his advice to Orwell before proceeding to Spain, and in this sense his turn to self-discovery amidst political turmoil and the Second World War is rich in 'political significance' rather than stripped of it. Durrell's editorial work on the journal *Personal Landscape* in Egypt during the war likewise avoids depictions or even discussions of the military conflict or world of politics to instead enact a highly political introspection as is implied in its title (Gifford 2014: 96)—that several of his poems appeared in anarchist periodicals at the time and he sent the anarchist Albert Cossery's work from Egypt to be published in California by the anarchist Circle editions only further suggests that we would do well to avoid labelling the personal as apolitical (Gifford 2014: 120). While the nuances of this distinction are not the matter at hand here, they do point to the continuing political importance of Greece in their writing, including after their influence on subsequent authors, among whom was Stewart, and with whom they share a careful attention to geopolitics even if they do not discuss it overtly.

Much as with Durrell and Miller, Stewart's sense of Greece and Greekness is one that is modern and severed from the Classical ideals yet at the same time not fully integrated into modernity, thereby offering the pastoral idyll: a far from apolitical theme. For her protagonist Nicola in *The Moon-Spinners*,

it was left to me to discover, if possible, some quiet place in southwest Crete which combined the simple peace and beauty of "the real Greece" with some of the standards of comfort and cleanliness which the new tourist age is forcing on it. An almost impossible mixture of virtues—but I believed I had found it. (Stewart 1962: 7)

This ‘reality’ is of course also a projection of the desires of the Same. That is, ‘the real Greece’ operates as a screen for the censored contents of the English imagination, and hence what follows is a space of murderous violence, blood feuds, and sexual desire. The sequence of such expressions in the novel is fascinating in that it thrives around matters of landscape more than people or customs, calling up the colonizing trope of *terra nullius* and land as metonym for censored emotional excess finding its sublimated projection in space. As Nicola climbs the hill near the rustic village of ‘real Greece’, she sees ‘No sign of man’s hand anywhere in the world, except the road where I stood, the track before me, and a white vapor-trail, high in the brilliant sky’ (Stewart, 1962: 10). The ‘real’ *terra nullius* contrasts strikingly against the modern vapour trail, as if to signal the conflict that will emerge as the modern woman enters the uninhabited land to claim it for her own and consequently encounter the violent pre-modern indigene. The immediately subsequent depiction of landscape makes a part of this role clear:

Behind me, inland, the land rose sharply, the rocky foothills soaring silver-green, silver-tawny, silver-violet, gashed by ravines, and moving with the scudding shadows of high cirrus which seemed to smoke down from the ghostly ridges beyond. Below the road, toward the sea, the land was greener. The track to Agios Georgios wound its way between high banks of maquis, the scented maquis of Greece. I could smell verbena, and lavender, and a kind of sage. Over the hot white rock and the deep green of the maquis, the judas-trees lifted their clouds of scented flowers the color of purple daphne, their branches reaching landwards, away from the African winds. (Stewart, 1962: 10)

With the landscape standing in for the inhabitants, almost as a synecdoche, what does the shift from a violent to a lavish, fecund landscape imply about desire in this projection? The reader moves from the ‘sharp’, ‘rocky’, metallic ‘silver’, and ‘gashed’ island to one of scents and flora—if we do not notice it in these first two instances, it recurs (Stewart, 1962: 14). The suggestion is that the ‘real Greece’ for Crete will be one of violence while the appropriate space for the English visitors is lush and sensual, but both are projections of the English imagination. The mark is very much in the spirit of Miller and Durrell, and her self-discovery by navigating landscapes of her own imagination presses the point home.

Likewise, as she encounters Greeks, the narrative naturalizes animalistic violence as their key trait. Lambis, who is ultimately in a helper role to the English, first appears as ‘rather like a

dog defending a bone. He still had that wary look; no longer dangerous, perhaps, but he was fingering his knife' (Stewart 1962: 19), which recurs as 'He went warily, like a nocturnal beast' (1962: 27) because 'these are wild parts' with blood-feuds tied to the mountains themselves (1962: 30), and in mountain villages 'it is a wild country' (1962: 30) with 'primitives' (1962: 103). The men, of course, have 'paws' while the women have 'claws' (1962: 88, 96). If the reader might turn to Lewis and Said to say this mode of representation is fundamentally different from the popular tropes depicting Muslims, the passages featuring Hamid in Stewart's *The Gabriel Hounds*, set in Lebanon, could be altered to read Theodoros without much disruption. Likewise, the oddity follows with the division of the modern Greek from his ancient history such that the epigrams to chapters from Classical sources, such as Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's *Iliad* (1962: 48) suggests that the Englishman Mark is the Homeric hero, not the indigenous Greeks who are too savage as they seek out 'a kind of interminable and painful patience, a striving for mindlessness' (1962: 80). In this, the explosion of activity translating and recasting Homer and Virgil as expressions of the new English nationalist identity after the Restoration in 1660, of which Pope's work is a later part, make more sense—the use of the Classical is very much an expression of Englishness, but more importantly, so too is the construction of the brutal, mindless Greeks unattached to their ancient world. If the reader is inclined to distance the Restoration and early 18th century use of Homer and Virgil to express London as the new Athens and new Rome, the imperial legacy appears in the background as well, operating like the landscape in a tableau: 'A seawall, and a little curved pier, held the water clear and still as a tear in the flower-cup. Someone had scrawled CYPRUS FOR GREECE along the harbor wall, and someone else had tried to scratch it out. A man was beating an octopus' (Stewart 1962: 94). The weeping 'tear' contrasts to the 'scrawl' that is then 'scratched' out, finally closing with the beating. Each image makes sense on its own and has its function, such as the tenderizing of the octopus for a meal, but the set piece together reflects contemporary discomforts over Cyprus for the British while also implying (suspiciously) that Greeks would not support or even want Enosis. While Lawrence Durrell's *Bitter Lemons* could ironically claim not to be 'a political book' (1957: ix), his comments on revised graffiti make clear the conflicted interests of the Turkish and Greek populations (Durrell 1954: 392, 395)—it would be unreasonable in 1962 to see Stewart's similar graffiti, unshed tears, and broken calm as apolitical either. If anything, it is *more* bound to a political loyalty even if less strikingly so.

The simplistic depictions of Greeks, lest the reader think it is based only on Crete or Athens in *My Brother Michael*, returns in *This Rough Magic* set on Corfu. In this later novel the reader finds ‘There were passion and grief in her face, as if she were reproaching the Saint for his negligence. There was nothing irreverent in such a thought: the Greek’s religion is based on such simplicities’ (Stewart, 1964: 44). The diminution of a complex society troubles, and parallels of the Greeks to animals again repeat (Stewart, 1964: 184). The same Greeks also show a natural subservience to the British and equates of Britishness with value: “‘Antiquities? Oh, you mean statues, like the ones on the Esplanade, the fine English ones’” (Stewart, 1964: 181). Likewise, for empire, Stewart shows herself sensitive to the nuances of language in colonial discourse, dwelling on a single coordinating conjunction through her protagonist Lucy’s voice:

“An Ancient Baedeker I found on Phyl’s shelves. It was my grandfather’s —date 1909. It’s really rather sweet. Listen to the bit at the beginning about the history of the island. He says ‘it came into the possession of’ the Romans, then ‘fell to the share of’ the Venetians, then ‘was occupied by’ the French, then ‘was under Turkish, then Russian sway,’ but—notice the but—from 1815 to 1863 it ‘came under the protection of’ the British. Rule Britannia. Those were the days.” (Stewart, 1964: 168)

The nostalgic and only quasi-ironical closing is echoed by her love interest in the novel, and in it her and his implicit national pride easily fits into the long colonial history of Corfu, both giving the lie to Said’s contention that Greece had never experienced such colonialism from Europe and explicitly opening Hellas as colonial space with a rich set of colonial tropes and an established discourse. Both books as well point specifically to the complexities of the Cold War context of these political conflicts, the Cretan book looking to Cyprus and the Corfiot to Albania’s post-Cominform relations with China, and *My Brother Michael* to ELAS and the Greek Civil War. The persistent anti-communist stance repeated in each book is explicit and more carefully nuanced than the genre needs or even realistically permits.

Finally, as a signal to Stewart’s awareness of her position in a long history of Western writing about Greece, she adds notice of the very authors Roessel takes up with such care—D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller—with both as a contrast against her own project and with their works in the hands of disreputable antagonists against the British protagonists: ‘I [...] went on, even prodding the mattress and feeling under the piled blankets, but all that came to light was a

paperback copy of *Tropic of Cancer*, which I pushed back' (Stewart, 1964: 199) and 'Tony was there, sitting behind the table, with his feet up, reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover*' (Stewart, 1962: 90). Both scenes depict the antagonist reading sexually explicit materials that also reveal her familiarity with the series of modernist and late modernist authors writing on Greece (as do her several allusions to Durrell), and the latter in *The Moon-Spinners* contrasts her own writing (in a postcard) directly against these precursors.

### **Greek Romance, Thalassa, and Feminism's Waves**

From the start, this section must emphasize its interest in *Romance* distinct from the *Romantic*. Stewart offers her readers romance novels threaded through a mystery plot structure, and hence the concern here is with this as a break from the Romanticist figuration of Greece retraced so persuasively by Roessel in *In Byron's Shadow*. The concern is less the revolutionary Greek and struggle for independence that could fire the imagination of Byron or Shelley, and indeed these tropes are largely set aside by Stewart to accomplish the same kind of revision already made by Miller and Durrell. Instead, Stewart's romances negotiate the troubled mid-century position of English women in relation to patriarchal norms, particularly those without access to a radicalism that is perhaps best articulated through Kate Millet, Gloria Steinem, Germaine Greer—indeed, not only would it be difficult for the commercial enterprise in the popular pulp to overtly call up second wave feminisms in a positive light (especially so in a Cold War context), but Stewart's Greek romance-mystery novels were published between 1959 and 1964, all but one of them a full decade before the founding of *Spare Rib* and *Ms.* magazines.

Nonetheless, as many scholars have shows, gendered subject positions are negotiated differently in colonial space (Ouzgane & Coleman 1998: par. 1), and while Stewart's novels present a colonial discourse around Greekness, they also articulate the emergence of a female agency made possible by occupying a different space outside of the normative hegemony of late empire. Preceding third wave feminist paradigms, Stewart's novels depict not only a woman in a patriarchal society but an English woman in a 'decolonizing' patriarchal society distinct from imperial space yet overlapping with its tropes. The differences among the subject positions available to women in this context are vital to the construction of Stewart's narratives: the

threshold of adventure comes outside of patriarchal supervision; intimations of female desire and agency drive the form; and ethnic identity operates in a manner that refines gendered identities. Intersectionality makes forms of difference multiple without privileging one over the others in the reading here. Drawing from Gothic tropes, the young female becomes an active agent for change but no longer confined to domestic space despite a Nancy Drew-ish prudery to expressions of desire. In essence, her freedoms grow insofar as she adopts a colonial position of authority over the indigenous Greeks as a quasi-colonized Other.

The combination of a politics of representation with tropes of gendered and colonial identities presses for a reading of Stewart that is in advance of the period of her novels' publication. The intersectionality of third wave feminist paradigms of the subsequent decade would draw the reader's attention to the complex subject position of her protagonists in their hotel heterotopias (Ross 2013: 149). That is, such a reader would attend to the protagonists' unique capacity for new forms of reflection and observations based on occupying liminal spaces of difference outside of their home cultures. While an American context would reflect on the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race for third wave interpretive ventures, for Stewart the in-betweenness of Greece produces in her protagonists a subject position in which being a woman in a patriarchal society overlaps with being a neo-colonial in formerly colonized space, temporarily free from oversight and exercising a scopophilic gaze enjoying the Other. Her protagonists occupy liminal vacation space between East and West but also between domination and dominating. By being out- side of their own patriarchal social space during the liminality of a period spent as a xenos in a Cold War NATO state in frisson with the non-aligned, they reflect on patriarchal domination of Greek women. They also articulate veiled critiques of colonial discourses while remaining distinct from former masculine colonizers. And finally, they experience forms of difference that are temporary yet prompt self-reflection. As the mystery and romance genres necessitate, these spaces and moments in the interstices of social norms must eventually close with the reassertion of traditional roles and the re-establishment of normative hierarchies, typically through incarceration or marriage (respectively...).

In all three of Stewart's novels, *My Brother Michael* (1959), *The Moon-Spinners* (1962), and *This Rough Magic* (1964), the English female protagonist travels to Greece and solves crimes while falling in love. The first novel of her Greek sequence, *My Brother Michael*, makes clear the liberating element of the environment for her female, first-person, cigarette-smoking,

engagement-breaking, car-speeding protagonist Camilla: ‘there’s another side to this Great Emancipation. Things do seem a trifle dull occasionally, after so many years spent being swept along in Philip’s—you must admit—magnificent wake’ (Stewart, 1959: 11–12). The enactment of the marriage plot demonstrates the novels’ three forms of entanglement in patriarchal systems of control while at the same time giving indirect voice to female agency, permitting the protagonists to feel and pursue desire while travelling alone in foreign lands. In this respect, the reader encounters the discomfiting combination of active female protagonists who possess a seemingly real agency (good) with such (troubling) comments as “‘I’m sorry, but we’ll have to accept our female limitations and wait till morning’” (Stewart 1962: 115). This self-limitation stands in conflict with the tacit condemnation of male domination in Greece, as in the ‘bitterly’ spoken “‘I was told this was a man’s country. It’s true.’” (Stewart 1959: 30). The feeling recurs in the two subsequent novels as well: ‘The Greek mind again: if a man chose to get drunk now and again, what did it matter except to himself? His women would accept it as they accept all else. Life here had its shining simplicities’ (Stewart 1964: 160) and “‘Good girl.” I must be far gone, I thought, when this casual accolade from an obviously preoccupied man could make me glow all through’ (Stewart 1962: 222). The combination is telling—Greece provides a space for increased female emancipation and from which the abuses of patriarchy may be observed in Greeks to make the English or American readers aware of how such systems of domination function, yet at the same time this emancipation is clearly limited to the liminal location in Greece (in the sense in which Kolocotroni and Mitsi describe it), and its observations are clouded when turned back to British contexts. Where Kolocotroni and Mitsi have presented the entirely persuasive argument that the various women discussed in their *Women Writing Greece* ‘bring a sense of imperial entitlement countered by eccentric vision, a recognition of the difference and specificity of gender across cultural and ideological boundaries, and equal amounts of conformity and daring’ (2008: 15), I would only add that the conformity is toward home and the daring is toward hosts in Stewart’s case, albeit with the very genuine advantage of broaching topics at a safe enough distance to avoid censure and to effectively leverage mass market media for disseminating a milder form of women’s liberation across Britain and America.

Likewise, while sexuality is not openly described in the genre, at least in this form and time, female desire is regularly implicit and allusive in Stewart’s Greek series. It is as if to signal the possibility for altering patriarchal norms through relocations to quasi-colonial liminal space.



For instance, intimacy adopts language that makes the sexual subtext difficult to miss. The reader discovers in *The Moon-Spinners*, that the protagonist ‘was sitting up, with Mark’s sound arm around me, feeling the warmth of his body comforting my own, and clutching his coat to my nakedness with numbed and flaccid fingers’ (Stewart 1962: 217) or the sublimation of sexuality and desire in other sensuous experiences and the landscape:

The first shock of it was cold to my overheated body, but then the silky water slid over the flesh with the inevitable shiver of pure pleasure. The filmy nylon I was wearing seemed hardly to be there. I thrust away from the rock into the smooth, deep water, shook the hair back from my eyes, and turned out to sea. I swam steadily and strongly, making as little splash as I could. From this angle, the cliffs stood up even more massively against the night sky. (Stewart, 1962: 210)

In both instances, amidst the perpetuation of gender inequalities, the difference of quasi-colonial space and of other subject positions distinguished by nationality and race intimates new freedoms for the protagonist. She may ‘thrust’ and feel power while at the same time combining fleshly, quasi-orgasmic pleasure with strength and independence, even as she is flaccid after intense experience aside the massive vertical cliffs. The substitutions and sublimations remain quite near the surface. As with Ouzgane and Coleman’s work on masculinities and colonial space, Stewart’s readers may rightly ask ‘If genders and sexualities are the products of cultural practices and institutions [...], then what modified forms of sexualities and genders are produced or maintained in the hybrid societies of postcolonial places?’ (Ouzgane & Coleman, par 1). Clearly they are forms with greater agency and self-possession, at least while ‘abroad’. The telling distinction, however, is that while Coleman and Ouzgane mean North Africa and locations decolonizing from French and British rule, for Stewart this query comes in a critical vacuum. An argument via Said’s critique in *Orientalism* would need to set aside Hellenism and her frequent recourse to Classics in her epigrams and allusions in order to contend that the imperial styles of thought are unburdened here with ties to colonial privilege—clearly this is not the case. Stewart’s depictions of Greece and its reception among her audiences are troubled by Greece’s very different understanding of its prior partial colonizer (but geopolitical big brother) and the general acceptance of modes of depicting Greece and modern Greeks constructed through Hellenism and Philhellenism.

One of the contrasts afforded by the setting of *The Moon-Spinners* in ‘primitive’ and ‘wild’ Crete is between the men who possess women. On the Greek side of the image, much in line with the beastliness outlined in the previous section, there is the Greek Stavros who implicitly has beaten his wife in juxtaposition to the Englishman Mark who instead offers a suitable love interest to the protagonist, Nicola. The scenes depicting them, however, differ more in tone and attitude than in content or potential for violence and patriarchal domination:

I pushed the empty mug back into the cabin, and shut the door. I half expected to be told to go in after it, but nobody even noticed me. Lambis and Mark were both leaning out, watching the dim rocks of the shore rush to meet us. Colin, on the prow, held the boathook at the ready. The caique heeled more sharply still, then drove in. (Stewart, 1962: 223)

The expectation of being ordered about by dominant males and their readiness for physical violence as a trait of masculinity that turns her back to the role of nurse and maid shows that the differences between the men are far more about affiliation or affinity for the first person narrative voice (for Englishness and against Greekness) rather than actual differences between the characters—both are capable of violence and naturalize dominance over women. In the conclusion, while she excoriates Mark for diminishing her role in saving the day, she ultimately accedes to his dominance as a ‘g-girl’ reduced to tears who accepts his description of her work as housekeeping (1962: 171). We accept the narrator’s domination by a man so long as he is English, and we abhor Maria’s domination by her husband precisely because he is Greek. While the critique of patriarchy is welcome, it remains entangled in other forms of difference and privilege most readily understood through the tropes of colonialism.

## **Conclusion**

As already noted, a key element of Said’s analysis of Orientalism is that rather than being merely a scholarly discipline housed in institutional structures that produce bodies of knowledge from a position of power, ‘It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts’ (Said 1995: 12). This distribution is more troubling than any part of the field on its own, and as Stewart’s novels illustrate, it is also a trait of Hellenism. It is, finally, a closing point for all three novels amidst the tensions of the

Cold War and conflicts around Greece from 1959–64, with *My Brother Michael* centered around the legacies of the Communists in the Greek Civil War, the Cypriot struggle for Enosis in *The Moon-Spinners* in a post-Suez world, and most tellingly the potential to spark heat into the Cold War through Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria in *This Rough Magic*. This third book closes with the foiling of a mystery wrapped in international espionage and yet further frontiers from Greece. For the protagonist Lucy speaking of Albania,

“I know it’s Communist, of couse, and at daggers drawn with Tito’s Yugoslavia[...]. I gather that it’s a poor country, without much workable land and no industries, just peasant villages perched on the edge of starvation[...]. I gather that they are still pretty Stone Age at the end of the war, but trying hard and looking round for help. That was when the U.S.S.R. stepped in” (Stewart 1964: 134)

To this her male love interest responds and expands ““Yes. She supplied Albania with tools and tractors and seeds, and so forth[...] [A] few years ago Albania quarrelled with Russia, and broke with the Cominform, but because it still badly needed help (and possible support against Russia) it applied to Communist China.”” (1964: 134). The matter being set up is clear with Greece now a susceptible or unreliable ally in anti-communist Cold War politics. The foiled plot is then ““Communist China sitting pretty in Albania, with a nice little base in Europe, the sort of foothold that Big Brother over there’d give his eye teeth to have. And if the present pro-Chinese government fell, there’d be a nice almighty Balkan blowup, and the Chinese would be out and the Russians in. And maybe into Greece as well. Get it now?”” (Stewart 1964: 216). The most telling element here is the issue of Big Brother, which opens the image of the animalistic Greek up to foreign intervention and paternal ‘protection’ while entangling the novel in wider ideological conflicts. The point, however, is the error over George Orwell. The American C.I.A. famously supported Orwell’s *Animal Farm* (1944) and sponsored the film production of the novel (Leab 2007), and editions of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) have stressed Orwell’s opposition to totalitarianism while eliding his democratic socialism. Most tellingly, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was completed in 1948 and published in 1949 months before the Soviets acquired atomic weapons, yet in the novel Big Brother is the face of an invader of Britain who uses dollars and deploys atomic bombs. In short, Big Brother is Uncle Sam, and the shift of the image to China is an ideological operation of the time period’s conflicts that infuse Stewart’s novels—

we are back to Orwell in Spain, but with POUM rather than the communists, wearing Henry Miller's coat, and Durrell's chirping 'Revolution!' about Greece while his generation went to Barcelona. Where Roessel has described how they 'reinvested modern Greece with meaning by stripping it of all political significance' (2002: 32), the personal self-discovery reminds that the personal is always political. From the complexities of subject positions based on competing spaces and roles for gender, class, race, and ethnicity that give a proto-third wave hunger for independence to Stewart's novels, the Philhellenic movement between a self-discovering in Greece yet infantilizing presentation of modern Greeks, to the anti-communist tropes in each book, the reader finds these three novels very much 'a distribution of geopolitical awareness' into popular consciousness akin to Said's critique (1995: 12). That kinship then troubles Said's own division of his project from Hellenism and insistence that the two disciplinary fields and bodies of scholarship are incomparable. We cannot leave these novels without a deepening sense of the cultural politics of classical pulp, and a part of Stewart's richness as a writer is that she provokes the need for a *Hellenism* to accompany *Orientalism* while writing to a mainstream audience made to feel dissatisfied with the world it has even while unsure of what another might be.

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