

Percy Bysshe Shelley’s lyrical drama, *Hellas*, written in 1821, just after the outbreak of the Greek struggle for independence, remains one of the most powerful allegories of a nation’s effort to invent itself. What is remarkable, though, is that this allegory suggests that the singularity of a nation—the singularity of its emergence, of its borders, of its people, of its fate—is always related to other nations. For the British Romantic poet, the Greek revolution was at least a European event, if not an even broader one. Indeed, the intensification of the struggle between Greece and the Turkish Empire was noted across Europe and even across the Atlantic in America, and Shelley’s drama, while focusing on the struggle itself, also reflects on past and present conflicts on the continent, and forms part of his effort to encourage the British public to become philhellenes and support Greek resistance against Turkish domination. As he explains, “We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece.” At the same time, and in the process of the unfolding of his drama, what becomes clear is that “we are all Greeks” because we are never simply ourselves, and, within the logic of the text itself, this fact implies not only the fragmented history of “Europe,” but also the fragmented history of the nation as a concept. It tells us that any effort to provide a monogenealogy of a nation is a mystification and that the resistance to tyranny and injustice must also include a resistance to this fiction.