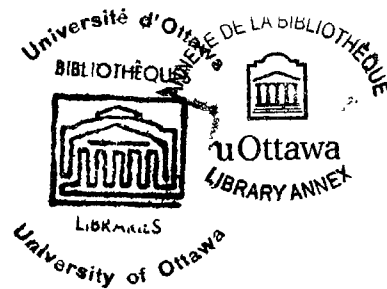


SHELLEY'S POETIC INSPIRATION AND ITS TWO SOURCES:
THE IDEALS OF JUSTICE AND BEAUTY.

by Marie Guertin



Thesis presented to the School of Graduate
Studies of the University of Ottawa as partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts in English Literature

Department of English

Ottawa, Canada, 1977

UMI Number: EC55769

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform EC55769
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

SHELLEY'S POETIC INSPIRATION AND ITS TWO SOURCES:
THE IDEALS OF JUSTICE AND BEAUTY

by Marie Guertin

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to show that most of Shelley's poetry can be better understood when it is related: (1) to each of the two ideals which constantly inspired Shelley in his life, thought and poetry; (2) to the increasing unity which bound these two ideals so closely together that they finally appeared, through most of his mature philosophical and poetical Works, as two aspects of the same Ideal. That Shelley himself became fully aware of these two major sources is made explicit, for instance, in the "Dedication" of The Cenci he addressed to Leigh Hunt in May 1819:

"Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just".

Therefore, after a brief study of Shelley's philosophical thought (because it constantly supports his poetry), we first analyze several great poems inspired by the ideal of justice, such as Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, The Cenci, in order to demonstrate both the content and the poetical power of this ideal. Then we deal with some of the most successful achievements inspired by the ideal of beauty and aesthetic preoccupations or emotions, viz. Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Mont Blanc, the Odes. Finally, after having noted several times how these two ideals tend to converge into one, somewhat analogous with the Platonic Idea of Good, we consider two masterpieces which can be seen as the best expression of this unity: A Defence of Poetry, and Prometheus Unbound. This threefold analysis leads to concluding remarks about the originality of Shelley's Romanticism.

T O M Y P A R E N T S

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Dalton J. McGuinty, who as the supervisor of my M.A. thesis assisted me throughout this project. I also thank the library staff at the University of Ottawa and the Director of Bancroft Library in Berkeley, for their professional and personal courtesies.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

All quotations from Shelley's Poetry, his Prefaces and Mrs. Shelley's Notes on the poems are taken from: Shelley Poetical Works, ed. by T. Hutchinson, a new edition, corr. by G. M. Matthews, OUP, 1970, 920p.

All quotations from Shelley's Prose, except for the Prefaces and Notes on the poems are taken from: Shelley's Prose or the Trumpet of a Prophecy, ed. by D.L. Clark, with introd. and notes, Albuquerque, UNMP, 1966, 368p.

All quotations from Shelley's Letters are taken from: The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by F.L. Jones in two vols. OCP, 1964, I, 457p., II, 523p.

ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS FREQUENTLY USED IN THESIS

SPW	<u>Shelley Poetical Works</u>
SPTP	<u>Shelley's Prose or the Trumpet of a Prophecy</u>
LPBS	<u>Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley</u>
QM	<u>Queen Mab</u>
ASS	<u>Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude</u>
HIB	<u>Hymn to Intellectual Beauty</u>
MB	<u>Mont Blanc</u>
RI	<u>The Revolt of Islam</u>

A NOTE ON SOURCES

PU Prometheus Unbound
TC The Cenci
OWW Ode to the West Wind

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	I
I.- THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF SHELLEY AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT	1
1. <u>Family Background and Early Years</u>	4
2. <u>Philosophical Works</u> Belief and God -- Religion and Philosophy -- Nature -- Man and Society --	13
3. <u>A Turning Point: The Irish Campaign</u>	35
II.- THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE IN POLITICAL AND MORAL POETRY	38
1. <u>Philosophy and Poetry: The Ideal of Justice as a Source of Poetry</u>	38
2. <u>Common Themes and Features</u> Historical Perspective -- Evil and Good -- Dramatic Form -- Visions and Prophecies -- Symbolism and Lyricism --	41
3. <u>Particular Emphases on Special Aspects of Justice</u> Initiation to Justice (<u>Queen Mab</u>) -- Justice and Revolution (<u>The Revolt of Islam</u>) -- Satire vs Establishment (<u>The Mask of Anarchy</u>) -- Justice and Revenge (<u>The Cenci</u>) --	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
III.- THE IDEAL OF BEAUTY AND ITS FUSION WITH THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE	88
1. <u>The Ideal of Beauty: Birth, Development and Expression in Poetry</u> Travels and Letters -- <u>Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude</u> -- <u>Hymn to Intellectual Beauty</u> -- <u>Mont Blanc</u> -- <u>The Odes</u> --	88
2. <u>Unity of the Two Ideals</u> <u>A Defence of Poetry</u> -- <u>Prometheus Unbound</u> The Last Poems	129
CONCLUSION	150
BIBLIOGRAPHY	153

I N T R O D U C T I O N

INTRODUCTION

During the past ten years, there has been a renewed interest in Percy Bysshe Shelley, reflected in the number of new editions and critical studies published in Europe and America. Among the editions, may be mentioned, for instance, The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley¹, that Neville Rogers began in 1974, supplemented with Rogers' annotations and those of eminent critics, or The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, first issued in 1887 by W. Sharp and re-issued in 1972 by Kennikat Press, or A Shelley Primer and Percy Bysshe Shelley, Poet and Pioneer, written by H. Salt in the end of the 19th century and also published by Kennikat Press in 1968. Similarly Haskell House republished in the early seventies, Francis Gribble's 1919 edition of The Romantic Life of Shelley and the Sequel. This list is far from being exhaustive.

As for the critics, they continue to vindicate Shelley from the misunderstandings and disparagement of him by Arnold and his followers, casting new light, through their detailed analyses, of both his writings and personality. Thus, some authors undertake to write biographies, since family manuscripts are now available to the public: for instance J.O. Fullerton and R. Holmes in England respectively published, in 1968 and 1974, Shelley, a Biography and Shelley, the Pursuit.

1 Although this edition has been criticized, it is nevertheless a sign of interest in Shelley.

Others direct their attention towards what may be called the "poetic-ethics" and study the political interests of the poet: for example Pollard Guinn in Shelley's Political Thought and Gerald McNiece, of Harvard University, in Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea (1969). Another critic, Margaret Crompton (Shelley's Dream Women, 1967) thought that female figures ought to be looked at in Shelley's life, while some years later, Earl R. Wasserman, of Johns Hopkins University, stressed in Shelley a Critical Reading (1971) the philosophical side of the poet, i.e. his skepticism as well as his idealism, and analyzed his poetry from this viewpoint. Almost at the same time, James Reiger of Berkeley reconsidered Shelley's natural and religious rebellion in The Mutiny Within: the Heresies of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1967).

Other scholars, from various countries, believe on the contrary that more emphasis should be placed upon what may be called the "poetic-aesthetics". For example, Ross Woodman, of Canada, studied the importance of myth in The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley (1964); E.J. Schulze, of the United States, re-assembled the poet's literary criticism in Shelley's Theory of Poetry (1966); the year before, Donald H. Reiman had developed the notion of symbols in his new edition of The Triumph of Life. Later on in 1973 Jean Perrin, of France, published Les Structures de l'imaginaire Shelleyen, where he studied the process of imaginative creativity according to Bachelard's

ideas¹, while H el ene Lemaitre², in Shelley, po ete des El ements, analyzed the symbolical hegemony of light.

While many of these critics have considered in depth particular aspects of Shelley's poetry, and some of them scrutinized step by step the whole canon, there is still room, I believe, for another kind of study, closer to a simple but attentive reading, viz. an attempt to reach a global understanding of this poetry according to its major sources of inspiration, as they appeared to the poet himself.

Shelley's poetry divides naturally into two parts. The first consists of poems such as Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, The Mask of Anarchy which have political subjects, as well as metaphysical³, and seem inspired by the so-called idealism of Shelley, or more precisely by his ideal of justice. The achievements of the second part appear at first sight very different: here an aesthetic emphasis predominates, because the poems which belong to this group such as Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude, Mont Blanc and the Odes are filled with sensitive impressions,

1 As developed in his books of aesthetics, i.e. La Psychanalyse du feu, L'eau et les r eves, L'air et les songes, where Bachelard takes Shelley's poetry as an example.

2 Who also follows Bachelard's ideas on imagination.

3 By metaphysical, I mean topics dealing with God's existence, fundamental nature of things, destiny of man, etc. These topics are often a source of inspiration in Shelley's poetry.

a strong feeling for nature and deep emotions; ideal beauty rather than ideal justice is now celebrated through various themes and symbols. However, if the content of these poems is examined more closely, it becomes evident that there are many links and interconnections between the two ideals, and consequently some unity of inspiration. For instance, beauty praised in Hymn to Intellectual Beauty is not only the principle making the world beautiful, but a source of goodness, justice and wisdom. The same could be said about Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude, To a Skylark, The Sensitive Plant • Conversely, political and moral order, which Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam and Hellas represent as the fruit of justice, brings about a world of beauty and flows from the sense of beauty no less than from the love of justice. Therefore it is not surprising that in the greatest creations of Shelley, above all Prometheus Unbound and The Cenci, the two ideals merge into a single one which, like the Good of Plato, presents two major attributes, the just and the beautiful.

These considerations have suggested the following study and defined its framework. Shelley's poetical works will be read and analyzed in the light of the two sources alluded to, special emphasis being given to their increasing unity. In other words, the object of this dissertation will be to show, in a great variety of examples, how a better understanding of Shelley's poetry can be reached through such an approach. To

trace the progress of each inspiration within the poet, and especially their increasing unity, it seemed appropriate to follow as far as possible, in each part of this study, a chronological order. In addition, since Shelley's ideal of justice as it is expressed in poetry flows from his early reaction to his milieu and from philosophical reflections, his formative years and philosophical essays could not be ignored.

Hence, in order to show the roots of this ideal of justice in Shelley's mind, Chapter I deals with the early personal experiences of the poet and recapitulates his major doctrines through a short analysis of his main philosophical essays, The Necessity of Atheism, Refutation of Deism, Essay on Christianity, An Association of Philanthropists and Philosophical View of Reform. Chapter II concentrates on what can be called the political and moral poetry, namely poems such as Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, The Mask of Anarchy, Hellas and The Cenci. After emphasizing the common features which characterize content and forms of these poems, it points out special aspects of the ideal of justice which are developed in each of them. Chapter III fulfills a twofold purpose: first, to show how the ideal of beauty, too often neglected by critics, began to grow in the heart of the poet, and inspired more and more his poetry from the Swiss period to the Italian; secondly, to demonstrate how Shelley was able to unite increasingly these two ideals in his thought as well as his poetical achievements: this

is proved by a short examination of the Defence of Poetry and a more substantial analysis of his masterpiece, Prometheus Unbound. Finally, a brief Conclusion stresses the fact that this double ideal led Shelley to an original Romanticism.

C H A P T E R I

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF SHELLEY AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

CHAPTER I

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF SHELLEY AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

The Shelley canon indicates, when it is considered in its totality, that there is a close relationship between the poet's life and thought, his philosophical writings and his poetry.¹ He was a man reflecting in his life what he had conceived², constantly meditating upon and learning from his own experience. The essay The Necessity of Atheism caused his expulsion from Oxford and turned him away from pursuing what could have been a brilliant academic career. Again, his Letter to Lord Ellenborough, against this judge's decision to imprison a deist, and his publication of Queen Mab, aroused hostile feelings among the authorities. This became evident in 1817, when the poet's petition for having custody of his children was rejected by the court, because his views were thought too liberal and eccentric. Conversely, just as the French and American Revolutions and the Irish situation had a strong influence on the young reformer, the journey to Switzerland and

1 Trelawny, E.J., Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author, ed. by David Wright, Penguin Bks, 1973, 323p., Ch. 7, p. 105: "To form a just idea of his poetry, you should have witnessed his daily life; his words and actions best illustrated his writings."

2 LPBS:I, No 116, p. 147, Letter to Sir Bysshe Shelley, October 13, 1811: "I am accustomed to speak my opinion unreservedly; this has occasioned me some misfortunes, but I do not therefore cease to speak as I think."

Italy provided his genius with a new dimension: a greater sensitivity to natural and artistic beauty.

Moreover, Shelley is a poet whose philosophical writings and poetry often reflect each other. The appeal for tolerance, friendship and love, which inspired An Association of Philanthropists, is represented in dramatic form by the characters of Laon and Cythna in The Revolt of Islam. Likewise, the idea developed in the Address to the Irish People, i.e. that men cause more miseries and evil when they resort to violence in order to vindicate their rights or rectify injustices inflicted upon them, is the central theme of The Cenci where the vindictive action, undertaken by Beatrice to punish the misconduct of her father, brings her and her family to destruction. And Shelley's insistence that morals should be united to politics for the attainment of social justice, an idea which is already perceptible in the Defence of Poetry and pervades A Philosophical View of Reform, is expressed by the fate of a mythical hero - his woes, conversion and final liberation - in the great lyrical poem Prometheus Unbound.

Therefore, if we wish to understand Shelley's poetry in relation to its sources, we must have some knowledge of the conditions in which the poet lived and of the philosophical thought that he conceived in his youth. Many of these points have been

carefully studied in recent years by critics.¹ Of course it will be enough, in this essay, to recall the most significant features of Shelley's formative years and trace the major ideas, as well as their origin, contained in his most important philosophical writings.

Shelley was born in 1792, five years after the end of the American Revolution and three years after the beginning of the French Revolution, into an aristocratic family involved in political affairs. His early teens were spent in times of turmoil and multiple upheavals, as the French Revolution still in its full swing was spreading, with Napoleonic wars, throughout Continental Europe. England, amongst other European countries, was shaken by these events and feared that similar movements would start at home. These fears were to a certain degree justified as, within the United Kingdom itself, the Irish, for whom the poet became later on so much concerned, attempted twice, in 1782-1784 and 1794, to gain their own Independence through revolutionary uprisings.

Among British intellectuals another kind of revolution was taking place. Renowned writers such as Burke, Paine, Godwin²,

1 For instance, in the following works: The Young Shelley, Genesis of a Radical, Shelley: The Golden Years (K.N. Cameron); Shelley's Political Thought (P. Guinn); The Revolutionary Idea (G. McNiece); Shelley, a Critical Reading (E.R. Wasserman).

2 Father-in-law of Shelley.

Price and Mary Wollstonecraft¹ were cultivating the spirit of the French Enlightenment and advocating more civil rights. In addition, the industrial revolution was growing considerably in the north of England where peaceful towns were being destroyed. Considering all these events, one can hardly think that Shelley remained unmoved. He inherited from them, in part, a spirit of passion and "sentiment of the necessity of change".²

PART I: Family Background and Early Years

Although Shelley spent his mature life in opposition to his family, he derived from it, however, attitudes and psychological features he had from his early years. The atmosphere within Shelley's home was one of striking contrasts between characters, religious views and philosophies. Everyone fostered a strong belief in his own ideal and acted accordingly, very often in opposition to the feelings and opinions which he had suffered painfully; hence arose many extreme positions. The grandfather, Bysshe Shelley, was a self-made man, very enterprising, who possessed tremendous confidence in his own powers, while his son, Timothy Shelley, father of the poet, was more humble and discreet, so that, for instance, he owed his place in parliament

1 First wife of Godwin and mother of Mary Godwin (Mrs. Shelley).

2 SPTP: Philosophical View of Reform, Ch. II, p. 240.

to parental influence. In religious matters, the grandfather professed atheism, but his son upheld a staunch Anglican orthodoxy and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. E. Shelley, declared herself a philanthropist. Shelley adhered to both his mother's and grandfather's views. As far as moral principles were concerned, the grandfather had rather loose ones, while Timothy Shelley conformed to highly rigid precepts. In this respect, Shelley resembled his father. Obviously, all these persons had very different natures, but nevertheless they united their efforts around a common interest, politics. This love of politics came to them, one might say, as an hereditary gift from the first branch of the aristocratic Shelleys who had been often involved, since the times of Charlemagne, in the affairs of the state. Some proved very courageous, even to death, such as:

Sir Thomas Shelley who fought, and died on the scaffold, in the cause of Richard II; Sir Richard Shelley, Grand Prior of the English Language among the Knights of Malta, whose well-proved valour brought him, in extreme old age, to the defence of the island against the Turks in 1565.¹

Shelley's immediate family also had a certain boldness and cleverness which its ancestors possessed. They did not hesitate to commit themselves to great and hazardous enterprises. In particular the grandfather was endowed with such a spirit. His intelligent, alert mind quickly showed its capacities in business

¹ Rossetti, W.M., A Memoir of Shelley, London, Printed for the Shelley Society, by R. Clay & Sons, 1886, 1st ed., 2nd ed., AMS Press Inc., N.Y. 1971, 154p., Ch. I, p. 3.

and politics. After several years spent in North America where, through various trades, he earned much money, he succeeded upon his return to England in building up an alliance with the Duke of Norfolk, leader of the Whig Party in Sussex, and thus provided valuable connections for his family.

Although Shelley's father did not demonstrate his political abilities so outstandingly as the grandfather, he nevertheless took very seriously his role as a supporter of the Whig Party and member of Parliament. His most cherished desire was to see his son follow the same path, so that a political ambition surrounded the child. This is reflected in the education the young Shelley received in his early years. The parents paid great attention to developing the intellectual capacities which would enable their son to reach and keep the high position coveted for him. Thus, taught Latin at the age of six, he was sent later to the best schools of England, Sion, Eton and finally Oxford, where his father had already been a student. Besides this formal education, Shelley received at home a unique training in political affairs, through the numerous conversations of his grandfather, father and friends about the Whig Party, its opponents, and the various problems debated in the House of Commons, - the Irish question for instance. The future poet-philosopher learned immensely from these discussions and perhaps we find some echo of his early experience in his Address to the Irish People, when he emphasizes the benefits people gain by discussing among themselves

and exchanging ideas. It was at Field Place that he learned the first rules of rhetoric and dialectic. Moreover, to supplement formal and speculative formation by practical observation, Timothy often sent his son with his steward around Sussex county, in order to inquire about the situation of his farmers and report to him upon their return. These short journeys developed in Shelley not only a social interest but also a realistic outlook on life.

Meanwhile, contrary to what one may expect from such an atmosphere, the first signs of the poetical temperament which was to become so prominent afterwards in Shelley were not long in appearing. Of course it is not unusual that young children try to compose short poems. But it is less common that these first exercises deserve attention and show originality, as it is the case with the Verses on a Cat, written by the schoolboy at age ten. And what seems much more significant is the translation into Latin, at thirteen, of Gray's masterpiece, The Elegy. or the number of poems which he wrote from 1802-1812, between the ages of ten and twenty, a selection of which was published with the gracious aid of his grandfather. His education at school favored such a tendency, because he succeeded in mastering Latin (and loved to read Gothic literature, for instance novels such as The Monk by M.G. Lewis). These novels directed the teenager into an imaginary world. His tendency to day-dream increased at home in reaction to the boredom of daily life. The family, notwithstanding its liberal ideology, had kept conservative fashions to

the point of monotony. Its social circle was restricted to aristocratic and political connections. Living under an austere everyday discipline and deprived of the company of other youths, except for a time when Graham, student in music, remained under the tutelage of his father, Shelley came to rely, for relief, upon the workings of his imagination. He invented frightening stories which he used to tell his sisters (and later wrote two Gothic novels, Zastrossi in 1810, St Irvyne, or The Rosicrucian in 1811). As he took pleasure in an imaginary world, the poetical side grew in him, arousing some admiration from the whole family, unaware that the mind of the adolescent was moving away from usual designs.

Although he showed early signs of overheated, unquiet disposition and was often at odds with his peers¹, it was somewhat unexpectedly and suddenly that Shelley revealed a character rebellious against the tradition in which he was brought up. The first manifestation happened at Oxford where, as is well known, he took to task the theologians on the subject of belief and disclosed his personal views in a pamphlet entitled The Necessity of Atheism. The expulsion and censure which ensued as the University's reply to his obstinate refusal of submission greatly

1 In his early years Shelley, as biographers tell, suffered greatly in schools from his masters' and comrades' teasing because of his habit of reading in recreation time. Their mockeries developed in him a feeling of persecution, which afterwards recurred in particular circumstances and awoke in him a strong sympathy for the unhappy. See Medwin, T., The Shelley Papers, Memoir of P.B. Shelley by T. Medwin, Esq., and Original Poems and Papers by P. B. Shelley. Now first collected London: Whittaker, Reacher, & Co., 1833, 180p., pp.3-4.

disturbed Timothy Shelley, who personally disagreed with such ideas and resented these events as a "disgrace" to the family¹, in addition to some political uneasiness at a time when the Chancellor of Oxford, Lord Grenville, was a Foxite-Whig. Notwithstanding his father's objurgations and the uncertainty of his own situation, Shelley did not want to yield and a few weeks after the expulsion he rejected a kind offer made by the Duke of Norfolk to join the Whig Party.² Once again Timothy became angry at this disconcerting behaviour towards a man who was his patron and friend, worrying all the more as his son, apparently, was idling in London, without concern about his future career. But in order to follow his own path, perhaps a personal vocation, more freely, he retaliated against the rigidity of his father. The presumed rebel, rather a free-thinker indeed, who did not want to be reckoned as among the aristocrats, repudiated

1 LPBS:I, Note 2, pp.56-57, Letter from Timothy Shelley, April 8, 1811: "The disgrace which hangs over you is most serious, and though I have felt as a father, and sympathized in the misfortune which your criminal opinions and improper acts have begot: yet, you must know, that I have a duty to perform to my own character, as well as to your younger brother and sisters. Above all, my feelings as a Christian require from me a decided and firm conduct towards you."

2 LPBS: I, Note 3, p. 158, Charles Grove's relation (1857): "'By the duke's invitation Bysshe met his father, at dinner at Norfolk House, to talk over a plan for bringing him in as member for Horsham, and to induce him to exercise his talents in the pursuit of politics. I recollect the indignation Bysshe expressed after that dinner, at what he considered an effort made to shackle his mind, and introduce him into life as a mere follower of the duke.'" See Medwin, T., The Shelley Papers, Memoir of P.B. Shelley. p.24: "But if Shelley thought this, it was different with his father, who, proud of his son's talents, had looked forward to a brilliant career for his heir."

his family inheritance and title¹. Such a decision could hardly be more offensive to the pride of his parents. It was obvious that Shelley had developed a kind of antagonism against his own milieu.

The opposition just described in its main features was not merely temperamental: it was essentially an opposition of ideals, beliefs and goals. Although Shelley had previously assumed that he would replace his father in parliament as he had told Leigh Hunt before departing from Oxford, he became gradually indifferent to this ambition. Unnoticed at the time - except by his friend T.J. Hogg - the change nevertheless began at University College, and developed later on, in the period of apparent idleness which took place between his expulsion from Oxford and his departure for Ireland. The main reason for this change is Shelley's universal curiosity and his early strong interest in philosophy.² To perceive this bent for philosophical speculation,

1 LPBS: I, No 90, p. 116, Letter to E. Hitchener, June 25, 1811: "I am no aristocrat, or any crat at all but vehemently long for the time when man may dare to live in accordance with Nature & Reason." (Shelley's italics) And No 57, p. 62, Letter to W. Whitton, April 17, 1811: "As common report, & tolerably good authority informs me that part of Sir Bysshe Shelley's property is entailed upon me; I am willing by signature to resign all pretensions to such property." See Hogg, T.J., Shelley at Oxford, with an introd., by R.H. Streatfeild, London, Methuen & Co., 1904, 229p., Ch. IV, pp.124-126; Ch. V, pp. 132-133.

2 Hogg, T.J., Shelley at Oxford, Ch. I, pp. 15-16: "He was, indeed, a whole university in himself". And he was concerned by practical inventions as well: for while in Oxford, he wanted to see chemistry developing to help the needy, or he dreamed to dispatch "aeronauts" into Africa to liberate the black slaves. Later, in Italy, he gave money dealing with a project of steam-engine.

we need only to glance at the recurring themes of his poems and letters before, during and after his stay at Oxford. They are filled with queries about God and man, life and death. Moreover he liked to think of himself as a philosopher: "But am I not a Philosopher? Do I not pursue virtue for virtue's sake?".¹ This concern for ideas in themselves led him to study various philosophers of different tendencies and countries. Instructed in the Aristotelian and British tradition by his masters he early showed a strong preference for the latter, mainly for Bacon's and Locke's Empirical Rationalism and for Hume's Skepticism; later on he became also acquainted with Berkeley's Idealism. But the prevailing influences on his mind remained those of Locke and, even more, of Hume, which predominated at least for a period of nine years, from 1810-1819. Afterwards, he became more interested in the Greek tradition, the value of which he had not previously perceived to the same extent, because he had too much leaning toward the skeptical and materialistic trend of the 18th century. A deeper learning of the Greek language, during his stay in Italy, allowed him to read Greek philosophers and poets in the original, and then he enthusiastically found in Plato, the philosopher "par excellence", the light of his understanding. In addition to these studies suggested by the Oxford curriculum, a contemporary influence,

¹ LPBS: I, No 83, p. 104: Letter to T.J. Hogg, June 16, 1811.
(Shelley's italics)

a somewhat personal discovery, played an important role in Shelley's thinking: the social philosopher William Godwin and his work Political Justice. The letters of the poet state how as a young student he saw the book for the first time at Eton and ordered it for particular study. He grew so fond of it that he kept it like a Bible throughout the years from 1810 to 1822 and read it several times. Political Justice impressed Shelley in a very special manner because this book inspired to a greater extent his ideal of justice and devotion to this ideal.¹ Furthermore the doctrine of Political Justice directed his attention towards the French Encyclopedists and Thomas Paine who, in addition to Godwin, were the most important sources of his religious and political conceptions.

This partial list of readings shows that Shelley was exposed to a wide circle of philosophers and philosophies. But although still very young, he was urged by his own creative powers to build his personal thought with the elements borrowed from his favourite authors; and he hurried to write a number of essays on various subjects. Of course all these philosophical essays cannot

¹ LPBS: I, No 157, p. 220: Letter to W. Godwin, January 3, 1811 (for 1812). See Baker, C., Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of a Vision, Princeton Univ. Press, paperback ed. 1973, 307p., Ch. I, pp. 22-23, 29, 33-36. Guinn, P., Shelley's Political Thought, Mouton, The Hague, 1969, 134p., pp. 25-26. J. Reiger, The Mutiny Within: The Heresies of Percy Bysshe Shelley, G. Braziller, N.Y. 1967, 283p., where some of Godwin's novels are studied in relation to Shelley's thought.

be analyzed in detail. But if one wishes to reach the sources of Shelley's poetry, it is necessary to get a clear idea of his philosophy, if this word can be applied, as we think, to a set of occasional writings, the content of which was never reshaped in a systematical exposition.

Part II: Philosophical Works

Belief and God

The first and most important early essay Shelley wrote is The Necessity of Atheism¹, which laid the foundation for his entire system of thought and reform. In this essay, Shelley claims to deal from the outset with the juridical question raised by atheism. Are men responsible for their beliefs or disbeliefs? No, Shelley answers, and he borrows from Locke's philosophy of knowledge and belief² a reason to support his

1 All references with quotations marks within the text are taken from this essay (D.L. Clark's edition) pp. 37-39.

2 Locke, J., An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, in two vols. ed. with an introd. by John W. Yolton, Dent: London, Everyman's Library, 1972, Vol. II, Bk IV: Ch. I, Of Knowledge and Opinion, pp. 133-138; Ch. II, Of Degrees of our Knowledge, pp. 138-145; Ch. IX, Of our Knowledge of Existence, pp. 126-127; Ch. X, Of our Knowledge of the Existence of God, pp. 217-227. It is noteworthy that Shelley before coming to Oxford had already deviated, so to speak, from Christian precepts. This deviation started at home with his grandfather's example of professed atheism, and was carried within silently for months. A sign of such evolution is the novel Zastrossi, which he wrote in 1810. It seems that the young man, hesitating with himself upon the issue of the existence of God or his nonexistence, portrayed this dilemma through the characters of Zastrossi, Mathilda (Atheists), and Verizzi, Julia (Christians). But this period of doubts soon changed with his writings The Necessity of Atheism and There is no God.

answer: our beliefs are grounded on our perceptions and we are not responsible for these perceptions. It should be noted that what Locke calls "perception" is the perception, i.e. awareness, - of a relation between two ideas. In the present instance, the terms to compare and relate are the ideas of God and of existence. Either men perceive an agreement between these two ideas or a disagreement. In the first case, men become believers; in the second, disbelievers. But in neither case should they be held responsible for their beliefs or disbeliefs. Then Shelley shifts to the metaphysical issue and tries to show that disbelief seems closer to truth, because men cannot give any proof whatsoever of a necessary connection between the idea of God and the idea of existence. Here, Shelley leaves Locke's analysis to follow Hume's skeptical reasoning. According to Hume and therefore to Shelley, three kinds of proofs may be given for the existence of a thing in general, consequently for the existence of God: (1) through the senses; (2) through reason; (3) through testimony.¹ "The evidence of the senses" would be the strongest and the best (surprisingly enough, Shelley does not seem to question the possibility of such evidence); unfortunately "the Deity" does not appear to

1 Hume, D., The Essential David Hume, ed. with an introd. by R.P. Wolff, The New American Library, N.Y. 1969, 383p., Section: Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, Parts XI-XII, pp.343-365 ; and An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed., by C.W. Hendel, The Library of Liberal Arts, the Bobbs-Merill Co., Ltd., 1955, 198p., Section, XI: Of Particular Providence and of a Future State, pp. 142-157; Section XII: Of the Academical or Skeptical Philosophy, pp. 158-173.

our senses in the present, at least commonly and publicly.

"Reason claims the second place"; but it is easier to understand the universe as eternal itself than its creation by an eternal God, and man's existence is not explained when it is represented as an effect "produced by an eternal, omniscient, Almighty Being, cause more obscure than its supposed effect" (here Shelley somewhat deviates from Hume's precise argument, which forbids the induction from a finite and imperfect universe to an infinite and perfect God). "The 3rd and last degree of assent is claimed by Testimony": although weaker than the preceding ones, this proof would still be a proof, if it were not "contrary to reason". But the so-called "eye-witnesses" report miracles, i.e. phenomena which do not agree with natural laws and reason, or speak on behalf of an "irrational" Deity, - irrational because such a Deity commands belief as a voluntary act (here again Shelley adds something of his own to Hume's argument)¹. In consequence of this negative analysis, one must declare that disbelief is more reasonable than belief, since there is no proof whatsoever of God's existence.

Prominent in this first essay is the ability displayed by its author to summarize, focus and adapt for his own purpose some essential arguments of the philosophies of Locke and Hume. And in spite of a polemical overtone and a provocative title, he did not go much further, at least if one takes his words literally, than

¹ Hume, D., An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Section X, On Miracles, Part I, pp. 117-124.

the skeptical position of the latter. But Shelley, indeed, had a tendency to go further, towards a radical position, in other words to move from a skeptical "there is no proof of God" to a radical "there is no God". In a note to Queen Mab, entitled There is no God, Shelley categorically affirms an atheistic point of view. This new shift is supported by a new authority, Baron d'Holbach, an obstinate promoter of a materialistic atheism among the French Encyclopedists, of whom Shelley quotes a long excerpt from the Système de la nature, in order to express his own thought.¹ The passage says in substance that belief in the Deity is a mere product of ignorance and superstition, that the traditional idea of God and the claim of a revelation is a cluster of contradictions. "For if God has spoken, why is not the Universe convinced? If the knowledge of God is the most necessary thing, why is it not the most obvious and the most clear?"² Furthermore, still in the wake of d'Holbach, the young author asserts that science accords with atheism. "The consistent Newtonian" - Shelley does not care too much about the feelings of Newton himself - "is necessarily an atheist". "Newtonian", here means

1 D'Holbach, P.-H.D., baron, Système de la nature, ou des lois du monde physique et du monde moral. Nouv. éd. avec des notes et des corrections, par Diderot, ed. avec une introd. par Yvon Belaval, Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1966, 2 vols. Vol. I, Ch. 18: Origine de nos idées sur la divinité, pp. 456-458, et Vol. II, Ch. VIII, Que les hommes ne peuvent rien conduire des idées qu'on leur donne de la Divinité, pp. 279-286. (In SPTP: There is no God, pp. 97-102.)

2 SPTP: There is no God, pp. 99-102, quotation of d'Holbach translated by E.F. Bennett in Translations of Longer Foreign Language Passages, p. 356.

"scientist" as it was commonly intended in the XVIIIth century, especially among Voltaire's and d'Holbach's friends. Shelley's atheism appears, therefore, at that time, as a firm and steady belief. As a matter of fact, Shelley never abandoned this position, never believed in a creative and transcendent God, still less in the Christian God. Nevertheless, he did not keep strictly with d'Holbach's position all his life; sometimes he seems to have oscillated. The ambiguities he experienced in 1810 constantly recurred.¹ It may appear paradoxical, but whenever the concept of justice came to his mind, he could not refrain from saying "God created all men alike". Whenever he spoke of the concept of love, as he wrote to Hogg in January 1811, he said: "Oh! that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal imperishable love".² And later on, during his visit to Switzerland in 1816, the beauty of the Alps inspired religious feelings and he exclaimed: "They were created indeed by one Mind".³ Perhaps there was some unconscious conflict between his spontaneous sentiments and his philosophical conceptions which were suggested to him by the

1 See above p. 13, note 2.

2 LPBS: I, No 39, p. 45, Letter to T.J. Hogg, January 12, 1811; and I, No 35, p. 35, Letter to Same: "The word 'God' has been (and) will continue to be the source of numberless errors until it is erased from the nomenclature of Philosophy - it does not imply 'the Soul of the Universe the intelligent & necessarily beneficent actuating principle' - This I believe in."

3 LPBS: I, No 353, p. 485, Letter to T.L. Peacock, July 12, 1816.

common philosophy of the eighteenth century.

The controversial reception of the first essay did not stop Shelley from pursuing his philosophical thought, which he continued to express in several writings such as: An Association of Philanthropists, the Notes in Queen Mab, A Refutation of Deism, etc. . These writings deal with a great variety of themes, the most important of which appear to be: religion and philosophy, nature, man and society. Therefore, in order to perceive the components of Shelley's philosophical thought, it is useful to recall his main ideas on each of these themes.

Religion and Philosophy

On religion, Shelley's attitude derived from his ideas about God developed through psychological, historical and social considerations. He constantly dwelt upon this subject throughout his life, in his letters or essays such as: I will Beget a Son, A Refutation of Deism, A Refutation of Christian Religion and an Essay on Christianity. If we try to determine the source of his ideas expressed in these writings, it is evident that they were taken mostly from the Baron d'Holbach and Voltaire. For instance, he read attentively d'Holbach's Système de la Nature, from which he borrowed a long passage, as mentioned above, when he wanted to prove in Queen Mab that there is no God. And it is no less obvious that many of his judgments about the origin of religions, the baneful influence of churchmen on society, the weak morality of reli-

gious beliefs and the personality of Jesus Christ are very close to those so strongly vindicated by the Baron in Le Christianisme Dévoilé ou Examen des principes et des effets de la religion Chrétienne; La Contagion Sacrée ou Histoire naturelle de la superstition; Histoire Critique de Jésus-Christ. From Voltaire, he repeated his motto: "Ecrasez l'Infâme". He particularly drew upon the historical studies of religion in Dictionnaire Philosophique; Lettres Philosophiques ou Lettres Anglaises, Le Siècle de Louis XIV, which dealt especially in Ch. 35-39 with ecclesiastical affairs. This explains why in the poet's writings may be found all the major ideas of the 18th century. Like the Encyclopedists, Hume or Paine, he did not believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God, nor in man's original sin, the divinity of Christ and punishment after death. Consequently he could not believe in the truth of miracles and prophecies, nor have any faith whatsoever in the Church. Only the kind of sentimentality which Shelley added to the proclamation of these ideas (already expressed with passion, but a more intellectual one, by eighteenth century authors) is something original and properly romantic. It would be difficult, indeed, to render a just account of all these ideas. However, they can be grouped into three divisions.

First, Shelley tries to show how religion contains a superstition without objective truth: it is a false science, a false representation of the world:

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the

universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none.(...) It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. 1

Consequently, these religions formed in men's own imaginations, a mythical or fantastic being. Moreover their influence upon men was baneful, because it gave them an illusory view of the world they lived in and prevented them from putting forth remedies for sufferings and evils. Instead of becoming active to fight against their miseries, Christians were inclined to hope for eternal rewards:

These demagogues artfully silenced the voice of the moral sense among them by engaging them to attend not so much to the cultivation of a virtuous and happy life in this mortal scene as to the attainment of a fortunate condition after death. 2

These views, which were later on popularized by Marxism, were taken by Shelley, once again, very much from Voltaire and above all from d'Holbach.

Secondly, he opposes religion to itself by contradicting its doctrine with its practice. In a rather astonishing way, Shelley uses the teachings of Jesus, for which he has a great admiration, to show his discontent with the Church. The young man cannot understand the attitude of Church authorities who did not

1 SPTP: "Necessity! Thou Mother of the World!", pp.211-212.

2 SPTP: Essay on Christianity, p. 212.

hesitate to punish those who questioned their creed. Inspired by Voltaire's studies on the history of religions, he recalls the names of intellectuals who were victims of a suspected heresy, such as, "Lucileo Vanini", an atheist burned at the stake in Italy, "Galileo Gallilei" condemned to imprisonment, "Voltaire" himself exiled because of his opinions.¹ Moreover, he can hardly see why the Church resorted to violent means to impose upon men her belief and he reminds us of the various wars of religions which hit so many countries of Europe from Constantinople to Germany, Spain and France, from England to Ireland:

Eleven millions of men, women, and children have been killed in battle, butchered in their sleep, (...) in the spirit of the religion of Peace, and for the glory of the most merciful God. 2

Again, Shelley wonders how Christian churches were so blind to their own teachings:

If they had looked an inch before their noses, they might have found that fighting and killing men(...) was the very worst way for getting into favor with a Being who is allowed by all to be best pleased with deeds of love and charity. 3

Shelley blames the Church for boasting about her system of morals when too often she does not put her own dogmas into practice. He thinks that she would have been stronger, if she had not resorted at all to violent means: "Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the pre-

1 SPTP: A Letter to Lord Ellenborough, p. 75.

2 SPTP: A Refutation of Deism, pp. 124-125.

3 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 42.

ceding analogy would be inadmissible".¹ Priests or ministers made men unhappy because they deviated from the true spirit of the Gospels.

Thirdly, Shelley wants religions to disappear and be replaced by philanthropy and philosophy. If religions have been the clouds of the past, philanthropy and philosophy should be the lights of the future: "Reason points to the open gates of the Temple of Religious Freedom, Philanthropy kneels at the altar of the common God".² Philanthropy was the best solution for men because it made them more tolerant: "There is no safer (method of improvement) than the corroboration and propagation of generous and philanthropic feeling, than the keeping continually alive a love for the human race".³ For Shelley, philanthropy is not only a part of man's philosophy, it is a kind of religion, as he writes in a letter to Elizabeth Hitchener: "Oh! that I (may) be a successful apostle of this only true religion, the religion of philanthropy".⁴ Moreover, Shelley sees in Christ, as in Spinoza, a model or symbol of true philosophy: "Jesus Christ has said no more than the most excellent philosophers have felt and expressed -

1 SPTP: I Will Beget a Son, p. 105. (This point is made in Hume's History of Natural Religion, and B. Spinoza's Tractatus Politicus.)

2 SPTP: An Association of Philanthropists, p. 61.

3 Ibid., p. 62.

4 LPBS: I, No 167, p. 255, Letter to E. Hitchener, February 14, 1812.

that virtue is its own reward".¹ In this manner, Shelley elevates philosophy above existing religions and, like the French Encyclopedists, believes that progress towards truth, wisdom and virtue could be achieved through the love and practice of philosophy: "The progress of philosophy and civilization which ended in that imperfect emancipation of mankind from the yoke of priests and kings called the Reformation had already commenced".²

Nature

On nature we shall be very brief, because it is especially in his poems that Shelley deals with this subject.³ However, we must observe that his attitude in this respect is an essential part of his philosophical thought. Why? Because, in a system which denies a personal and transcendent God, nature as an immanent power⁴ has to take His place, as in Spinoza's Ethics, a work which the poet seems very much to have admired, at least through a romantic interpretation. Nature has also in his view a redeeming role for men who feel lonely through lack of sympathy

1 SPTP: Essay on Christianity, p. 201.

2 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 231.

3 In addition, given our topic we cannot treat this subject for itself.

4 See section on God, p.17. For it is well-known to critics that Shelley "was drawn towards a kind of pantheism". (Baker, C. Shelley's Major Poetry, pp. 29,31-32.)

from other men:

Hence in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings, and yet they sympathize not with us, we love the flowers, the grass, and the waters, and the sky. In the motion of the very leaves of spring, in the blue air, there is then found a secret correspondence with our heart. There is eloquence in the tongueless wind, and a melody in the flowing brooks and the rustling of the reeds beside them, which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul, awaken the spirits to a dance of breathless rapture. 1

Finally, besides its metaphysical and emotional function, nature becomes a principle in the social-political domain. When Shelley seeks a foundation for equality among men he turns them to nature pointing out that "it created them all alike"². A similar idea had already inspired Rousseau, Paine, Godwin, authors to whom the young thinker owed so much.

Man and Society

The third theme dealt with in the philosophical writings is man and society. To these questions, Shelley devoted a tremendous amount of energy and wrote several pamphlets such as: An Address to the Irish People, An Association of Philanthropists, A Declaration of Rights, And Statesmen Boast of Wealth, etc. . Although these pamphlets contain many ideas, they would remain incomplete without the addition of the most important political essay A Philosophical View of Reform, written in 1819, the year in which the poet's thought had considerably progressed and ma-

1 SPTP: Essay on Love, p. 170.

2 SPTP: And Statesmen Boast of Wealth, p. 113.

tured. We shall therefore refer to it occasionally in this chapter. Just as Shelley took some ideas on religion from d'Holbach and Voltaire, here he borrowed extensively on the subject of man and society from Thomas Paine, the famous author of Common Sense, The Rights of Man and The Age of Reason, who had been a friend of his father before becoming one of the most influential revolutionists in America and in France.¹ Moreover, it is well known that, on this matter, Shelley read carefully Godwin's Political Justice and Rousseau's Contrat Social. Once again it would be difficult to give a detailed analysis of Shelley's conceptions as well as the various influences which contributed to shaping his personal thought. But it is possible to focus his main ideas around two centres: (1) his criticism of the present state of man and society; (2) his "philosophical view of reform".

In observing his fellow-men, Shelley noticed how far Britain was from having reached the heights of true civilization. He realized that evil still existed, unfortunately, under many forms in society. Workers in England and Ireland were living in utter poverty, ignorance, hunger, although they worked some sixteen hours per day. Farmers could hardly subsist on farms which were inadequate to allow them to produce goods for the nation and their families. In short, a great number of the English

¹ Where he wrote with Condorcet La Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et le Citoyen.

population felt unhappy. The immediate cause of this situation, in Shelley's view, was the division into social classes, that is, between the king, the aristocracy and the masses. Such segregation had been encouraged by the general ignorance of men on the one hand, by the power of the rich on the other.¹ The latter possessed sufficient money and influence to become the leading force in government in the House of Peers or the House of Commons, while the majority of British people deprived of a franchise failed to be represented: "I have said that the rich command and the poor obey, and that money is only a kind of sign which shows that according to government the rich man has a right to command the poor man".² Moreover, such a gap into social classes encouraged more evils, concentration of all effective rights and riches for the wealthy, heavy duties and complete destitution for the poor:

The poor are set to labor - for what? Not the food for which they famish; not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels; not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage--oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him--no; for the pride of

1 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 245: 'Mankind seem to acquiesce, as in a necessary condition of the imbecility of their own will and reason, in the existence of an aristocracy'.

2 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 53.

power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundreth part of society. 1

Unfortunately for the working classes, a new aristocracy, the industrial class and bourgeoisie, was increasing constantly in strength and power, tending even to supplant the old one. This was an ominous event for the poor, because this new establishment was worse than the older. And for Shelley, aristocracy meant the habit and power of living upon the labour of common people:

Let me be assumed to employ the word aristocracy in that ordinary sense which signifies that class of persons who possess a right to the produce of the labor of others, without dedicating to the common service any labor in return. 2

Shelley noticed also that men did not enjoy the freedom of speech and expression as they were taught to believe: "There is no liberty of press for the subjects of British government".³ As soon as they protest publicly against the system, they are arrested and imprisoned as were Leigh Hunt, Eaton, Finnerty or Burdett. But the greatest sign of the presence of evil within society was the necessity for men to keep a government: "Govern-

1 SPTP: And Statesmen Boast of Wealth, p. 113. (Here, Shelley is very close in thought to Rousseau and Godwin. Cf. Rousseau's Social Contract and Godwin's Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, with selections from Godwin's other Writings, abridged ed. & ed. by K. Codell Carter, OUP, 1971, 340p., Bk VIII, Ch. II, pp.282-291; Enquirer, Essay II, pp.320-332.

2 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 245. (Shelley's italics)

3 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 55.

ment is an evil; it is only the thoughtlessness and vices of men that make it a necessary evil(...)Society is produced by the wants, government by the wickedness".¹ From this consideration, Shelley arrived at the idea that reform was desperately needed, as the very institutions created with a view to bringing more order and consequently more happiness to the population, such as government, law and religion, had in fact not only failed to do so, but increased the inequalities and unhappiness in society.

The reform which Shelley proposed is exposed throughout his first essays, but is portrayed in greater detail in A Philosophical View of Reform, issued some years later. The main reason which led him to want reform within society was that men should be happy in this world, and not dream about an illusory world of happiness after death. But if men wish to be happy, according to the young reformer, they should look upon themselves: "Reform ought to begin at home". They should start reform at the lowest level possible, the physical, whereby they would all become faithful vegetarians like himself. In his 1812 essay A Vindication of Natural Diet, he had already given numerous indications about how to keep a natural diet. His advocacy of vege-

1 SPIP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 51. (Notice that this judgment of the poet was taken literally from Paine's Common Sense, "Of the origin and design of government in general, with concise remarks on the English Constitution", p.13: "Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness.(...)Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil".

tarianism did not spring totally from sentiments of pity toward animals which were butchered for human consumption, but came rather from a deeper source, that of moral principles. Shelley believed that vegetarians have more facilities to become and remain virtuous than others, because they are exempt from eating strong meats which excite the humours. He presents an historical survey of people who were drawn toward severe passions and even to murder because they had excessively eaten flesh and drunk wine. Nero, Ismael, Napoleon were examples of this physical evil.

On the intellectual and moral levels, he encourages his fellow-citizens to educate themselves, in particular to become aware of their rights as human beings. This is the motto of An Address to the Irish People, his first public declaration:

Are you slaves, or are you men? If slaves, then crouch to the rod and lick the feet of your oppressors; glory(in)your shame; it will become you, if brutes, to act according to your nature. But you are men; a real man is free, so far as circumstances will permit him. Then firmly, yet quietly, resist. 1

The Declaration of Rights, written also in 1812, has the same purpose. In this essay, Shelley takes some ideas from Godwin's Political Justice and Paine's Common Sense to emphasize the right of every man to liberty:

X. A man must have a right to act in a certain manner, before it can be his duty. He may, before he ought.

1 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 54.

XXIX. Every man has a right to a certain degree of leisure and liberty, because it is his duty to attain a certain degree of knowledge. He may, before he ought. 1

This is indeed, the teaching of common sense and nature, as Shelley proclaims later on: "I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the nature of equality of man".² Although a socialist connotation is ordinarily added in Shelley's use to this eighteenth century phrase (because "equality of man" means for him equality of social conditions as well as equality of rights), the value of moral duties is not dismissed nor the necessity of moral improvement overlooked. On the contrary, such improvement is praised as the basis for the success of social reform. Men are obliged to think not only about their own happiness, but about that of others because they live in society. They should cultivate virtues such as charity, benevolence, justice, disinterestedness, and most of all, a sense of accepting in others differences of opinion and taste. These virtues are the very sources of concrete equality, the goal of any true reform aiming at social justice.³

1 SPTP: A Declaration of Rights, pp.71-72. (Godwin, W., Political Justice, Bk II, Principles of Society, Ch. V, Of Rights, pp.84-90; Paine, T., The Rights of Man, ed. with an introd. by H. Collins, Penguin Bk, London 1969, 308p., pp.94-100.)

2 SPTP: And Statesmen Boast of Wealth, p. 113.

3 These points are expressed in A Treatise on Morals and an Essay on Christianity, written between 1812-1815. Of course, Shelley develops ideas borrowed for the most part from Hume and Godwin. But he does not keep their cautious practical attitude, instead, he is more passionate and radical.

Moreover, men should be more interested in the affairs of the state: "For it is fit that the governed should inquire into the proceedings of government".¹ And the British especially should work at obtaining some genuine reform in society and in its institutions. In 1817 Shelley deals again with this issue he deems important, when he composes Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the Kingdom.

About reform within society, the poet advocates possible changes at three levels: the British Constitution, government and legislation, society at large. This renewal is based upon this "broad principle of political reform", viz. "the natural equality of men, not with relation to their property but to their rights".² Therefore, at the constitutional level, he recommends the abolition of monarchy and aristocracy. For instance, in the Address to the Irish People, he declares: "Can you conceive, O Irishmen!(...)The descendant of the greatest prince would then be entitled to no more respect than the son of a peasant".³ But other reasons suggest the need to abolish monarchy and aristocracy: the attainment of a democratic government, as in America:

If England were a republic governed by one assembly; if there were no chamber of hereditary aristocracy which is at once an actual and virtual representation of all who claim through rank or wealth superiority over their countrymen; if there were no king who is the rallying point of those whose tendency is at once to

1 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, p. 55.

2 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 253.

3 SPTP: An Address to the Irish People, pp.51-52.

(gather)and confer that power which is consolidated at the expense of the nation, then...(sic). 1

Then, this change would provide the lower classes with a strong majority in parliament. But Shelley qualifies his anti-monarchism with some amount of opportunism. He respects popular opinion and foresees the possibility that perhaps the British might wish to keep the monarchy. Therefore, he accepts this eventuality as long as it comes directly from the popular will. In short, his reform in government and legislation could be viewed as follows. The king and aristocracy would represent the House of Peers, but they would leave the House of Commons to the nation. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that Shelley envisages such an arrangement as a temporary measure, which would gradually move towards his final goal: the complete abolition of monarchy and aristocracy.

For society at large, the poet wants further steps to be taken in the establishment of civil rights. All men should feel free to express their opinions on political or religious matters. A change in marriage laws would permit men or women whose marriage has broken down to divorce, because they are "unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than

1 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 252. (cf. Godwin's Political Justice: Bk V, Of Legislative and Executive Power, Ch. I, pp. 192-195; Ch. VI, pp. 197-200; Ch. XIV, General Features of Democracy, pp. 201-205.)

they are".¹ On capital punishment, he expresses a modern view. He is against retaliation, the use of torture, the execution of criminals. This is probably due to the numerous excesses which took place during the French Revolution. Moreover, Shelley wonders, like Hume², if death is at all a punishment. He sees that people undergo two kinds of attitudes at a public execution, either they are terrified and sympathize with the sufferings of the condemned and cannot discern if they are culpable, or they "feel that their revenge is gratified". For him, "the first law which it becomes a reformer to propose and support, at the approach of a period of great political change, is the abolition of the punishment of death".³

But the major change he wishes to implement is a reorganization of labor and redistribution of wealth throughout the United Kingdom. First, he demands the suppression of the national debt, constantly increased in support of wars, and pressuring mainly the poor. Secondly, he would like a "levelling of inordinate wealth, and an agrarian distribution, including the parks and chases of the rich, of the uncultivated districts of the country"⁴, in order to establish more equality among men. Social

1 SPTP: Even Love is Sold, p. 116. (Cf. Godwin's Political Justice, Appendix, Of Co-operation, Cohabitation and Marriage, pp. 300-303.)

2 Cf. Hume's Essays on Immortality, Death, etc.

3 SPTP: Essay on the Punishment of Death, pp. 155-158.

4 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, pp. 252-253.

conditions should be fairly adjusted and the obligation of working should become the common law, as it is the natural, so that everybody may benefit from his own labour and not simply from inheritances. Thus, Shelley gives a new meaning to the old ideas of work, wealth or property: "Labor and skill and the immediate wages of labor and skill is a property of the most sacred and indisputable right and the foundation of all property".¹ And consequently he extends the principle of democracy towards socialism and repudiates an economic liberalism: "There is no real wealth but the labor of man".² It is only through this kind of general reform, Shelley believes, that men will be able to reach a true civilization: equality, justice and knowledge are the associated fruits of higher civilization.³ In some respects Shelley is one of the first socialists, and was celebrated as such by socialist thinkers, Marx, Engels and Shaw.⁴

1 SPTP: A Philosophical View of Reform, p. 251.

2 SPTP: And Statesmen Boast of Wealth, p. 113. Wealth and property in England had too often been associated only with monarchy and aristocracy. Here it is enlarged to all men.

3 SPTP: Essay on Christianity, pp. 211-212, where these concepts are developed.

4 In Salt's book, P.B. Shelley, Poet, and Pioneer, Ch. X, p. 115, Marx is reported to have said: "The real difference between Byron and Shelley is this: Those who understand them and love them rejoice that Byron died at thirty-six, because if he had lived he would have become a reactionary bourgeois; they grieve that Shelley died at twenty-nine, because he was essentially a revolutionist, and he would always have been one of the advanced guard of socialism"; and Engels: "Oh, we all knew Shelley by heart then". According to Marx's daughter similar declarations were often made by members of the Chartist Movement. For an interesting study on socialism in relation with Shelley, see Shelley: The Golden Years by K.N. Cameron, Ch. 3, pp. 115-119; 131-137.

Part III: A Turning Point: The Irish Campaign

But this philosophical system of reform was not intended to remain in the field of pure speculation. In fact, Shelley's first political essays were written for practical purposes and living causes. Always trying to live in action what he conceived in thought and vice-versa, the young man saw in Ireland an immediate opportunity to implant among the Irish his ideal of reform. This is why the Irish campaign must be considered: it throws some light not only on the character of Shelley, but on his future career as a poet. The clashes between religious denominations and social classes in Ireland moved him to write in 1812 the Address to the Irish People, An Association of Philanthropists, A Declaration of Rights. But writing these pamphlets was not enough; he decided to participate actively in politics and prepared his own campaign. His stay of approximately six weeks in Dublin is important because it reveals another side of Shelley's character and explains why he refused the offer of the Duke of Norfolk of a place to enter the Whig Party. For him to replace his father in parliament was not closely related to his ideal of reform. He wished to be a political and social reformer as were Godwin and Paine. It was also on this occasion that Shelley informed a recent acquaintance, William Godwin, of his plans about Ireland and asked for advice. The young man believed that he could immediately implement his reform with success: "I am perfectly confident of the impossibil-

ity of failure".¹ He invited Elizabeth Hitchener, correspondent and "sister of (his) soul", as he used to call her, to come and join his efforts: "I entreated you instantly to come and join our circle. To resign your school, all everything for US, and the Irish cause".² His plans encompassed more than Ireland, as he envisaged the possibility of extending the reform to Wales and England. At first Shelley received a hearing and some support, but when he promoted an Association of Philanthropists things turned out differently than expected: "Prejudices are so violent in contradiction to my principles that more hate me as a freethinker, than love me as a votary of Freedom".³ Then, he realized that opposition to his original ideas was growing not only among the Irish, but from Godwin himself who, terrified at the idea of founding an association, wrote:

Shelley, you are preparing a scene of blood! If your associations take effect to any extensive degree, tremendous consequences will follow, and hundreds, by their calamities and premature fate, will expatiate your error. 4

With this warning Shelley, although somewhat displeased by his

1 LPBS: I, No 162, pp. 239-240, Letter to E. Hitchener, January 26, 1811(1812).

2 LPBS: I, No 167, p. 251, Letter to E. Hitchener, February 14, 1812. (Shelley's italics)

3 LPBS: I, No 174, p. 271, Letter to E. Hitchener, March 10, 1812.

4 LPBS: I, No 173, p. 270, Letter from W. Godwin, March 14, 1812.

patron's critique, nevertheless agreed to leave Ireland. In other words, his honest attempt at reforming society failed. But courageous and never short of ideas, the young reformer discovered another way of promoting the ideal of social justice. He would look to literature and find in it a militant device, as the French Encyclopedists had done. Hence he could carry out his mission peacefully: "I will look to events in which it will be impossible that I can share, and make myself the cause of an effect which will take place ages after I have mouldered into dust".¹ Poetry would then become his mode of expression, but a very demanding one: "My Volume of Poetry(...)will be only valuable to philosophical and reflecting minds".²

1 LPBS: I, No 176, p. 277, Letter to W. Godwin, March 18, 1812.
(Shelley's *italics*)

2 LPBS: I, No 162, p. 239, Letter to E. Hitchener, January 26, 1812.

C H A P T E R I I

THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE IN POLITICAL AND MORAL POETRY

CHAPTER II

THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE IN POLITICAL AND MORAL POETRY

Part I: Philosophy and Poetry: the Ideal of Justice as a Source of Poetry.

The ideas which Shelley proclaims in his philosophical writings inspire also his political and moral poetry.¹ These ideas re-appear under a new form; and Shelley himself was very careful to warn his readers of the great difference between his poetry, even philosophical, and philosophy as such. He emphasized this difference in the Preface of The Revolt of Islam, one text among many of this kind:

The Poem therefore(...)is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are under the sun'; its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind. 2

Although this passage is related to The Revolt of Islam, it nevertheless includes a general assertion of what poetry, in the

1 I call political what is related to society, institutions and politics; I call moral what is related to personal behaviour and destiny. As well-known, philosophers are used to distinguish between two kinds of justice, namely: political and moral. Of course these two kinds are deeply interconnected as it is obvious in the Works of Shelley himself.

2 SPW: RI, Preface p. 32.

eyes of Shelley, should be. This means that instead of being a chain of reasonings as in a "didactic" treatise, a poem should be "narrative", i.e. must express ideas through the narration of a story, whether invented by the imagination like Alastor or taken from a myth such as Prometheus Unbound, whether borrowed from history or suggested by contemporary events such as The Cenci and Hellas. Secondly, a poem is a picture and illustration where abstract ideas are either concretized through characters (for instance Queen Mab, Cenci, Prometheus) or developed through symbols (the eagle and the serpent in The Revolt of Islam, the personification of anarchy in The Mask of Anarchy), and generally enlivened with images and metaphors. But above all, poetry should awaken feelings and emotions in the reader: cool reflection on the causes of evil and good must give way to a vivid representation of miseries and vices, virtues and heroic actions, in order to inspire various feelings of sympathy, antipathy, indignation and love. Therefore, if almost the same ideas recur in both the philosophical writings and poems of Shelley, the latter are interesting essentially because of the new forms and new expressions they add to these ideas. As Shelley's philosophical conception of justice has been studied in the preceding chapter, attention will be paid now to its poetical expression. In other words, this chapter will attempt to show how Shelley's ideal of justice animates his poetry.

Political and moral themes have inspired a great number of poems. As a matter of fact, when these themes first appear in

1805 with The Emperors of Russia and Austria and later on in 1809 with Falsehood and Vice, they never quite depart from his poetry: sometimes they are approached separately but more often are joined together in a single poem. We can distinguish three main periods in the development of this inspiration. From 1805-1813, Shelley, still very young, wrote a series of poems including A Tale of Society as it Is, Republicans of America, The Crisis, Love and Tyranny or Bigotry's Victim, Liberty, To Ireland, all culminating in the writing of a major work, Queen Mab, in 1813. Between 1814-1817, - although the poet was tormented by personal problems and already attracted by the ideal of beauty, - The Daemon of the World, Rosalind and Helen, To The Lord Chancellor, Marengi, Prince Athanaze arise from the same source. Another peak is reached with The Revolt of Islam, Shelley's longest and for a long time most neglected poem. The third period 1818-1822 corresponds to the Italian exile, with many important compositions and some masterpieces such as The Mask of Anarchy. Peter Bell the Third, Oedipus Tyrannus, Ode to Liberty, Ode to Naples, Prometheus Unbound, The Cenci, Hellas and The Triumph of Life.

Given the purpose of this study, ~~one need not~~ to analyze all of these poems. It will be enough to take representative examples which best portray, at various periods, the influence and different aspects of the ideal of justice in Shelley's poetry, namely Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, The Mask of Anarchy, Hellas and finally The Cenci. Obviously Prometheus Unbound is still more

significant, and Shelley considered this masterpiece as his favorite¹; but we shall postpone its analysis until the second part of Chapter III, where the unity between the two ideals of justice and beauty will be studied.

If these poems are read successively, one gets the impression that they exhibit many common features both in content and expression. The same fundamental philosophical, political and moral ideas constantly return with the same types of symbols and images. That is not surprising because these poems share the same inspiration and have similar themes. Thus, before considering their particular aspects, we shall point out what they have in common.

Part II: Common Themes and Features

Historical Perspective

The first common feature is the use of history. Shelley recalls the past and argues with the present in order to enlighten the future.² The past he evokes is made up of the most significant events of history, legends and religions, either reported by historians, as the glory and fall of Ancient Greece, narrated in legends, as the story of Prometheus, or taught by religions,

1 LPBS: II, No 551, p. 174, Letter to C. Ollier, March 6, 1820 and, II, No 568, p. 200, Letter to L. Hunt, May 26, 1820.

2 Cf. J.V. Murphy's The Dark Angel, Gothic Elements in Shelley's Works, Lewisburgh Bucknell Univ. Press, London, AUP, 1975, where a detailed study of this aspect is developed, although this book focusses on the "Gothic Elements" and sources of Shelley's poetry.

at the beginnings of the world. In the present he is concerned with contemporary social ills and the struggles, so frequent and violent in his times, between governments and revolutionary movements. The future to which he leads our imagination is the ~~establishment~~ of an ideal society, just in its politics and morally good in its members.

An interesting example of this historical approach is Queen Mab. It is an imaginative story about a sleeping maiden, Ianthe, who is visited by a fairy, Queen Mab, and travels with her upon her chariot throughout the universe. But Mab declares the purpose of Ianthe's trip:

'... .. Spirit, come!
This is thine high reward:-the past shall rise;
Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach
The secrets of the future.'

(II, 64-67)

Truly different from what the reader expected, Ianthe is faced with another kind of trip, one into human nature and its destiny on earth, the very place she left. Through this allegory, Shelley depicts an intellectual and spiritual voyage which men should undertake to understand their own planet and themselves. He stresses the importance of maintaining a distance or "negative capability"¹ from the object of study, in order to see truth with detachment and objectivity.² As Mab said to Ianthe, it is a panoramic, ency-

1 Keats' term.

2 SPW: QM, II, 244-257, pp.769-770.

clopedic view of the world that she presents, i.e. not only detached parts of men's history but its totality and unity.¹ Therefore, in Canto II, the Queen recalls the various civilizations of the past, whether Egyptian, Arab, Greek or Roman. These nations, once glorious, brought about their own downfall and are now despised. From Cantos III to VIII, the fairy portrays contemporary societies which unfortunately follow the footsteps and inclinations of preceding generations. In other words, the present repeats the past, with its errors, vices, injustices and miseries. Men still continue to long for power and wealth; they enjoy having kingdoms and disobey the principles of nature and reason.² Because they do not want to change their habits, evil evolves in a vicious circle and perpetuates itself while society remains stagnant, in a state of disorder. For instance, as the Romans did not "hurl down" the tyrant Nero when he contemplated "flaming Rome, with savage joy"³, modern people have let conquerors and kings tear apart the earth. They did not listen to Milton or to Newton any more than the ancients listened to the advice of

1 Here, we are reminded of the poet's attachment to the Renaissance writers who examined the world in a very universal and comprehensive manner such as Shakespeare or Milton or Spenser.

2 SPW: QM, IV, 168-195, p. 777.

3 SPW: QM, III, 180-192, p. 773.

Cicero and Cato¹:

'THUS do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb,

(V, 1-2)

without ever understanding:

... .. the imperishable change
That renovates the world;

(V, 3-4)

and without knowing that:

'...every heart contains perfection's germs:(.)

(V, 147)

For had contemporary nations understood their true nature and the meaning of history, they could have built a present liberated from the darkness of the past. Finally, in Cantos VIII to IX, the fairy looks at the future², hopefully explaining to Ian- the how it can be, indeed, very different from previous times. There will be a realm of order in nature, of tolerance, love, wisdom and peace among men:

Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear:
Earth was no longer Hell;
Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime,
And all its pulses beat
Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
Then dulcet music swelled
Concordant with the life-strings of the soul,(.)

(VIII, 13-20)

1 SPW: QM, V, 137-146, p. 781.

2 SPW: QM, VIII, 1-3, 49-50, pp. 792-793 and the whole canto IX, 1-137, pp. 796-798.

Ianthe herself is invited to work personally for the advent of this new era:

'Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change: (.)

(IX, 146-148)

This is the main lesson to be learned in Queen Mab: that "the Past, the Present & the Future are the grand & comprehensive topics of this poem".¹

This method is not restricted to Queen Mab. The poet employs the same pattern in Ode to Liberty, Ode to Naples, Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills where he also considers the three dimensions of history, i.e. past, present and future, in order to illuminate human existence and capabilities. But in other poems, although a similar method is used, the symmetry we have noticed is somewhat changed. Less importance is given to past events and more to contemporary and future ones. The Revolt of Islam exemplifies this approach. Among twelve cantos, only Canto I deals with the past. This is the story of a muse taking aboard her boat a grieved poet, whom the failure of the French Revolution has saddened. Here the muse, as Queen Mab does with Ianthe, takes the poet into her realm and explains the history

¹ LPBS: I, No 202, p. 324, Letter to T. Hookham, August 18, 1810 (for 1812).

of evil on earth:

'Know then, that from the depth of ages old,
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold.

(I, xxv, 346-347)

Her purpose is to instruct the poet so that he may learn from
history:

'Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,
Much must remain unthought, and more untold,
In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:
... ..
Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe,-
To few can she that warning vision show-

(I, xxv, 343-345; xxxviii, 460-464)

But as the poet, led by the muse, enters the Temple of the Spirit, he is faced with the young Laon and Cythna who tell him another story, supposed to have happened in Islam, about their attempt to promote an egalitarian social revolution in their own country. At this moment - in Canto II - a shift takes place from the past to the present. Thus, this Islamic tale becomes an allegory through which the poet alludes to recent events, as he tells us in his Preface: the French Revolution and its European influence, the conspiracy of Louis XVI with other monarchs to destroy it, the alliance of European leaders against its application and success; the restoration of Bourbons in France and Spain in 1814 and the execution of Patriots. This reference was first indicated by the original title Shelley had chosen

for this poem.¹ It was not called The Revolt of Islam but Laon and Cythna; or The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century.² Such a title clearly shows the poet's intent, i.e. to propound a judgment of his century. But it is more than a judgment! It is a vision of what he thought the future should be:

It is a Revolution of this kind, that is the beau ideal as it were of the French Revolution, but produced by the influence of individual genius, & out of general knowledge. The authors of it are supposed to be my hero & heroine whose names appear in the title. ³

The same emphasis on present times in relation to future ones distinctly appears also in The Mask of Anarchy and Hellas, - poems which express the poet's sympathy for contemporary revolutions and revolutionary movements, because they struggle against

1 SPW: RI, Preface, p. 32: "The awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, - civil war, famine, plague, superstition, (...) the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; (...) Such is the series of delienations of which the Poem consists." See p. 33.

2 LPBS: I, No 435, p. 582, Letter to T. Moore, December 16, 1817.

3 LPBS: I, No 417, p. 563, Letter to (A Publisher) probably T. Moore, October 13, 1817. See also SPW: title on page 31. (Shelley's italics)

unjust oppressors. The Mask of Anarchy is an allegorical invective against those responsible for the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, on August 16th 1819. Aroused by the news, Shelley portrays this conflict between Loyalists and Radicals through the personification of "Anarchy" against "Hope". Then, he fore-shadows a better realm through the vision of the "planet of good" which descends from the heavens amidst the battlefield. And in Hellas, the future of Greece will be a revival of what was the best in its glorious past, and even brighter than this past.¹ These historical and prophetic visions take here metaphysical proportions: Satan, Mahomet, and those who try to stifle the revolutionary movement are men of the past; they think that history is condemned to repeat eternally the same evils, without any change and real progress. Jesus and reformers are those who foresee and prepare what should be in the future, first for Greece itself and then for the benefit of all mankind, because as we are told in the Preface: "We are all Greeks".

The Conflict Between Evil and Good

Besides a reference to history, another common characteristic is the recurrence of similar themes and fundamental ideas which are often expressed by way of contrasts. A striking example

¹ Shelley wanted to sing the fight for liberty of Modern Greece as AEschylus did for the battle of Ancient Greece against the Persians. See SPW: Hellas, Preface, p. 446.

is the opposition between evil and good. Such a theme dominates many of the poems referred to in this chapter, either explicitly or implicitly. It is very explicit in The Revolt of Islam for instance. Thus, in Canto I, when the muse meets the poet, she explains to him, through symbols and cosmic drama, this universal opposition:

Know then, that from the depth of ages old,
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold.
Ruling the world with a divided lot,
Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,
Twin Genii, equal Gods-when life and thought
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

(I, xxv, 346-351)

Evil and good are represented by a detailed description of a fight between two animals near the seaside, namely an Eagle and a Serpent. Contrary to the Biblical interpretation of the serpent which makes it a symbol of evil, Shelley, who is inspired by the Greek and Persian Myths and by Peacock's Ahrimanes, makes the serpent a symbol of Good or at least of the immense variety of the universe which is itself good¹; whereas the eagle symbolizes strength, violence, war and is the instrument of the red comet, Mars.² Vanquished by the eagle, the serpent which had

1 SPW: RI, I, ii-xiv, pp. 40-43; xxvii, p. 46; xlvi-xlvii, 540-541, p. 50; in the Temple, lv-lviii, p. 52. On this subject, an excellent study was done in 1975 by an eminent critic, Stuart Curran, in Shelley's Annus Mirabilis.

2 SPW: RI, I, xxvi, p. 46.

previously a celestial form is now rampant on earth under the vulgar form we know, and takes the appearances of evil.¹ But thanks to the care of the muse, who serves the Spirit of Good and the Planet of Love², the wounded serpent, clasped to her heart, is restored to its former shape and replaced in the midst of a Temple(which is probably the temple of Beauty and Good); then, as far as such apocalyptic and sometimes confusing visions can be interpreted, it becomes again "a majestic, yet most mild-calm yet compassionate" creature. The same kind of cosmic battle is an essential clue also for Hellas, where at the outset of the poem, i.e. in the Prologue, we see Satan, Christ and Mahomet discuss before God's throne the immediate future and destiny of Greece:

The giant Powers move,
Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill.

(ll. 60-79)

Satan claims that Greece should remain under his empire, i.e. under "Anarchy, Tyranny, War, Fraud and Death". Against him, Christ calls for the eradication of such miseries and the restoration of Freedom because "Discord and Slavery", "Chaos and Death" can be overcome, and then Greece

... shall arise
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!

(ll. 113)

1 SPW: RI, I, xxvii, p. 46.

2 SPW: RI, I, xviii-xxii, pp. 44-45; xxvii, p. 46; xlvi-xlvii, p. 50 in the Temple: lv-lvii, pp. 52-53.

In other words, the liberation of Greece, according to Christ, should coincide with a cosmic triumph of Good over evil. As for Mahomet, who does not take part in the discussion but has listened to it as a third party, he is mainly concerned by the "rolling back of Christianity upon the West" and the total victory¹ of his own creed over the Trinitarian:

Be thou a curse on them whose creed
Divides and multiplies the most high God.

(ll. 178-179)

This opposition between evil and good is not entirely an eternal battle between cosmic forces; it develops also between men, through history, on a temporal and moral level. For instance in The Revolt of Islam we are reminded, through the muse's dialogues with the poet, how evil entered into the world, how men wondered at its shining appearance, and accepted its presence under multiple forms and consequently distorted the true values of life to please such a foe.² But we are also shown the return of good in early Greece through its bards and

... .. with that Fiend of Blood
Renewed the doubtful war... ..

(I, xxxi, 401-402)

1 SPW: Hellas, Prologue, ll. 175-176, p. 452: "Wake, thou Word / Of God, and from the throne of Destiny / Even to the utmost limit of thy way / May Triumph."

2 SPW: RI, I, xxvi-xxx, 352-396, pp. 46-47.

Since then, as the muse tells us, men live and repeat this cosmic battle:

'Such is this conflict-when mankind doth strive
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,

 Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood
 Wage silent war;...

 When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,
 The Snake and Eagle meet-the world's foundations tremble!

(I, xxxiii, 415-416, 419-420, 422-423)

But Shelley exemplifies more concretely this general conflict by portraying representative characters of evil and good in action within particular stories. Therefore, in The Revolt of Islam it is essentially Laon and Cythna, the major characters, who are the apostles of good. They work at reforming their country and people through a social revolution of equality, liberty and fraternity. The old man, Zonoras, is another character who writes militant prose to promote this change and saves Laon's life. Against those heroic men, Othoman and his ministers strive to destroy the egalitarian revolution. By means of violence, by wars that spread famine and death, they succeed in restoring their power.¹ By confronting these two camps, Shelley shows the inner workings of truth or falsehood within men's hearts and behaviours. Laon and Cythna use the power of the mind to liberate their people

1 In Queen Mab the battle between evil and good is not portrayed the same way as in The Revolt of Islam. Instead of characters confronting each other, we have a poetry of statements: i.e. the fairy herself tells Ianthe, through a lengthy narrative, how this battle pervaded the whole history of mankind, dividing men within and among themselves.

and make them happy by teaching them the true values of life. Othoman and his accomplices use the power of fear and create miserable beings. Laon and Cythna stay in the open air to accomplish their work, while the authorities plot in the dark with bribes. The detailed descriptions of these struggles, which illustrate the poem reveal how men's actions, however varied, are determined by a fundamental choice between evil or good. In The Mask of Anarchy, it is through the personification of "Anarchy" and "Hope" that this battle takes place. Under the symbol of "Anarchy" are the English rulers, Sidmouth, Castlereagh, Eldon, who oppress the nation. Under "Hope" are represented the English working classes struggling against government and leaders for better conditions. There is the same opposition in The Cenci, where Cenci himself represents the main figure of evil, with Orsino, Camillio and even the Pope as accomplices, while Beatrice and her family, at least in the beginning, suffer and struggle for good.

Dramatic Form

Another common feature appears in most of these poems: the development of philosophical ideas familiar to the poet, (that of a Power pervading the world, justice against injustice, liberty, fraternity, equality) through the voice of some major characters, for instance Queen Mab, (Queen Mab), Laon and Cythna, (The Revolt of Islam), or "Earth" (The Mask of Anarchy). However, as we

analyzed these ideas in Chapter I, we shall not dwell on this aspect but continue to study other constant features of Shelley's poetical style: namely his use of dramatic, prophetic, symbolical and lyrical forms. In the wake of Dante, Spenser and Blake, Shelley felt a basic need to create his own mode of expression in poetry¹, because he had to convey to his readers abstract ideas in concrete terms. He sought a language and forms which would appeal to his poetical instinct and to the whole make-up of men, intellect, imagination and feelings.

First, by using a dramatic form in poetry, the poet narrates his stories more convincingly. He makes his readers "see, feel, live, hear"², imaginatively, the same adventures which his characters encounter.³ Cenci, Beatrice, Orsino in The Cenci, Othoman, Laon and Cythna in The Revolt of Islam, for instance, are endowed with different personalities, virtues or vices, feelings and goals. Then they face, through a dramatic or allegorical transfiguration,

1 SPW: RI, Preface, p. 34: "Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. (...) I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity".

2 SPW: RI, v, xli-xlii, 2085, 2089, p. 88.

3 SPW: RI, Preface, p. 32: "I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human heart".

situations resembling real life, so that readers may learn from the consequences of their actions. Such portrayal arouses excitement, suspense, feelings of fear, pity or indignation and inclines us to judge their actions and passions, much in the same way as Aristotle proclaimed in his Poetics or J. Conrad in his Preface to the Nigger of the Narcissus.

Visions and Prophecies

Another type of expression which returns frequently in these poems is the visionary or prophetic. Past and future episodes, supernatural landscapes and persons which we cannot normally perceive appear to us as if they were present. This is done through the visionary and prophetic power that the poet attributes to his major characters: they judge of times as though they were Biblical prophets, and they unfold visions of history. In Queen Mab for instance, with the simple device of Ianthe's dream, we are introduced to the queen flying through the skies with her chariot and coursers. Readers become inhabitants of the heavens and travel in celestial spheres, examining different planetary and solar systems and among them the earth:

Seemed it, that the chariot's way
Lay through the midst of an immense concave,
Radiant with million constellations, ...
... ..
Earth's distant orb appeared
The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven;
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever-varying glory.

At the end of this cosmic voyage, Mab and Ianthe, "The Fairy and the Spirit", enter "the Hall of Spells", the Temple of the Spirit, a preview of paradise. Here the queen, calling from the grave the ghosts of a king and a wandering Jew, evokes the ruins of the ancient civilizations and the injustices of present times, in order to instruct Ianthe on the way which leads to the new paradise, equality between men to be realized in the future. Almost the same figures are used in The Revolt of Islam and Hellas. In the former, the poet is still "embarked" with the muse in "a wingless boat", and afterwards is brought into a temple, a place of artistic achievements, peopled with supernatural forms, where the poet meets the Spirit of Beauty and the young Laon and Cythna; in the latter, we attend a debate between Christ, Satan and Mahomet in eternity. Prophecies follow. In The Revolt of Islam, Laon and Cythna proclaim the continuation of the revolutionary fight for freedom after their death, and the advent of a better society; in Hellas, a new incarnation of the wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, calls the ghost of Mahomet II to predict the victory of Greeks over Moslems. These few examples, among many others, show how the visionary and prophetic forms are linked together. Such expression adds a new dimension to the philosophical and political ideas Shelley wished to convey through his symbolic figures. It makes their words resound with a solemn tone as if they were inspired from above. A certain aura of mystery is shed on the characters, as well as a seal of certainty and authority on their statements.

These poems have the dignity of a sacred word.¹

Symbolism and Lyricism

The use of symbols is naturally prompted by this visionary and prophetic form. Shelley resorted to symbolic expression as early as Queen Mab and the more he developed as a poet, the more he invented and integrated various kinds of symbols in his verse. We shall indicate some of the most significant. Dreams portray philosophical problems raised by the life of mankind within the world. The voyage has an ambiguous meaning: sometimes it signifies escape out of the ordinary world, in the Platonic sense; sometimes it symbolizes the knowledge acquired in this escape. Flying on chariots or boats, evokes the Soul looking for a new freedom, unstained by evil and miseries. The veil is also ambiguous: when it hides evil designs, it means hypocrisy; on the contrary, when it somewhat conceals eternal and celestial entities from unworthy eyes, it enhances the supreme value of what is thus

1 The Bible and Greek religion probably inspired this technique of visions, dreams, prophets, prophecies, and Shelley closely linked these things to the role of the imagination. As a matter of fact, these visions and prophecies correspond to the innate dispositions of the poet who had been fascinated, in his childhood, by the occult, magic and ghosts. Moreover they suit both the idealistic and realistic aspect of his thought. The major characters speak as prophets showing the presence of evil as well as good in the world; they announce better years to come if men change, but terrible ones if they refuse. Through these characters, we notice how the poet's idealism is connected intimately with realism and must be indeed: because if things were perfect, there would be no need for idealism, but as they are imperfect and must be improved, they are to be realistically known as they are.

veiled. Seasons take an allegorical quality: autumn and winter represent the decadence of men and its reflection on nature:

'The blasts of Autumn drive the winged seeds
Over the earth,- ...
... ..
Lo, Winter comes!-the grief of many graves,-
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
The flood of tyranny.

(RI, IX, xxvi, 3640-3641; xxiii,
(3671-3673)

Spring and summer foreshadow the new society of virtuous, just and good citizens:

'O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness
Wind-winged emblem! brightest, best and fairest!

(RI, IX, xxii, 3658-3659)

Equality. for instance, becomes the true Spring. Similarly vices and virtues are personified: fraud, murder and hypocrisy by "Anarchy" and its masque, justice and liberty by the character of "Hope", while the chain symbolizes men's slavery. We still find, to symbolize evil and good, animal images. In The Revolt of Islam, the eagle symbolizes Evil, the serpent Good, and their battle the eternal fight between these two entities. Wolves and hounds mirror oppressors, while their followers are compared to a flock of stupid sheep. As for the symbol of the cave borrowed from Plato, it essentially means for Shelley the inner depth of the mind, where truth appears after a long search.

Lyricism adds sometimes a powerful strength and poetical quality to all the preceding devices. In Queen Mab it is noticeable with the description of Mab's arrival at Ianthe's place

(I, 45-113), when she praises the grandeur of the universe with its numerous spheres, stars, and the temple of Nature, but most of all, when she foreshadows the advent of a happier world where nature and men will be regenerated. In The Revolt of Islam lyrical passages are especially noticeable at the preparation of the Feast of Equality (V, xxxvii-xlvi) and its celebration, where Cythna sings with ecstatic joy the future reign of fraternity, equality and wisdom:

'O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart, (.)

(V, 2, 2197-2200)

But apart from Prometheus Unbound, the summit of lyrical form in political poetry is reached in Hellas, which is called appropriately a lyrical drama and where Shelley revives the lyricism of ancient poetry. with the reappearance of the chorus of Greek tragedy. In some of the most beautiful verses he ever wrote, Shelley, through an alternation between the chorus and the semi-chorus of captive Greek women, extols the coming liberation of Greece and even of mankind:

Semichorus I

I hear! I hear!
The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming.
I hear! I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
... ..

Chorus

The world's great age begins anew,

The golden years return,

 A brighter Hellas rears its mountains

 Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime; (.)

(ll. 719-724, 1060-1061, 1066,)
 (1084-1087)

Part III: Particular Emphases on Special Aspects of Justice

Besides these common features and common themes, this kind of poetry displays particular emphases on specific aspects of justice: for instance on either the social and political sides as in Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam, or contemporary implications as in The Mask of Anarchy, or the personal, moral and religious dimensions as in The Cenci. The object of the last part of this chapter will be to show how such special aspects are expressed in these examples.

1. An Initiation to Political and Social Justice: Queen Mab

Although called a "philosophical poem", i.e. cosmological and metaphysical, Queen Mab is not restricted to one exclusive meaning.¹ Shelley, we believe, had another objective in mind

1 As a matter of fact, the poet tried to accomplish three things at once in QM: (1) to translate into verse, as a modern Lucretius, our knowledge of the world; (2) to propound his own philosophical ideas; (3) to tell a story.

while writing it: that is - how the ideal of justice can germinate within men. And this intention gives to the poem its political social bearing:

It is the Author's boast & it constitutes no small portion of his happiness that, after six years of added experience & reflection, the doctrines of equality, & liberty & disinterestedness, (...) to which this Poem is devoted, (...) first determined him to devote his life to the investigation & inculcation of them. 1

But in order to inculcate these doctrines in men, Shelley poetically narrates the story of the fairy Mab and Ianthe in which readers become, as it were, involved. The character of Ianthe is representative of all mankind, and the fairy Queen Mab wants to awaken her to social ills and initiate her to the ideal of justice. In Canto I, the portrayal of Ianthe asleep perhaps symbolizes her state of inertia and lack of preoccupation with reality. However, because of Ianthe's sincerity and goodness, the fairy is prompted to develop within the maiden's soul a desire to become a reformer, a role which every man should normally fulfill, in order to get the eternal "meed of virtue", as the Queen says:

And it is yet permitted me, to rend
The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit,
Clothed in its changeless purity, may know
How soonest to accomplish the great end
For which it hath its being, and may taste
That peace, which in the end all life will share.

(I, 180-185)

1 LPBS: I, No 421, p. 566, Letter to Mr. Waller, November 22, 1817.

But Ianthe's goodness without any knowledge of the world remains insufficient and pointless. Therefore, Mab begins the initiation. Through her spells, Ianthe is shown the greatness of the universe but much more: the fall of once glorious nations and empires of the past. Already the maiden is undergoing a change from a state of innocence to experience, so that she exclaims:

'I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught
A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly: (.)'

(III, 4-10)

Then Mab displays the miserable secrets of present years, a new dark age indeed. She denounces the childish dispositions of men who are called the shepherds of the people, kings, aristocrats, statesmen and churchmen, but are sunk in selfishness and multiply more miseries and injustices because they lust for power and wealth, and indulge in pernicious customs, struggles and wars. Illusions are dispelled by the fairy's philosophical and political discourse on institutions, policies, religions. Evil is unmasked and its causes brought to light. These causes are mostly moral, human vices such as lust, ambition, pride, immoderate thirst for fame, selfishness. This picture of mankind awakens Ianthe to the sad realities of the world. Endowed with a greater degree of awareness, she anxiously wonders about the fate of her brethren:

'It is a wild and miserable world!

Thorny, and full of care,
 Which every fiend can make his prey at will.
 O Fairy! in the lapse of years,
 Is there no hope in store?
 Will yon vast suns roll on
 Inteminably, still illuming
 The night of so many wretched souls,
 And see no hope for them?
 Will not the universal Spirit e'er
 Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?'

(VI, 12-22)

But the young girl does not remain stunned in a barren pessimism. Mab answers that only men of virtue shall start the reform and that Ianthe herself could count among them:

Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,

 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
 Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,

 O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
 Where virtue fixes universal peace,
 And midst the ebb and flow of human things,
 Show somewhat stable somewhat certain still,
 A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary waves.

(IX, 193-194, 197-198, VIII, 53-55)

In her good heart a strong desire grows to improve mankind and build a better society, where the "sentiment of justice" might become the rule and soul of all practice. Finally, to encourage Ianthe in her new role as social reformer, Queen Mab foreshadows a vision of the destiny that awaits her:

Futurity
 Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.

 'The habitable earth is full of bliss;

'All things are recreated, and the flame
 Of consentaneous love inspired all life:

 'Here now the human being stands adorning
 This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;

Man has lost
 His terrible prerogative, and stands
 An equal amidst equals.

My task is done:
 Thy lore is learned.

(VIII, 50-52, 58, 107-108, 198-199)
 (225-227; IX, 140-141)

Therefore, thanks to the dream vision of Queen Mab, Ianthe has changed. At the beginning, in Canto I, naive and somewhat uninterested in the world, her young mind is symbolically portrayed in a state of sleep. But, at the end, in Canto IX, Ianthe awakens from sleep and this perhaps symbolizes her new frame of mind. More learned about the universe and men's history, she is better prepared to cope with life, knowing that she too has a purpose to achieve and that her efforts will be rewarded. This is essentially what the poet wished to teach his readers through this allegorical tale: that they should strive, as Ianthe, to alleviate men's sufferings and vices by working themselves for the advent of justice in the world.

2. Justice and Revolution: The Revolt of Islam

Written five years after Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, the longest of Shelley's poems, is an amplification of the same ideas. The reader is again invited to contemplate and love an

ideal of justice which means equality and freedom for all men. The purpose of the author, a passionate idealist who is fond of practical achievements, seems nothing less than to show how the ideal can be put into practice through an effective policy. But Shelley, as previously indicated, had before his eyes the failure of a recent attempt in this direction, the French Revolution. The Revolt of Islam is mainly an allegorical presentation of the deep reasons for such failure, in order to help men to avoid falling into the same misfortunes in the future. This purpose already points out the special interest that such a poem presents for us, at this stage of our study. By a true idealism it illustrates the combination of idealism and realism which, according to Shelley, is required in politics.

The Revolt of Islam, as has been said above¹, narrates the temporarily successful attempts by a young couple, Laon and Cythna, to establish a new social order through a peaceful revolution. The two heroes are helped in their endeavour by an old man, symbol of the philosopher, who has prepared the revolution by his writings for years and has suddenly seen, in the action of the young couple, an opportunity to realize the ideas he had defended. Therefore the particular meaning of this poem will become clearer if we briefly sketch the role of these characters, recall their

1 Cf. Part I, of this chapter, "Common Themes and Features", pp.45-47.

successive endeavours and draw the conclusions that are suggested by the exemplary value of their destiny. As the poem contains almost 5,000 lines, it may be convenient first to summarize this rather complicated story.

Laon and Cythna have consciously decided, since their childhood in Argolis, to devote their lives to a revolutionary undertaking. Afterwards, as we are told by Laon himself in Canto II, they equally vow together to overcome the slavery under which their nation moans, in the same fashion as the poet and the muse have done in the Dedication and Canto 1.¹ But it happens that they are separated before they can undertake any reform. Cythna is kidnapped by soldiers of Othoman, king of Constantinople, raped and imprisoned in a cave near the seaside, where she stays for seven years and apparently gives birth to a child² who is taken away from her by the tyrant. However, she is delivered during an earthquake by mariners who bring her to Constantinople and there, under a new name, that of "Laone", she attempts to secure the triumph of a peaceful revolution (C. III, VII, VIII, IX). Meanwhile, Laon is confined to a lonely column on a mountain facing the city of Argolis, because he killed three soldiers to

1 SPW: RI, Dedication to Mary, i-xiv, pp. 37-40 and especially St. iii, iv, v, pp. 37-38: Shelley recalls how, since an early age, he decided to devote his life to the cause of justice. This confidence reminds us of a similar revelation in HIB, where the poet also makes another vow, this time to beauty. For the muse, cf. C. I, xxxv; xl-xlv, pp. 48-49: while she was working on earth to eradicate evil among men, the spirit of justice appeared to her in a dream under the form of a child.

2 SPW: RI, VII, xvi-xxv, pp. 110-112: This episode narrated by the poet is somewhat ambiguous: on the one hand, Cythna thinks that it is a dream; on the other, at the end of the poem (C. xi-xii) the child appears as a real child.

defend Cythna's life. He is saved from death by an old man, called Zonoras, who nurses and instructs him for many years. After his recovery, Laon goes to Constantinople where he attends, with alternations of joy and pain, the ups and downs of the revolution which Cythna has prepared. Although the revolution enjoys some success at the beginning, it is quickly crushed by Othoman's soldiers, before Laon has any chance to meet Cythna, so that they are condemned to act separately for another span of time. Then Laon tries to overcome the first failure by reconciling the patriots with the military and converting Othoman himself, while Cythna, taking advantage of this interval of peace, organizes the feast of Equality, in which she acts as a priestess of the new Deity. Once again, although Laon has now been able to recognize Cythna, they cannot be reunited to celebrate their success, because Othoman, who has refused to change, defeats the revolution for the second time with the help of his allies, the foreign kings. But towards the end of the battle between the patriots and their enemies, Laon and Cythna find each other at last; and during four Cantos (VI, VII, VIII, IX) Cythna narrates her past sufferings to Laon, and discusses with him the failure of their common undertaking. Nevertheless, they continue to believe in their ideal and Laon, strongly moved by the misery of the people, makes a new and last attempt to soften the King, senators, priests and soldiers (C. XI). On the whole, his generous bravery avails nothing. The few who have listened to Laon are killed with

the patriots. Laon and Cythna themselves are caught and burned (XI). But they are redeemed in a supernatural world, and in Canto XII we see them celebrating their spiritual victory in the company of the tyrant's child, who had pleaded for them and out of sorrow died with them. They all enjoy for eternity the reward of justice and generosity.

Cythna exemplifies the true nature of a woman.¹ Symbol of truth, she has a spiritual mission to accomplish in society and fulfills several roles as preacher, consoler, inspirer, animator and priestess, according to the need of the hour. The first time Cythna succeeds in establishing a social reform is during Laon's confinement. Freed from the tyrant's cave, she is bold enough to assume the normal task of Laon and preach to the mariners with a long discourse on moral values, so that she makes them reveal their ugly secret: they keep young maidens in captivity for the tyrant's lustful purposes. Under the spell of Cythna's truthful words, the mariners release the fair virgins, return to the city and work wholeheartedly for the advent of a peaceful revolution.² Apart from being a preacher in exceptional circumstances,

1 Baker attributes a major role to Cythna and a minor one to Laon, while he ignores completely the benevolent figure of Zonoras. We believe that Shelley favored more equality between man and woman, and our analysis of these characters is based on such views. As for Zonoras, Shelley dedicated a whole canto (IV) to him and this is also our reason for studying this character.

2 SPW: RI, VII, xl-xli; VIII, i-xxx; IX, i-xii; pp. 115-125. The atmosphere on the boat, where she meets the mariners, reminds us of Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner.

Cythna appears in everyday life as a consoler and liberator of the poor, of children and above all of women¹: "Can man be free if woman be a slave?" (II, xlii, 1045) The results are proportionate to the effort. Self-respect and confidence are restored in saddened hearts, the multitude is encouraged to participate in reform by casting aside all superstitions, vices, passions and by sharing among themselves superfluous goods. The population becomes a faithful follower of Cythna's principles and in no time the king is abandoned behind his walls (C. V). The triumph of the heroine reaches a peak at the feast of Equality, in which she becomes "Priestess" and "Animator".² The crowds, hopeful and enthusiastic, pray with her for the definitive arrival of justice:

'Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
The treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming, thou in light descending
O'er the wide land which is thine own
Like the Spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!-
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
And all her children here in glory meet
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

(V, 3, 2212-2226)

1 Cythna's social work reminds us of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, first wife of the philosopher William Godwin. See Appendix II, 'Cythna's Prototypes', pp. 278-280 in Baker's Shelley's Major Poetry.

2 SPW: RI, V, xxxvii-lviii, 2044-2334, pp. 87-94.

After such a prayer, the people of Islam, gathering in groups and sharing food in a general banquet, celebrate their quiet and just revolution, while peace reigns everywhere.

Laon carries out the masculine role of a man. Although a preacher like Cythna, he assumes essentially a diplomatic, political and military mission. It is a less rewarding and more difficult work than that of his wife, because he has to face the very opponents of his program of equality: Othoman the Sultan, the ministers of his government and churchmen. Although the hero fights against higher authorities and their policies, he wishes above all to be a man of understanding and compassion, because it is only in this way - a revolution without violence - that lasting social change can be brought about. The first experience which confirms these sentiments in the young reformer comes after his stay with Zonoras. At this time, Cythna has established her quiet revolution in Constantinople. But the tyrant, afraid of losing his throne and powers, and outraged by such a successful attempt, tries to intimidate the population through bloodshed. The following day, a vengeful patriot throws a lance at an enemy soldier, and Laon, protecting the victim to save his life, is wounded. Such an heroic gesture converts all enemy soldiers, and Laon wins his first victory for the revival of Cythna's revolution:

... .. Thus the vast array
Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day,

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,
Towards the City then the multitude,

And I among them, went in joy--a nation
Made free by love;-a mighty brotherhood(.)

(V, xiii, 1835-1836, xiv, 1837-1840)

Another incident occurs when Laon, still very aware of Othoman's malice¹, pities the tyrant, now lonely, sad and hungry in his palace, and forces the multitude, in a Christ-like manner, to forgive his injustices:

'What call ye justice? Is there one who ne'er
In secret thought has wished another's ill?-
Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. ...
... ..
... ..-the chastened will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.'

(V, xxxiv, 2017-2019, 2023-2025, my italics)

Therefore, Laon for the second time restores peace in Islam. As we have seen he will try to accomplish this mission until the end - rather the sacrifice - of his life.

The part played by Zonoras, the old man, is that of a man of letters, a sage who has a providential role in saving Laon's life. For instance, when he unties the young militant from the column where he was kept prisoner and takes care of him in his own home, the old man gives an example of true benevolence.² Not

1 SPW: RI, V, xxxvi, 2035-2043, p. 87.

2 A whole canto is dedicated to the character of Zonoras. IV. Moreover, the old man is identified with New Testament figures, such as the good Samaritan, or Joseph of Arametha who after Jesus' death on Golgotha took his body and hid it in a shelter. Laon is identified symbolically to Christ hanging on the Cross, and his resurrection on the third day.

only does he save Laon's life, but he prevents the tortured hero from falling into mental illness. Zonoras so completely restores Laon's soul that he rekindles in it a desire to work anew for social reform:

... ...-Uplift thy charmed voice!
Pour on those evil men the love that lies
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes-...

(IV, xxviii, 1659-1661)

Moreover, Zonoras calls himself the "passive instrument"¹ of Laon, i.e. of peaceful revolution, because throughout his life as a philosopher and man of letters, he has eradicated a certain form of injustice - "ignorance" - in Islam, by enlightening the minds of enslaved men, women and children, and by reviving within their hearts a fire of hope.² Like the two young heroes, he dies also for the cause of social justice and liberty.

Notwithstanding these heroic actions, and some short triumphs, the move for a peaceful revolution fails in the end, at least temporarily. Shelley insists that it is not because of any internal flaws, but because of external and unjust attacks. Othoman with his ministers and foreign allies, men who take pleasure in slavery, aim also at some kind of peace, but are absolutely opposed to the one established by Laon and Cythna. When power is in their

1 SPW: RI, IV, xvi, 1549, p. 75.

2 Here, Shelley makes perhaps some autobiographical allusions to Dr. Lind, who came to see the poet at his home when he suffered a mental breakdown, or to W. Godwin, because of the writings and doctrines he propounded, cf. (RI, IV, xii-xiii, pp. 74-75; xviii, p. 76; xxviii, p. 78.) The old man's warning against "bloody revolutions" is the same that Godwin gave to Shelley on his tour to Ireland, cf. Ch. I, "Part III, A Turning Point: The Irish Campaign", p. 36.

hands, they soon abuse it, and they do not hesitate to overthrow all natural order. They succeed when they burn Laon and Cythna. However, Shelley does not want to convey a message and a feeling of abiding pessimism.¹ Of course the poet shows, and this is a mark of realism, that even the best revolutions can be defeated from without because they hurt the interest of powerful opponents; furthermore the kingdom of Satan can be united to destroy a kingdom of Light. But hope and idealism prevail finally. The martyrdom of Laon and Cythna is not lost but takes an eschatological dimension, for instance when their spiritual victory is celebrated in the Temple of the Spirit (C. XII). Because they knew the snares of evil men and were themselves realistic (as was Shelley), they foresaw their fate. This is clear from the words of Cythna to Laon before their terrestrial death:

'O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
 Before this morn may on the world arise; ...

 'The good and mighty of departed ages
 Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
 Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages, ...
 (IX, xxvi, 3694-3695, xxvii, 3712-3714)

But they had faith:

... ..--and we
 Are like to them--such perish, but they leave
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.
 (IX, xxviii, 3716-3720, my italics)

1 Baker has a similar view when he says: "Although Shelley recognizes the probability of martyrdom, he is not a defeatist". (Shelley's Major Poetry, Ch. 3, p. 80.)

In other words, the seeds of an egalitarian society are sown in the minds of people who shall remember the two heroes and will follow their example, for as the heroine says:

'Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
Our happiness, and all that we have been,
Immortally must live, and burn and move,
When we shall be no more;--the world has seen
A type of peace; ...

(IX, xxx, 3730-3734; my italics)

3. Satire Against the Establishment and Powers: The Mask of Anarchy

It is not surprising that Shelley, after such work as The Revolt of Islam, would continue to support revolutionary movements to which he was a witness during 1818-1820. Several of his poems are dedicated to them, whether these movements take place within his own country (The Mask of Anarchy), or on the European continent, as in Spain (An Ode, Ode to Liberty), in Italy (Ode to Naples), or in Greece (Hellas). The particular aspect of justice in all of these poems is a plea for liberty against anarchy, but our analysis shall be brief and limited to The Mask of Anarchy.

Distressed¹ by the Peterloo Massacre at Field Place, Manchester, August 16, 1819, Shelley took sides with the Radicals who were the victims of the British army and Loyalists. Living then in Italy, the poet received the news from faithful informers

¹ LPBS: II, No 513, p. 117, Letter to Charles Ollier, September 6, 1819; No 515, pp. 119-120, Letter to T.L. Peacock, September 21, 1819.

such as Leigh Hunt, Peacock or Ollier. But it is especially the reading of Hunt's article Disturbances at Manchester¹ which moved him to write The Mask of Anarchy, and suggested in part its title.² Within six weeks the poem was sent to Hunt for editing, who subsequently refused to publish it.³ -The poem serves two purposes: the one immediate, a denunciation of the Peterloo Massacre, the other more remote, a condemnation of government and ruling class' injustices of the sort which cause the miseries and servitudes of the people. Using a strong kind of metaphor and metonymy, Shelley indicates in the title what he intends to do: unmask the true anarchy which hides itself under the cloak ("the mask") of order, - social order, legitimacy, and morality. For, according to the poet, what is ordinarily called order is in fact a disorder. What is called justice, legitimacy and lawfulness is really injustice and oppression, with a lip-service to social peace and civilization. Hence, we should reverse our judgment. When government leaders

1 Johnson, R.B., ed., Shelley - Leigh Hunt, ed. with intr. by R.B. Johnson, Haskell House Publ. N.Y. 1972, 352p., The Examiner, No 608, August 22, 1819, pp. 289-293 and No 502, August 10, 1817, pp. 245-248: Of the Necessity of Being Watchful during the vacation of Parliament: and of one grand obstacle to the view of military government in this country.

2 Ibid, p. 291: "With what feelings can these men in the Brazen Mask of power dare to speak lamentingly of the wounds or even the death received by a constable". (my italics)

3 Ibid, p. 77: Preface to the edition of 1832: "I did not insert it because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kindheartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse".

accuse revolutionary movements of creating anarchy in a country, they are indeed responsible for such a situation. On the contrary, the Radicals or other movements represent the majority of workers who suffer, and work towards liberating them from servility and restoring their rights. They fight for freedom and justice. In order to present such an idea, Shelley first pictures a procession, or rather the parody of a procession, where vices appeared personified and identified with statesmen: for instance, "Murder(...)had a mask like Castlereagh, (...) Fraud (...)had on, like Eldon, an ermined gown; (...)clothed with the Bible, as with light, like Sidmouth, next Hypocrisy, on a crocodile rode by". They are followed by "many more Destructions". And to end the parade, "last came Anarchy" (ii, iv, vi, vii-viii, my italics)-both the source and result of all the preceding vices:

... ..he rode
 On a white horse, splashed with blood;
 He was pale even to the lips,
 Like Death in the Apocalypse.

And he wore a kingly crown;
 And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
 On his brow this mark I saw--
 'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

(viii-ix, 30-37)

Personified "Hope" shows up afterwards, ironically portrayed as "a maniac maid" (xxii, 86) crying aloud and running on the streets:

'My father Time is weak and gray
 With waiting for a better day; (.)

(xxiii, 89-90)

But through her, suddenly is foreshadowed a vision of the planet

of good where:

... the prostrate multitude
Looked-and ankle-deep in blood,
Hope, that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien:

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,
Lay dead earth upon the earth, (.)

(xxxii, 126-129, xxxiii, 130-131)

Then, finally "mother Earth" speaks to her children reminding them how they endured years of oppression:

'What is Freedom?--ye can tell
That which slavery is too well--

(xxxix, 156-157)

But she gives an apology to freedom and describes it:

'For the labourer thou art bread,
... ..
'Thou art clothes, and fire, and food
... ..
'Thou art Justice--
... ..
'Thou art Wisdom--
... ..
'Thou art Love--
... ..
'Science, Poetry and Thought
Are thy lamps; ...

(liv, 217; lv, 221; lvii, 230; lviii,)
(234; lxi, 246; lxiii, 254-255)

She invites all labourers to work for its advent:

'Shake your chains to earth like dew
... ..
Ye are many--they are few.'

(xci, 370-372)

Thus, in depicting what is, to his eyes, the true contemporary anarchy and indicating in a concrete manner the conditions of a

future liberty, Shelley tries to awaken the political conscience of his people.

Although the poet showed a constant preoccupation with the social and political aspects of justice in poems such as Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, The Mask of Anarchy, he nevertheless enlarged his study further, looking more deeply into the personal, religious and moral aspects of justice within men. Two long dramas correspond to this period of exceptional creativity or "annus mirabilis" in the poet Prometheus Unbound and The Cenci. Of course, it is not possible to analyze at length these two poems and, as mentioned previously, we set aside Prometheus Unbound for the last chapter. But in order to conclude this section, it is appropriate to add a few remarks on The Cenci.

4. Moral Challenge: Justice and Revenge, The Cenci

The Cenci is a tragic drama borrowed from the archives in which is narrated the pitiful story of a Roman family in the 16th century, namely the Cenci.¹ The subject of the drama is incest and the revenge it provoked. The father of an aristocratic Roman family, Francesco Cenci, ~~sexually assaulted~~ his own daughter Beatrice "during the Pontificate of Clement VIII". This young, beautiful

1 The Italian Manuscript: Relazione della morte de Signi Cenci Romani seguita dell'anno 1599, can be seen in microfilm at the Archives of Bancroft Library, Univ. of Calif. Also there is first edition of The Cenci, printed in Italy, 1819. It was Mary who copied the Cenci manuscript for a period of eight days, May 18-25, 1818 and translated it ~~into~~ English for Shelley. Cf. Shelley and Mary (Journal) Vol. I, London, Printed for Private circulation only at the Chiswick Press, 1822, 596p.

and virtuous lady was horrified by the "deed" her father forced upon her, and searched in vain for outside help, from neighbours, friends, high-ranking men, the Pope himself.¹ Finally, approved by her former fiance Orsino, who has become a priest but wants to marry her and therefore needs money from Francesco Cenci to buy the dispensation of the Pope, she decides to pay murderers to kill her father. But, although she gets the approval and support of all the family, she and her accomplices are charged with murder by the State authorities and all the accused end on the rack. Revenge, even though just, has produced destruction.

To be sure, Shelley was first of all interested by the tragic value of this story and of the characters involved in it. He wanted to write a play², and had noticed "that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathing interest".³ The central heroine, Beatrice, seemed absolutely suited for a tragedy, being capable of rousing "sympathy" and this kind of "superstitious horror", i.e. dramatic pity, which is provoked, according to Aristotle, by a mixture of good and evil, of responsibility and misery. Therefore, although Shelley was perfectly aware of the "fearful", "monstrous", and even "insupportable" nature of the original events, so that he

1 SPW: TC, II, iii, 122-129, p. 287.

2 A play to be acted by Miss O'Neill. Cf. SPW: Note on The Cenci, by Mrs. Shelley, pp. 336-337.

3 SPW: TC, Preface, p. 276.

thought necessary to add some idealistic light to "such a subject", he refrained from pursuing "what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose".¹ As he said, in his dedication to Leigh Hunt, he only wanted to present "a sad reality". Probably, as we read the hint in the Preface when he speaks of the Catholic mentality in Italy, he was also captivated by the colourful contradictions of 16th century Rome. Nevertheless, behind these intentions, another can be detected, perhaps deeper. Through the story of incest followed by revenge, the poet wanted to display an anguish about justice and show different aspects of injustice.

One of these aspects has been denounced at length in the poems already analyzed, namely The Revolt of Islam, The Mask of Anarchy and Queen Mab. It is the injustice committed by political and judiciary authorities, precisely in their administration of justice, in other words what Shelley has called anarchy. In this tragedy the Pope, head of the Church and State, is most responsible for this type of injustice. For, under the cloak of forgiveness and his papal privilege of absolution, he closes his eyes to three murders committed by Francesco Cenci and delays punishing a more horrible crime: the assassination of two sons by their father. But on the other hand, when Giacomo, third son of Cenci, urges Cardinal Camillo to obtain for his wife and children, through

1 SPW: TC, Preface, p. 276.

Papal intervention, assistance from his father, Camillo answers:

The Pope will not divert the course of law.

(II, ii, 28)

Worse than that, the Pope is unfair. When Beatrice with the help of her family has killed her father, a nefarious action, indeed, but understandable, the Pope does not listen to Camillo pleading mercy for the unfortunate family.¹ He prefers to yield to political arguments under the pretext of preventing the multiplicity of crimes and preserving normal order in society.²

Another example of injustice portrayed in the tragedy is injustice within the family. The central cause of disorder is Cenci himself, who uses his paternal authority to oppress and tyrannize his wife and children. He strikes Lucretia, Bernardo and Beatrice, deprives his other sons, Rocco, Christophano, Giacomo and their families of the necessities of life, and even steals the dowry of Giacomo's wife. Moreover, he constantly threatens to kill them if they refuse to obey his commands and he accuses Beatrice of insanity when she asks the guests for help at the party.³ But this is not all. He has two of his sons, Rocco and Christophano, murdered not so much out of anger against them but out of

1 SPW: TC, V, iv, 1-14, pp. 330-331.

2 SPW: TC, V, iv, 15-27, p. 331.

3 SPW: TC, I, iii, 160-161, p. 288: "My friends, I do lament this in sane girl / Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity".

sadistic feelings towards his wife and other children, who would be driven into despair by such a murder. The last horror is his incest with Beatrice. Through such drastic actions and behaviour with his family, Cenci brings into the lives of Lucretia, Bernardo and Beatrice a state of slavery and great unhappiness. Worse, he distorts their souls through such tyrannical abuses.

With such a distortion, we reach the third kind of injustice which Shelley wanted to picture primarily in his tragedy, the injustice which grows within souls. For, either in soliloquies or in the development of the action, Shelley throws some light on the thoughts, dispositions and internal evolution of his main characters, especially Cenci, Orsino and Beatrice. The first two are diabolical minds who vowed themselves deliberately and secretly to become agents of evil.¹ In the course of a conversation with Camillo where his own life and wickedness are discussed, Cenci declares, for instance, the enjoyment he gets from doing evil:

All men delight in sensual luxury,
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult
Over the tortures they can never feel--
Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.
But I delight in nothing else. I love
The sight of agony, ...
... ..
And I have no remorse and little fear,
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.

(I, i, 77-82, 84-85)

1 Cenci and Orsino remind us of two characters in Shakespeare's tragedies, namely: Richard III, in Richard the Third and Iago, in Othello. In spite of his claim in the Preface that "an idea suggested by Calderone is the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed" the play is full of echoes from Elizabethan drama, i.e. they are unconscious plagiarisms, i.e. Beatrice's speech Act V, Sc. iv, l. 48. Compare Measure for Measure, Act III, sc.I, Claudius' speech on death or in Lear's: "Let me not go mad". (King Lear)

And, as with the murder of his two sons, lustful temptation is not the deepest cause of his incest with his daughter: it is rather his wicked desire to corrupt a virtuous soul¹ and even, -his passion reaching metaphysical proportions, -his will to darken every light, not only on earth but up to the heavens:

Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?
And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
A deed which shall confound both night and day?

Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin.

(II, i, 181-183; IV, i, 93-95)

A similarly deliberate malignity, perhaps more dangerous because it is less cynical and more hypocritical, stains the soul of Orsino. Although he strives to do "as little mischief as (he) can", and does not want to be tainted by the blood of the Cenci, he would like to "take the profit, yet omit the sin and peril" of the murder.² And if he is very anxious, for reasons of prudence and self-preservation, "not (to) become the instrument of ill"³, he does not hesitate to "flatter the dark spirit that makes its empire

1 D.H. Reiman in his Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, St. Martin's Press, N.Y. 1969, 188p, holds a similar point of view on the count. Cf. Ch. 5, "Roman Scenes", p. 90: "In Act IV Cenci(...)is determined not only to pollute her body but also to kill her soul".

2 SPW: TC, II, ii, 118-125, p. 295.

3 SPW: TC, II, ii, 154-158, p. 296.

and its prey of other hearts".¹ Finally, under the guise of friendship, but actually for self interest, he cunningly approves the revenge, and encourages the assassination. When a first attempt fails, he sends to Beatrice two murderers, Marzio and Olym-pio, who succeed. However, this patent complicity does not prevent him from betraying Giacomo his "friend" and denouncing him as an accomplice to the police.

The example of Beatrice is very different, and still more eloquent. Before the incest, the heroine is portrayed as a living example of justice and honesty, as an enduring person who fights against the Cenci's tyranny to protect Lucretia and Bernardo. She is, as it were, the emblem of justice within the family, when with dauntless courage she strengthens her mother and brother in the face of sufferings.² Moreover, she does not hesitate to ask help from neighbours, friends and authorities, in her opposition to the oppressive and criminal behaviour of her father.³ She remains unshaken by the failure of her resistance and petitions. But she suddenly becomes depressed, and almost out of her mind, after she has suffered the rape. For a time, the unfortunate girl is so bewildered that even her perception of the outside world undergoes

1 SPW: TC, II, ii, 159-161, p. 296.

2 SPW: TC, II, i, 46-49, p. 289: "Until this hour thus you have ever stood / Between us and your father's moody wrath / Like a protecting presence: your firm mind / Has been our only refuge and defence: ..."

3 SPW: TC, I, iii, 122-128, p. 287.

a complete perturbation; she feels lost, a moral anxiety takes over, agonizing problems arise from every side. In this chaos of senses and understanding Beatrice experiences a loss of identity:

... .. O God! What a thing am I?

(III, i, 38)

Revoking at least for a moment her religious faith, Beatrice recovers some moral consistency and peace when she dares to take alone, in the secret of her heart, what she believes to be a bold decision: revenge. Revenge appears now to her the only way to obtain justice and show her innocence, because she has decided to "determine" herself "what is right".¹ But this fatal decision will completely change her soul. Her heart hardens² and her mind darkens:

Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,
Brotherly love, justice and clemency,
And all things that make tender hardest hearts
Make thine hard, brother.

(III, i, 387-390)

Taking the sword of justice in her own hand and plotting her father's

1 SPW: TC, III, i, 126-127, 134-137, p. 299; III, I, 218-221, p. 301; IV, ii, 35, p. 313.

2 SPW: TC, III, i, 208-218, p. 301; III, i, 384-386, p. 305. Here again, there is some analogy with Shakespeare's play Macbeth, viz. between Beatrice's and Lady Macbeth's behaviour before and after the murder, although Beatrice was not perverted like Lady Macbeth by her ambition. Cf. SPW: TC, III, i, 169-172, p. 300; III, i, 228-229, p. 302; IV, iii-iv, pp. 313-320. For a detailed study on this topic, read Shelley's Cenci by S. Curran who traces the history of articles written about Shakespeare's influence on Shelley. Ch. 2, pp. 35-36, fn 2; 27-41, fn 9 which says that Shakespeare was probably influenced by the "Relation" of the Cencis.

death, she unwittingly follows her father's way¹. Of course, she does not go so far, and because her actions did not lack some justification, she remains capable of good, and worthy of our pity. Nevertheless, the emblem of justice, in deciding revenge, has fallen in the world of the unjust.²

Therefore, although The Cenci is not a philosophical poem, as are Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam, but a "real play"³, the problem of justice still dominates this tragedy. As indicated by the preceding analysis, the main characters are defined by the positions they adopt or have adopted in the past about justice, and these positions govern all the development of the action. Furthermore, even if Shelley, in order to avoid didacticism, abstains from judging either his characters or the outcome, nonetheless the whole of the tragedy leaves us with a warning. Beatrice bore previously the sign of justice on her forehead. But when she has

1 In The Mutiny Within, J. Reiger goes to the extreme when he says that "Beatrice is a less poetical though more tragic version of Prometheus. She is in fact Shelley's Satan." (p. 125) We do not go so far. We agree very strongly with J.V. Murphy who writes in The Dark Angel, that "Shelley mixes good and evil into the figure of Beatrice." (p. 172)

2 D.H. Reiman in Percy Bysshe Shelley and C.E. Robinson in Shelley and Byron, The Snake and Eagle Wreath in Fight, The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1976, 291p. hold a similar points of view on Beatrice.

3 SPW: TC, Note on The Cenci, by Mrs. Shelley, p. 337: "Universal approbation soon stamped The Cenci as the best tragedy of modern times. (...) There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout."

decided to use revenge as a means to restore justice, she is marked in her turn by the stain of sin and darkness.¹ Although Shelley does not want to teach dogmatically in his tragedy as he says in the Preface that: "revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes"², this is the final impression which is given to us by the tragedy and its denouement.

1 Cf. The Dark Angel, J.V. Murphy, pp. 181-182: "As an audience, therefore, our response is ambivalent because of the ambiguous circumstances surrounding her acts: we know she is truly innocent and is provoked into the heinous deeds she commits, but on the other hand, her inexcusable deceit and ultimate spiritual wretchedness (as opposed, for example to Hamlet's tragedy) force us to conclude that she truly is guilty."

2 SPW: TC, Preface, p. 276. Cf. the judgment of Charles E. Robinson who also focusses his analysis of The Cenci on "revenge", Ch. 7, p. 152: "That Shelley judged Beatrice morally wrong for her revenge and morally reprehensible for her protested innocence of parricide in Act V is, I believe, beyond question."

C H A P T E R I I I

THE IDEAL OF BEAUTY AND ITS FUSION WITH THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE

CHAPTER THREE

THE IDEAL OF BEAUTY AND ITS FUSION WITH THE IDEAL OF JUSTICE

Part I: The Ideal of Beauty: Birth, Development and Expression in Poetry

We have just seen how the ideal of justice inspired Shelley's poetry to a considerable extent. But if one examines the poet's canon, one soon discovers that another source of inspiration quickened his mind: namely the ideal of beauty. First appearing during the summer of 1811, when Shelley visited a cousin in Southern Wales and was impressed by the beauty of mountains, this ideal re-appeared in the journey through Switzerland and during his exile in Italy. Many poems echo this new source of inspiration, for instance Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude at a time when Shelley was still in England: afterwards, - in the Swiss and Italian period - Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Mont Blanc, Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, finally some great Odes such as The Cloud, To a Skylark or The Sensitive Plant. For years the poet seems to have been torn between his two inspirations, but after his journey to Switzerland and arrival in Italy he tried, at least on some occasions, to reconcile his two ideals and succeeded in several poems, among them his masterpiece, Prometheus Unbound. The object of this chapter will be to study, through a few examples, the birth and growth of this new source of inspiration and its fusion with the former. But before under-

taking such analysis we must look briefly at the Letters, because they provide us with significant information about the aesthetic preoccupations of the poet.

1. Travels and Letters

The 1808-1815 correspondence rarely reveals, except in four or five instances¹, any particular inclination in the young writer to fine arts, or even a profound taste for outside nature, whose effects upon him he almost never describes. Oriented in a different direction first by his upbringing and afterwards by his own interest in politics and philosophy, he had somewhat stifled, as it were, his natural tendency towards aesthetics and nature. One may notice that on two occasions at least the poet was attracted by the beauty of the surrounding landscape, but did not yield to its influence. At Field Place, for example, he was awaiting the visit of the muse amidst "woods & wilds & solitary groves"², but at the same time was bored by the quietude around him: "Very little to do in the Country & a most excellent time to go mad for want of better employment".³ Later in Wales, in view of the moun-

1 Cf. the Letters from the Lake District from November 1811 to January 1812, in particular Nos 142, 144, 148.

2 LPBS: I, No 6, p. 4, Letter to J.T.T. Tisdall, April 7, 1809.

3 Ibid, I, p. 4.

tains, he instinctively exclaimed:

Nature is here marked with the most impressive character of loveliness and grandeur, (...)—This valley is covered with trees, so are partly the mountains that surround it. Rocks piled upon each other to an immense height, & clouds intersecting them, in other places waterfalls midst the umbrage of a thousand shadowy trees form the principle features of the scenery. I am not unwholly uninfluenced by its magic in my lonely walks. 1

But such emotions and feelings hardly lasted, because they conflicted with his analytical reason:

Once I was tremendously alive to tones and scenes--The habit of analysing feelings I fear does not agree with this. It is spontaneous, & when it becomes subjugated to consideration ceases to exist. But you do right to indulge feeling where it does not militate with reason, I wish I could too--. 2

Moreover, he thought at this time that political affairs and social justice were much more important than aesthetic emotions and pleasure:

--This country is highly romantic(...)I am more astonished at the grandeur of this scenery than I expected. I do not now much regard it. I have other things to think of. 3

A great change took place during his second trip to Switzerland. The Letters to Peacock, Byron and Hogg between May-September 1816 clearly indicate a new attitude. To begin with, we see that the young poet, instead of exclusively meditating on abstract and political philosophers, passionately read the great

1 LPBS: I, No 100, pp. 127-128, Letter to E. Hitchener, July 26, 1811.

2 Ibid, I, p. 127. (Shelley's italics)

3 LPBS: I, No 101, p. 128, Letter to T.J. Hogg, July 28, 1811. (Shelley's italics)

Romantic novel of the late 18th century, Rousseau's La Nouvelle Heloise. Letters of this period show how such a novel, which portrayed a new conception of love and a new sense of nature, made a strong impression on Shelley. The traveller that he was at the time became so deeply moved and exalted that he transformed his voyage into a pilgrimage not only to Rousseau, but even to the characters of La Nouvelle Heloise, Julie and St Preux.¹ Secondly, the undeniable genius of the French author, his strong imaginative and emotional powers developed in Shelley a genuine concern for the role of the imagination and feelings in aesthetics, something that the poet had thought of in politics and ethics. Therefore a close relationship is established in the poet's mind, between imagination, emotion, and the perception of nature: "The mountains of La(le) Valais and Savoy, present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar."² In addition to Rousseau's influence, Shelley benefited from discussions on poetry and literature with Byron and Mme de Stael in Geneva. The

1 LPBS: I, No 356, pp. 493-494, Letter to T.J. Hogg, July 18, 1816: "I have read La Nouvelle Heloise at these places, a book which tho(though) in some respects absurd & prejudiced, is yet the production of a mighty Genius, & acquires an interest I had not conceived it to possess when giving & receiving influences from the scenes by which it was inspired. Rousseau is indeed in my mind the greatest man the world has produced since Milton." And No 353, p. 486, Letter to T.L. Peacock, July 12, 1816: "A thousand times, thought I, have Julia and St. Preux walked on this terraced road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread."

2 Ibid, I, p. 485.

latter¹ suggested to him ideas which he used later in his Defence of Poetry. Thirdly, these letters indicate how nature became a true inspirer and even a teacher for the poet. Delighted by the beauty of Swiss landscapes, he gave way to his own sensations and emotions, and transmitted the wonders which he saw through a colourful language, filled with musical overtones. Hence, his prose has a poetical style. Discovering new kinds of scenery from day to day, he continuously exalted their beauties to his correspondents: small villages with "antient castles", houses or spires, like Hermance, Evian, Meillerie, surrounded with vineyards and lakes where one could admire "the vast expanse of(...)purple and misty waters"; waterfalls at St Gingolph "which roar over the rocks with a perpetual sound, and suspend their unceasing spray on the leaves and flowers that overhang and adorn its savage banks"; rivers, like the Drance over which fly "besolets, beautiful water-birds"², or like the Danube and the Rhone which "are not like roads, the work of the hands of man;(but)imitate mind, which wanders at will over pathless deserts, and flows through nature's loveliest recesses, which are inaccessible to anything besides."³ Yet what touched the poet

1 Author of Corinne, ou l'Italie (1807); De l'Allemagne (1810); De La Litterature (1814). According to the Shelley and Mary Journal, pp. 81,84, 108, the poet ~~had been~~ familiar with these books since 1815.

2 LPBS: I, No 353, pp. 480-481, 484-485, Letter to T.L. Peacock, July 12, 1816.

3 LPBS: I, No 354, pp. 489-490, Letter to T.L. Peacock, July 17, 1816.

most profoundly were the mountains. He called them "Palaces of Nature", as if no word were strong enough to describe what he felt in front of La Roche de St Julien, La(le)Valais, Savoy and above all Mont Blanc, the snowy summit of the chain:

I never knew I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic(sic) wonders, not unallied to madness--And remember this was all one scene. It all pressed home to our regard & to our imagination.--1

Such was the source of Shelley's re-birth to the ideal of beauty, and it is not surprising that during this voyage he wrote two poems entitled Mont Blanc and Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. Nature had become for him "the poet whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest".²

However, it is especially the Letters written between 1818-1820 which show this extraordinary development of the ideal of beauty and artistic interests in the poet. Too often thought of as a country of exile for Shelley, Italy meant something quite different to him, i.e. the fountainhead of life, knowledge, culture and creation. There, more than in any other place he deliberately searched for beauty in nature, and this search was, so to speak, the daily bread of his mind:

No sooner had we arrived at Italy(...)than the loveliness of the earth & the serenity of the sky made the greatest difference in my sensations--I depend on these things for life for in the smoke

1 LPBS: I, No 358, p. 497, Letter to T.L. Peacock, July 22, 1816.

2 Ibid, I, p. 495.

of cities & the tumult of humankind & the chilling fogs & rain
of our own country I can hardly be said to live.--1

All the descriptions of Italian landscapes, whether they be the Euganean Hills, the Plains of Milanese or Parma are vividly expressed with words approaching images or paintings. For instance, this is the case, when he describes the Appenines and the region of Rome:

The surrounding scenery is in its kind the loveliest & most sublime that can be conceived. In our first walk we passed through some olive groves, of large & antient trees whose hoary & twisted trunks leaned in all directions. We then crossed a path of orange trees(...) & came to a forest of ilex of a large size, (...) around hemming in the narrow vale were pinnacles of lofty mountains of pyramidical rock clothed with all evergreen plants & trees; the vast pine whose feathery foliage trembled in the blue air, the ilex, that ancestral inhabitant of these mountains, the arbutus with its crimson coloured fruit & glittering leaves. 2

The poet wrote most of his poetry during his stay in Italy, amongst chosen scenery.

Apart from nature, Shelley looked to other forms of beauty, namely the artistic, and, first of all, architecture. The structure of cities like Rome, Milan and Venice, ancient towns like Pompei and Posidonia were causes of wonder for him; he no less admired monuments such as the Coliseum and the Arch of Constantine, Pagan Temples to Jupiter, Aesculapius, etc., Christian Basilicae

1 LPBS: II, No 460, pp. 3-4, Letter to T.L. Peacock, April 6, 1818.
And, I, No 420, p. 573, Letter to W. Godwin, December 7, 1817: "It is not health but life that I should seek in Italy,..."

2 LPBS: II, No 487, p. 56, Letter T.L. Peacock, November 20, 1818.

such as St Peter's in Rome and Milan's Cathedral. For instance, he says, speaking of the latter:

This Cathedral is a most astonishing work of art. It is built of white marble & cut into pinnacles of immense height & the utmost delicacy of workmanship, & loaded with sculpture. The effect of it, piercing the solid blue with those groupes of dazzling spires relieved by the serene depth of this Italian Heaven, or by moonlight when stars seem gathered among those sculptured shapes is beyond any thing I had imagined architecture capable of producing. 1

Discovering architecture, he was quickly fascinated by the unrivalled treasures of paintings which are sheltered within. He spent infinite hours in churches at Bologna and Rome, or in museums, contemplating masterpieces of Michaelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, Guido and many other painters. His Letters give us living records of his impressions. They reflect and nearly reproduce, at least as much as it is possible in writing, the content of the most admired paintings, for instance Raphael's St Ceacilia(sic); Guido's Jesus Christ Crucified, Michaelangelo's Moses, - anticipating already the aesthetic studies which were to be done later by Ruskin and Pater, the forerunners of the Art's for Art's Sake Movement. Thus he wrote to Peacock, to take one illustration out of many, about Christ Beatified by Corregio:

It is a half figure rising from a mass of clouds tinged with an ethereal rose-like lustre, the arms are expanded, the whole figure seems dilated with expression, the countenance is heavy as it were with the weight of the rapture of the spirit, the lips parted but scarcely parted with the breath of intense but regulated passion, the eyes are calm and benignant, the whole features harmonized in

1 LPBS: II, No 462, pp. 7-8, Letter to T.L. Peacock, April 20, 1818.

majesty & sweetness. The hair is parted on the forehead, and falls in heavy locks on each side. It is motionless, but seems as if the faintest breath would move it. The colouring, I suppose must be very good if I can remark & understand it. The sky is a pale and aerial orange like the tints of latest sunset; it does not seem painted around & beyond the figure, but every thing seems to have absorbed, & to have been penetrated by its hues. 1

As Peacock remarked in his reply², the poet was going to become while improving his taste, a true "critique d'art".

In addition to paintings, Shelley paid an increasing attention to sculpture³, whether it be bas-relief carved on arches, temples, or statues erected in churches like the Pieta, in open air such as those of "Castor & Pollux, each in the act of taming his horse"⁴, in galleries like those of Venus, Bacchus and the Satyr:

There is the Venus(Callipyga cancelled), an ideal shape of the most winding loveliness, a Bacchus more sublime than any living being, a Satyr making love to a Youth in which the expressed life

1 LPBS: II, No 486, pp. 49-50, Letter to T.L. Peacock, November 9 1818.

2 Peacock invited Shelley to write a book about Italy in a letter dated December 15, 1818. Cf. LPBS: II, No 487, note 4, p. 57: "Your descriptions of paintings are truly delightful; they make pictures more visible than I thought they could be made through the medium of words.(...)If you bring home a journal full of such descriptions of the remains of art, and of the scenery of Italy, they will attract a very great share of public attention..." The poet rejected this suggestion for he had other views on the subject. Cf. LPBS: II, Nos 491, p. 70 and 495, p.84.

3 SPW: Note on Poems of 1818, by Mrs. Shelley, p. 570: "The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth."

4 LPBS: II, No 495, p. 88, Letter to T.L. Peacock, March 23, 1819.

of the sculpture & the inconceivable beauty of the form of the youth overcome ones repugnance to the subject. 1

The poet appreciated this form of art to the greatest degree:

"Perhaps I attended more to Sculpture than Painting, its forms being more easily intelligible than those of the latter".² Here, we see that the enthusiasm for visual art and beauty has not weakened the rational faculty and intellectual drive. It is probably the reason why Shelley does not seem to have been strongly attracted by music as such (and this is all the more surprising as he was himself so musical in his poetry), but only some time before his death, when he could listen to Jane Williams's songs and guitar.

On the whole, the Letters show that the various forms of art, mainly architecture, painting and sculpture, discovered in Italy, contributed no less than nature to develop in Shelley, to a very great extent, the sense of aesthetics and the ideal of beauty. He went so far in his studies that he was on the way to become, according to the just remark of Peacock, not only a tasteful admirer of masterpieces but an expert in fine arts. However he sought, above all, links and correspondences between them and with his own form of art, poetry, which should, he believed, recapitulate and unite all of them so that they "can survive in

1 LPBS: II, No 488, p. 63, Letter to T.L. Peacock, 17 or 18 December, 1818.

2 LPBS: II, No 510, p. 112, Letter to L. Hunt, August 20, 1819.

the mind of man".¹ Now more than ever was he prepared to love the great poets of the Greek, Medieval and Renaissance periods, and to follow Plato in his quest for intellectual beauty through the understanding of sensible beauty. For all these great men had been themselves strongly influenced both by nature and the visual arts:

I now understand why the Greeks were such great Poets, & above all I can account, it seems to me, for the harmony the unity of perfection the uniform excellence of all their works of art. They lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms. 2

Therefore, the Letters prove that Shelley's stay in Italy was far from being an exile. The poet's imagination had found in this Mother of art and civilization a fertile garden or "Paradise"³, where his ideal of beauty could be enhanced by the greatest variety of outstanding models, and his creative powers, so well inspired, grow freely.

1 Because they are in part "material" monuments, paintings and sculpture must perish and it is the task of poetry to save from death their spiritual meaning. Cf. LPBS: II, No 486, p. 53, Letter to T.L. Peacock, November 9, 1819.

2 LPBS: II, No 491, p. 74, Letter to T.L. Peacock, January 23-24, 1819.

3 SPW: Julian and Maddalo, l. 57, p. 191: "Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!". Cf. Medwin, T., The Shelley Papers, Memoir of Percy Bysshe Shelley, p. 57: "He attributed the undisputed superiority of Italy, in literature and the arts, above all its contemporaries-the union, and energy, and beauty, which distinguish from all other poets the writings of Dante-that restlessness of fervid power, which surpassed itself in painting and sculpture, and from which Raphael and Michaelangelo drew their inspiration."

2. The Ideal of Beauty and its Early Expression: Alastor or The Spirit of Solitude, Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Mont-Blanc.

The Poetical Works of Shelley show a similar evolution, in the main, to that in his Letters. The first poems inspired by an ideal of beauty appear around 1811 in The Moonbeam or To a Star, although such an ideal was already alive in the poet's mind at an earlier date, as attested in Hymn to Intellectual Beauty:

While yet a boy ...

 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine - ...

(V, 49, 59-60, VI, 61-62)

But Shelley's preoccupation with the ideal of justice seems to have temporarily hampered such an inspiration for a period of four years. Intermittent recurrences can be observed either on the occasion of a trip along the Thames and Windsor forest in 1815, when Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude was written, or in the spring of 1816 with The Sunset, To Wordsworth, Oh! There are Spirits in the Air. However, such thoughts were only flashes until the poet's famous voyage, some months later, to Switzerland, where the ideal of beauty would be completely revived, as it is manifest in the two remarkable poems which he composed that Summer: Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and Mont-Blanc. From then on, that is during the whole sojourn of Shelley in Italy until the end of his

life, the revived ideal would never more abandon his genius, and became a major source of inspiration reflected in poems such as: Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, the Odes, in part Prometheus Unbound and still many of the last poems such as To Emilia Viviani, Epipsychidion, The Witch of Atlas.¹

Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude is the first important poem which illustrates this new inspiration. As Shelley himself indicates in his Preface, this poem is an allegory, which presents "one of the most interesting situations of the human mind", i.e. indeed that of the poet, fond of an ideal beauty. For "Alastor" is only a fictive and symbolic name and its meaning is defined by the other part of the title: "the Spirit of Solitude". We know rather well in what circumstances the poem was written. Recovering from a severe attack of tuberculosis suffered in the spring of 1815, Shelley spent his summer holidays near Windsor Forest in order to restore his health completely. Mrs. Shelley recalls in a Note on Alastor how her husband "spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park" contemplating "in solitude" the "magnificent woodland", hearing the voice and worshipping the "majesty of nature", but also constantly meditating on his death

1 And even other poems such as Evening: Ponte Al Mare, Pisa, The Boat on The Serchio, Hymn of Apollo, Hymn of Pan; To Jane: The Invitation, The Pine Forest of The Cascine near Pisa. Furthermore, it can be noticed that some of the themes which were found in the Letters re-appear also in certain poems. The beauty of nature in The Woodman and the Nightingale, Ode to Heaven, A Vision of the Sea; the beauty of music: To-Music, Music, With a Guitar, to Jane, To Jane: 'The Keen Stars were Twinkling'.

which he believed to be impending. These circumstances probably gave to Alastor an autobiographical meaning and may explain its character of "inward"¹ meditation as well as the melancholic tone which permeates many verses, particularly the last. Nevertheless Shelley as usual does not stay within the limits of circumstantial and personal events. Once again, he found in them a concrete and emotional occasion to "look beyond" the particular to the universal, in a poetic way. The autobiographical features, easily recognizable for those who know Shelley's life, remain in the background. What appears in the forefront is a poetical meditation upon several general themes: namely, as Shelley underscores in his Preface, the solitude of the poet among his fellow-men, his search for something to love in and beyond nature (cf. the quotation from St. Augustine:-Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare.-)², his thirst for beauty, finally his death because of passion, pain and sorrow.

The body of the poem is divided into three parts: an introduction which is a kind of personal exhortation; the story of Alastor; and again a personal meditation as a conclusion.

1 SPW: ASS, Note on Alastor by Mrs. Shelley, p. 30: 'Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward.'

2 SPW: ASS, Preface, p. 14: 'He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself.'

The introduction takes the form of an address in which Shelley himself speaks to the elements of nature: "earth, ocean, air", and later to nature itself,

Mother of this unfathomable world!

(l. 18)

This address is of a particular interest, because it is the first time that Shelley takes nature as the subject of his poetry. Of course in Queen Mab, for instance, there are several allusions, through poetical and symbolical images, either to the stars, the planets or other natural phenomena; the same observation could be repeated about The Revolt of Islam which is filled with descriptions. But now Shelley comes very close to Wordsworth¹: nature is not used as a simple decor and ornamentation; it is even much more than a store of symbols; it becomes a central theme of poetry, or a source of poetical feelings. These feelings are so intense that Shelley speaks to the elements as if they were animate beings; and even calls them his brothers:

EARTH, ocean, air beloved brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, ...
... ..
... ..; then forgive
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

(ll. 1-4, 15-17)

1 SPW: To Wordsworth, p. 526; and SPWP: Essay on Love, pp. 169-171. Compare these works to what W. Wordsworth said in: Preface to the Second Edition of Several of the Foregoing Poems published, with an additional volume, under the title of 'Lyrical Ballads', especially, "For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.", p. 735, OUP ed.

It is obvious through these verses and those which lie in between - where Shelley evokes "dewy morn, sunset, autumn, winter, spring, birds, insects", etc., - that not only the poet considers nature as an object of love but as a loving spirit which evokes piety.

This is why this address is spontaneously followed by a kind of prayer which indicates that such feelings had not recently developed in Shelley, but were natural to him:

Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; ...

(ll. 19-20)

This worship is accompanied by a metaphysical interrogation about the "deep mysteries" which are concealed in nature and around men. Of course such metaphysical inquiries were already Shelley's hallmark, since philosophy, as we have seen in Chapter I, always remained a major concern in his mind. But here philosophical meditation takes a new form. For the poet is now led to a philosophical and religious soaring not by abstract or political questions as in Queen Mab or The Revolt of Islam, but by the presence of concrete elements as they appear to the senses. Nevertheless, although the poet seems fascinated by sensible aspects of natural things and delighted to depict them in colourful and musical descriptions, with a profusion of details (similar to Wordsworth), he goes further, perceiving immediately or imagining the symbolical values of natural things. With a Platonic impulse, the impulse of many great poets, Homer, Dante and Spenser for in-

stance, Shelley's masters and models, the author of Alastor ascends toward an ideal sky:

... ..: ... and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought,
Has shone within me, that serenely now
... ..
I wait thy breath. Great Parent, ...

(ll. 37-41, 45)

As for the allegorical story of Alastor it is still more significant. In a way apparently paradoxical, the narration begins at the end of the tale, i.e. by recalling the premature death of the young poet. Obviously Shelley wishes to set the tone and central meaning of his allegory: the complete solitude and abandonment of the poet in death as much as in life. No one knew, - "no mourning maiden", "no lorn bard", - that he died:

He lived, he died, he sung in solitude.

(l. 60)

The end of the story thus foreshadowed, Shelley goes on narrating its stages. Alastor was, in his early childhood, a very imaginative and sensitive being for whom vivid impressions, emotions and feelings were essential. He responded spontaneously to everything encountered on his way:

... ..Every sight
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses,
The fountains of divine philosophy
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
And knew. ...

(ll. 68-75)

In other words, not only did the child live for sensations but already for knowledge and ideal wisdom.-Later on, having become a young man filled with a spirit of adventure, he leaves his family:

To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.

(l. 77)

He first finds nature itself which offers him a refuge. Above all he seeks its beauty in its various forms:

... .. Nature's most secret steps
He like her shadow has pursued, ...

(ll. 81-82)

And he admires "lakes, caves, and the red volcano". He goes so far in his kinship with the world that, like St Francis, he becomes a protector of animals:

Until the doves and squirrels would partake
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,(.)

(l. 100-102)

Apart from admiring beauty within nature, Alastor searches its shadow amidst the ancient civilizations, ~~treading~~ through "Athens, Tyre, Balbec, Jerusalem" trying to pierce the mysteries out of its ruins, "pyramids, obelisks, temples":

He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
... ..
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

(ll. 121-122, 126-128)

Having exhausted so far all possible forms of external beauties, he happily extends his quest to distant lands of India in the Valley of Cashmire. There, in a cavern where he had found a provisional home, he has a dream,

... ..., a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek.

(ll. 150-151)

He sees "a veiled maid" who is singing in "low solemn tones" a celestial music:

Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
Herself a poet. ...

(ll. 158-161)

But the symphony was so "strange". i.e. so different from what can be heard on earth and from human language, that the counterpoint of her "ineffable tale" is made of "sobs" and "beating of her heart", expressing her "irresistible joy". The young poet, recognizing "the voice of his own soul" burns with love for the maiden and dreams that he is united with her and sinks into her bosom. Then the vision vanishes... "That beautiful shape!" is evidently the symbol of ideal beauty which lies beyond nature, in other words, a divine inspirer of poetry. This apparition unexpectedly fulfills the longings of the poet. At last he suddenly finds before him the object he had pursued through nature for a long time. But while in love with this celestial shape, he has overleapt "the bounds" of the world. From now on, he is kindled with a desire that no-

thing in nature can satisfy.¹ He wants and hopes to meet again the beauty of his dream.

Here begins the last stage of Alastor's life. His short contact, in a dream, with a **supraterrestrial** beauty brings him into an endless wandering,

... ..: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,
... ..
He fled. ...

(ll. 232-235, 237)

But nowhere can he find the object of his pursuit; the most beautiful things on earth have become insufficient in comparison with his ideal. Sometimes afoot, sometimes afloat, for days and nights he travels over many landscapes, mountains and shores, lakes, forests and caverns, talks to the swan and stream,

Obedient to the light
That shone within his soul, ...

(ll. 492-493)

Nowhere he meets what he looks for. Then the hope and joy of his dream turn into despair. He becomes aware that he will never see again on earth the maid he loves, his ideal. Therefore exhausted by his passionate search and knowing that he is going to die, he

1 He ignored the presence of the Arab maid because he searched for an Ideal Beauty. But this Ideal Beauty does not exist within the world. This is at once the curse and blessing which Alastor undergoes. The vision is a curse because he cannot find its manifestation in the material world, yet it is a blessing because it comes from a realm higher than earth.

accepts solitude and death as his last refuge.

In the concluding part of the poem, Shelley, commenting on the destiny and death of Alastor, seems to share and even emphasize the sadness of this tragic story. For, even if the wonders which are the dream of any poet-"Medea's alchemy", God's kingdom and magic power,-were accomplished and had become "the true law" of the world, still the poet is dead. As Shelley says lyrically:

... .. But thou art fled
Like some frail exhalation; ...
... .. The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
... .. The child of grace and genius. ...

(ll. 686-687, 689-690)

And this complaint is stressed by the elegiac opposition between the duration of nature and the ephemeral life of man:

Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
Now thou art not.

(ll. 696-699)

Then a romantic dirge is sung about the death of the poet which should not be mourned or wept because it could not be:

It is a woe too 'deep for tears,'

(l. 713)

Only "pale despair and cold tranquillity" stand for such a loss, the loss of the "light", which "adorned the world". However in spite of this romantic melancholy about the apparent ruin of the poet, Shelley presents the unfortunate Alastor (and this apology

is no less romantic) as a model to mankind. For he was not "morally dead" as those

who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, (...) have their apportioned curse. 1

The poet is nobler because although he has been consumed by his "irresistible passion"², he was awakened to an "exquisite perception" of the Power which permeates the world but remains far above ordinary things.³

Although shorter, Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and Mont Blanc advance a step further. Instead of presenting a fictional story as does Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude, these poems are the immediate and direct expression of Shelley's own emotions during his summer trip in Switzerland. As we have seen in analysing the Letters, Shelley travelled for a period of six weeks on foot and sail in the region of Léman Lake and Chamonix. Such colourful and majestic landscapes moved him deeply and gave rise to a new burst of poetical inspiration. In a letter to Lord Byron during the same summer, the poet wrote: "I shall not attempt to

1 SPW: ASS, Preface, p. 15.

2 D. Reiman and J.V. Murphy in their interpretation of Alastor acknowledge the great sympathy of Shelley for the hero and the misfortunes and death which befall him. But, at the same time, they believe Shelley condemns the poet for his pursuit of an Ideal dream, because he ignores his fellow-men and society. We have emphasized more the sympathy of Shelley for Alastor.

3 SPW: ASS, 651-653, p. 29: "... .. the Poet's blood, / That ever beat in mystic sympathy / With nature's ebb and flow, ..."

describe to you the scenes through which we have passed. I hope soon to see in poetry the feelings with which they will inspire you."¹ Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and Mont Blanc are the main works which carry out this expectation. Written at the scenes which inspired them, they clearly indicate how Shelley was deeply impressed by his contemplation of natural beauty: they reveal his own experiences, because now the poet himself, without the medium of fiction, opens his heart to us within his poetry.

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, the title of which has a Platonic ring, **although** without reference to Plato², expresses a kind of Platonism natural to Shelley. For, although the poem was inspired by the marvellous scenery surrounding Shelley when it was composed³, although it begins by an evocation of different forms of natural beauty⁴, the true subject is beauty in itself or the "Spirit of Beauty" visiting the world with its "inconstant wing" and refracted by everything which "shines" before men's eyes.

1 LPBS: I, No 357, p. 494, Letter to Lord Byron, July 22, 1816.

2 Shelley was not reading Plato's Works at this time although he had done so at Oxford and Eton with a transl. from Taylor. Cf. J.A. Notopoulos, The Platonism of Shelley: A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind. Cf. LPBS:I, No 373, p. 517, Letter to L. Hunt, December 8, 1816: "The poem was composed under the influence of feelings which agitated me even to tears, ..."

3 SPW: Note on Poems of 1816, by Mrs. Shelley, pp. 535-536: "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty was conceived during his voyage round the Lake with Lord Byron."

4 SPW: HIB, I, 4-10; II, 15, 18-19; III, 32-35, p. 570.

The poem, a lyrical eulogy of beauty, a "hymn" as the title so perfectly defines it, progresses in four movements. In the first- the first two stanzas- the poet's mind, contemplating earth and sky on a summer day, is led to guess through these things:

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
... ..
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

(I, 1, 12)

Then, going immediately beyond nature, he directly addresses this Power, the "spirit of Beauty" which has a spiritual rather than sensible nature. The two following stanzas- the second movement- are an invocation to beauty itself about its relationship with human beings. Beauty is identical with God and Truth (as it was thought in the Greek and Christian Traditions):

Thy light alone- ...
... ..
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

(III, 32, 36)

And "Man were immortal and omnipotent" if only he could keep this grace and truth "within his heart". Unfortunately the Spirit of Beauty does not dwell enough with men; so far, it has not been fully revealed to sages and poets¹, and consequently is not properly understood by the human mind. Therefore this meditation brings a passionate plea from the poet:

Depart not--lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

(IV, 47-48)

1 SPW: HIB, III, 25-26, p. 530: "No voice from some sublimer world hath ever / To sage or poet these responses given--".

The third movement- the two following stanzas, V, VI- recalls a personal relation with this Spirit:

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
... ..
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

(V, 49-50, 59-60)

In other words, since childhood Shelley perceived, through the lyrical voice of nature, "winds, birds and blossomings" (cf. V, 56-58) as the revelation of transcendent beauty ("awful LOVELINESS" that "words cannot express"(VI, 71-72)) and vowed to it a religious worship:

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine-- ...

(VI, 61-62)

The poem ends with a sigh, a praise and a prayer. Dreaming about the unrivalled serenity and harmony of an autumn evening, impossible to experience in a summer day, the poet prays the "fair Spirit", which has enlightened his "passive youth", to "supply its calm" to his forthcoming years, perhaps the autumn of his life. The last lines of the poem, as the last verses of stanzas VI, clearly show that already beauty has an intimate unity with love and justice. Although its form appears to men in the world only through transitory and brief revelations, its Spirit "loves all humankind" and if men loved it in return, they would be freed from their "dark slavery"(cf. VI, 69-70). For as it is claimed in Prince Athanaze, "the mind becomes that which it contemplates", (cf.

1. 139). Then, when men contemplate beauty and "every form containing" it (cf. VII, 82) they become just and good because beauty is finally identical with justice and goodness.

Mont Blanc is devoted to the "sublime" rather than, in Kant's terminology¹, to the beautiful. In many respects the poem is much more descriptive than Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. Extremely impressed by a scene such as he had never seen in England, Shelley tried to render in verses the majestic spectacle which lay before him, its shape, its sounds, its mystery, and at the same time to express the strong and perhaps unknown emotions he felt at such a discovery. The description is made of three successive views which correspond to three different visions one obtains in Chamonix when looking from left to right. The first view is that of the Ravine of Arve-"dark deep Ravine"- facing Mont Blanc on the left. The second is the divine apparition of Mont Blanc itself:

Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears,--still, snowy, and serene--

(III, 60-61)

The third tableau shows the glaciers which "creep like snakes that watch their prey" and descend from the mountain like a "wall impregnable of beaming ice". Although Shelley does not intend to draw a picture of Mont Blanc for the sake of picturing (since the poem pro-

¹ In the poem, Shelley emphasizes more the majesty than the beauty of the mountain. In his Letters he noticed that the Alps: "exhibit scenery of wonderful sublimity" and are "majestic in their beauty". Cf. LPBS:I, Nos 348, p. 475, Letter to T.L. Peacock, May 15, 1816 and 358, p. 496, Letter to the same, July 22, 1816. Cf. Kant's Critique of Judgment, Parts II & III.

gresses as a dialogue with the mountain rather than as a painting of it), the evocation resulting from these three views produces a startling resemblance. The image which is given of the whole scene makes so impressive the presence of the mountain, and it is so close to reality, that someone who has never seen Mont Blanc before but has read the poem could recognize it, when he sees it for the first time.¹ However, it is not easy to explain how the poet obtained such an effect. If we try a tentative elucidation, we could say that Shelley uses some kind of cinematographic technique. He describes the mountains as he discovers them, successively, and by huge masses, for instance the "dark, deep Ravine",

Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,

(II, 14-15)

the "bursting" of the River and its "giant brood of pines around (it) clinging", Mont Blanc itself, with "its subject mountains",

... .. heaped around! rude, bare, and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.-- ... (,)

the icy and petrified chaos of the glaciers, and again finally Mont Blanc which "gleams on high" and inhabits the Heavens in "silence and solitude". Furthermore what makes the representation so faithful to the original, so vivid, is the intimate unity between the picturing images and the emotions that the scenery itself has provoked. "Awwful scene", "Dizzy Ravine", "How hideously

1 I had this experience last summer when visiting the very places where Shelley had been in and around Evian.

its shapes are heaped around", "Great Mountain", "Flood of Ruin", "Majestic River", etc., all these exclamations through which the poet directly addresses the mountains suggest at the same time the shapes, the feelings they produce. Combined with such expressions, the personification of elements and the choice of metaphors-"children of elder time", "a desert peopled by the storms alone", "old Earthquake-daemon", "city of death" etc.- transform the pines, the rocks, the ice into signs and materialized thoughts, and have a strong picturing power. The sounds of words with an accumulation of hard consonants (cf. particularly Part II), the rhythm of the verses, which sometimes clash and overlap each other, as a syncopated music, sometimes become calm, solemn and serene, contribute also tremendously to intensify our impressions and express the jagged and majestic aspect of the mountain.

Allied with these aesthetic qualities, the poem reverberates with a strong symbolical meaning, as well as a deep philosophical interrogation, the key of which is given in the first two admirable lines:

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, (.)

(I, 1-2)

At the very outset we are told, and this claim is repeated in each part of the poem¹, that nature descends into the mind of the poet who has to be its interpreter: it is the reason why all the

¹ SPW; MB, I, 1-6; II, 34-48; III, 80-84; IV, 98-100; V, 139-144, pp. 532-535.

poem develops as a dialogue between the mountain and the human mind.¹ The latter tries to penetrate the meaning of the former. From beginning to end, this meaning according to the poet remains ambiguous, the universe of things like a river being:

Now dark--now glittering--now reflecting gloom--
Now lending splendour, ...

(I, 3-4)

and the mountain itself being on the one hand the image of sterility, chaos, ruin and death (cf. III, 70-73; IV, 113-114), on the other the symbol of sublimity, solemnity or even wisdom. The poet constantly hesitates between these two alternatives, while his thoughts run within himself as the River flows from the mountains. On the one side, the "legion of wild thoughts" inspired by the scenery "float above(...)darkness", and everything evokes "a desert" or an eternal death, where "the limits of the dead and living world" are "overthrown" and "never to be reclaimed". On the other side, contemplating the river and the serenity of the snowy peak which speaks to the "wise" and "reveals large codes of fraud and woe", one hopes to perceive through them "the gleams of a remoter world" which would make "death" only a "slumber"; above all, one would like to see the "Power" source and soul of all nature, which inhabits the mountain and reveals:

... .. The Secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, ...(.)

¹ SPW: MB, IV, 99-100, p. 534: "And this the naked countenance of earth, / On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains / Teach the advertent mind." (Shelley's italics)

Although the second interpretation seems to be preferred, the poem concludes with an interrogation:

And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

(V, 142-144)

The meaning of these last verses is not without some ambiguity. Does the poet mean, as in verses 80-83, III, that only the wise can understand the significance of the great mountain? Or rather, does he mean that if there were no human mind to contemplate and think about the snowy peak, its "silence and solitude" would remain forever insignificant? It is difficult to say.¹

3. The Great Lyrical Poems: The Odes

The Odes are the blossoming of the inspiration which we have just analyzed. Although the preceding poems showed a great talent for evoking shapes and atmosphere, Shelley still developed and improved his descriptive powers. His observation has become keen and more delicate; his technique of using metaphors and rhythms, of choosing words and verses has reached a peak. Thus in the Ode to the West Wind and To a Skylark he fully displays a command of word-sonorities, verses and stanzas, which is already conspicuous in Mont Blanc, yet not to express the majesty of rocky mountains, but the motion of the wind or the flight and song

¹ K.N. Cameron in Shelley: The Golden Years, with reference to the conclusion of Mont Blanc states that "The question is left open, ..." (p.251). He ventures his own interpretation.

of the skylark. For instance long periods in triplets, combined with liquid syllables¹ and metaphors (ll. 1-8), express the blowing of the wind in part one of the first Ode, while the same triplets in part three picture the tranquillity of

The blue Mediterranean, ...
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams, (.)

(III, 30-31)

In the second Ode, two couplets of short verses followed by a longer line, in which the eye, ear and thought rest together, imitate both the successive wing-beats and trills of the skylark:

Higher still higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

(ll. 6-10)

In The Cloud and The Sensitive Plant the music of verses remains an important descriptive feature. The long stanzas of The Cloud, with their couplets made of a long verse combined with a shorter, evoke the movement of the cloud through the sky, either hiding the sun and stars, or pouring rain, or fleeing at the horizon. The quatrains of The Sensitive Plant evoke the life of the garden, awakening in the morning,

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,

(I, 1-2)

falling asleep in the evening, "beneath the kisses of Night" when

1 i.e. syllables with l, m, n.

... the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;

(I, 102-103)

and evolving from Spring through

All the sweet season of Summertide,

(II, 59)

to winter, when the wind becomes the "whip" of the flowers. However, in these last two poems, the emphasis is mostly on shapes, colours, scents, touch. Thus in The Sensitive Plant the poet describes, one after the other, the kinds of flowers which fill the garden with the precision of a gardener and a painter's eye for colour and detail. See for instance all the stanzas beginning with the Snowdrop ..., and especially:

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;(.)

(I, 25-28)

As for The Cloud, it is perhaps the best portrait of this phenomenon to be found in literature. Its six stanzas correspond to six large paintings which could be hung side by side on a wall, evoking six different stages of the ephemeral but always reappearing life of the cloud in the sky. The imagination of the poet comes so close to reality that, when he paints the other side of the cloud with the sun and the stars above, one might think he has seen it from an airplane, such as in stanzas three and four:

The Sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack, ...

... ..
That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor, (.)

(ll. 31-33, 45-47)

Hence the Odes show how Shelley has focussed his attention upon natural shapes and beauties. Partly on purpose¹, partly by a spontaneous development of his genius and sensivity, he had become a great observer and painter of nature. This feature is underlined by the fact that all these Odes are to a greater degree the fruit of both observation and emotional stimulation. We know that Shelley spent hours in his boat contemplating clouds, as he did on the ground hearing the wind or listening to birds. The Sensitive Plant shows also his knowledge of botany, impossible to acquire by a simple occasional interest.² But at the same time we know that The Sensitive Plant was suggested by the sight of a host of beautiful flowers, one afternoon, in his wife's drawing room, The Skylark by the singing of the bird on a lovely summer evening³ and the Ode to the West Wind was "conceived and chiefly

1 SPW: RI, Preface, pp. 34-35: "I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine."

2 Shelley read the Works of Buffon, Rousseau and Barthelemy on Natural Science.

3 SPW: Note on Poems of 1820, by Mrs. Shelley p. 635: "It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems."

written in a wood that skirts the Arno(...)on a day of violent tempest".¹

Progress in the use of symbolism is no less obvious. Even in The Cloud, the most purely descriptive of these poems, the personification of the object depicted, which speaks from the sky with the poetic "I", animates the cloud, making it a kind of Providence for nature:

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
... ..
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
... ..
I wield the flail of the lashing hail, ...

I sift the snow on the mountains below, ...(etc.)

(ll. 1, 3, 9, 13)

Perhaps it is also the symbol of the whole changing but eternal nature:

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky;
... ..
I change, but I cannot die.

(ll. 73-74, 76)

The metaphysical meaning is probably deeper in Ode to the West Wind where the West Wind is called a Spirit, "Wild Spirit", "Fierce Spirit", i.e. according to the two senses of this Latin word and of its Biblical use, as soul as well as a wind. And indeed it

1 SPW: OWW, Note of Shelley, p. 577.

seems to animate the whole universe,

... .. moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; ...

(I, 13-14)

and to be the inspiration of the poet:

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is: ...

... .. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

(V, 57, 61-62)

so that it becomes "the trumpet of a prophecy!" announcing to mankind in winter the coming of Spring,-i.e. hope of a spiritual renewal. These two poems and especially Ode to the West Wind have a pantheistic ring.¹ On the contrary, The Skylark and The Sensitive Plant reflect a Platonic orientation. This is particularly evident in the first of the last two Odes which could be said to be a flight out of the cavern toward the absolute Good and Beauty. Perhaps because the singing bird is not seen,

Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

(II. 18-20)

it becomes almost a pure symbol of an ascension towards divine perfection and of the joy which is produced by the contemplation

1 These poems somewhat evoke the Stoics' "Soul of the world".

of such an object:

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?

 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

(ll. 71-72, 75)

Of course Shelley is not a philosopher as is Plato, but what was a quasi-certitude for the philosopher is referred to in the form of an interrogation by the poet. Nevertheless the joy, clarity and happiness that the skylark diffuses through its songs exceed all the music, beams and scents which are spread around by the best things on earth:

All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass:(.)

(ll. 59-60)

Therefore in this passage, which includes six stanzas comprising one-third of the poem ll. 35-65, and which develops several comparisons, the skylark is described as a true messenger of the Ideal. And it is the reason why Shelley, in the second part of the poem, asks the bird to become his master, to unveil the mysteries of death and eternity:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

 Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,(.)...

(ll. 61-65, 81-84)

This invocation, continued in the last stanza where the poet implores the "skylark" to change him into a prophet¹, reminds us of the prayers which similarly conclude Ode to the West Wind and Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.

Although pure descriptions comprise an important portion of the poem, as already indicated, The Sensitive Plant is certainly no less Platonic and symbolic. The poem develops an allegory presented under the form of a fairy tale which fulfills the function and meaning of a Platonic myth, -or even of an Evangelic parable. The scene of the tale is a garden, the characters are beautiful flowers on the one side, bad weeds on the other; the Sensitive Plant stays in the middle of them, while a fair lady who comes from Spring to Autumn takes care of the garden. The garden stands for the earth and our transient world, changing according to the seasons, which also play an important part in the little drama narrated by the tale. The lovely flowers and the noxious weeds respectively signify all the beautiful things diffusing Good and happiness in the world, or ugly beings and vices destroying the beautiful. Meanwhile, the Sensitive Plant, "com-

1 SPW: SP, 101-105, p. 603: "Teach me half the gladness / That thy brain must know, / Such harmonious madness / From my lips would flow / The world should listen then-as I am listening now."

panionless" because it is alone of its kind¹ and apparently the poorest among the lovely flowers, represents both the Platonic Eros (son of poverty and want) and the poet, -who has no flower of his own but likes to mirror all the beauties of the universe:

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower:
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

(I, 74-77)

And "the light winds", "the plumed insects", "the unseen clouds of the dew", "the quivering vapours",

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear(.)

(I, 94-95)

As for the lady, both a fairy and mythological figure, her symbolic meaning is implicit in the name she bears, as well as by the tenderness and care she shows to the flowers:

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.
... ..
She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands, ...

(II, 1-4, 33-47)

1 D. Reiman in Percy Bysshe Shelley, Ch. 6 "The Chameleon", pp. 110-111, has a similar interpretation: "Using the Platonic myth in his fable, Shelley attributes love to man rather than to other natural creatures. Man alone is unfulfilled within the natural sphere; he appreciates the beauty of natural creation, but cannot contribute to it."

She is delicate and divine to the point that she extends her providence to the harmful but "innocent" beings which hurt the objects of her care. What happens in the garden is no less symbolic than the creatures which inhabit it:

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertime,
And ere the first leaf looked brown--she died!

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul, (.)

(II, 57-60; III, 17-18)

In other words, the presence of Grace and Beauty, symbolized by the blossoming of Spring and Summer, brings joy and delightful unfolding to the beings of the world, while the coming of the cold winter, i.e. probably the lack of love and longing for beauty, awakens the mob of bad thoughts and vices, -"thistles, nettles, darnels, hemlock", etc., -which spread death everywhere and even to themselves:

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth, ...
... ..
Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake, ...
... ..
Infecting the winds that wander by.

(III, 58-59, (cancelled passage, 62, 65))

The poet, symbol of man, is also killed by this cold lack of love and absence of beauty:

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck; (.)

(III, 110-111)

This is the end of the story, at least as it is told by the sensible appearances of this world. But there is another conclusion, brought about by Shelley's philosophical Platonic faith:

Whether the Sensitive Plant, ...
... ..
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
No longer with form combined
... ..
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; ...

(III, 114, 116-119, 121-122)

The mortal destiny recalled in the tale gives indeed an argument to the skeptical meditation and interrogation of the poet. Nevertheless resuming a dialectical reversal used in The Phaedo¹, where it is said that death causing nothingness must be nothing, i.e. as it is said here:

Like all the rest, a mockery.(,)

(III, 129)

the poet chances on the Socratic "creed" which is the last word of the dialogue in The Phaedo. The creed is intentionally qual-

1 By this reversal Plato tries to argue that death itself, being nothing, proves the immortality of the soul. D. Reiman shares the same view on the meaning of the conclusion of the poem, "which is not "logically" but psychologically inevitable. For the "modest creed" expressed at the end of "The Sensitive Plant" is Shelley's declaration that he is unwilling to accept as final the verdict of limited human senses and fallible human reason and that he intends to be guided by the premise that the Good and Beautiful are ultimately True as well". (pp. 112-113 in Percy Bysshe Shelley)

ified "modest" as well as "pleasant", i.e. easy to accept and not exceeding the philosophical power of reason, which knows the eternity of supreme values as well as its own weakness:

For love, and beauty, and the delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

(III, 134-137)

We shall conclude this survey of the Odes with a few remarks. An increasing openness to external beauties of the sensible world, the progress of which we have remarked since the journey to Switzerland, coincides with an increasing thirst for transcendent beauty and the Ideal. Shelley himself, in this regard, more and more resembles the allegorical figure of the poet he had portrayed in Alastor. The deeper he perceives and feels the colours, shapes, sounds and scents striking his senses, the stronger he looks for ideal perfection exceeding the range of human perception. Moved by a natural tendency and by a constant meditation of Plato at this time, namely during his stay in Italy¹, the author of the Odes, as it was already noticeable in Alastor and Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, tends to see beauty not only in its sensible aspects but essentially under a moral perspective. It is the beauty of the inward form that he alludes to, when he points out the decay of the "outward form" in The Sensitive Plant. And later on, he

1 Shelley studied Plato's Works and translated some during his exile in Italy, i.e. from 1817-1822. Cf. J. Notopoulos, The Platonism of Shelley.

will celebrate again the unity of beauty with spiritual and moral perfection in some of his last poems, where a personal and aesthetic inspiration seems to dominate, obliquely in Epi-psychidion, overtly in Adonais¹ and The Witch of Atlas. Eventually this explains why the symbolic form is so natural and so successful in Shelley's poetry. Sensible and material beauties were experienced by the poet as images reflecting some supernatural Ideal or perhaps Entity (the "Power"), and raising man's spirit towards divine perfection.

Part II: Unity of the Two Ideals

1. First Steps Toward Unity

Thus Shelley's ideal of beauty had a tendency, by its natural development, to be blended with the ideal of justice, as the political inspiration had already inclined towards the aesthetic. For, using an abundance of metaphors and symbols in his political poetry, Shelley was led to represent the just under the features of the beautiful, as observed in Chapter Two. Furthermore, he had started to unite the two ideals in his thought. In The Revolt of Islam for instance, Cythna and Laon, ministers of justice, love and reform, foreshadow the symbols of the Lady and of

1 SPW: Adonais, LII-LIV, p. 441.

the Sensitive Plant as expressed in the Ode. Cythna¹ is described with beautiful features almost in the same terms as the Lady of the Garden:

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
A power, ...
... ..
... ..: she did seem
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream ...

(II, xxiii, 865-866, 870-872)

Laon, on the other hand, a symbol of the poet and the reformer, loves this beauty, receiving from her inspiration and courage:

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, ...

(II, xxxii, 946-948)

Almost the same observations could be made about Prince Athanaze, Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, Mont Blanc.² Shelley was well aware of the deep unity between the two sides of his Ideal, the very sources of his poetry. This is obvious in A Defence of Poetry, his last and most important theoretical writing on the subject.

2. Theoretical Development: A Defence of Poetry

Although incomplete and written on an occasional circum-

1 SPW: RI, xxii-xxxii, p. 60.

2 Cf. section "Beauty and Poetry", pp. 109-117.

stance, in opposition to Peacock's attack against "modern" poetry¹, this admirable text unfolds a mature theory of poetry. It is not possible to analyze it here even briefly. For evidence supporting the argument of this thesis, it suffices to consider the first and last parts of this text², which explain first the origin and nature of poetry, then, "the functions of the poetical faculty". On the one hand, if Shelley defines poetry as "the expression of the imagination", which was commonplace in the 18th century, his concept of imagination, very similar to Coleridge's, was distinctly romantic. Imagination is not only the reproductive power through which our mind answers as a "lyre" to the external impressions, but essentially a "principle of synthesis", - i.e. a creative or a poetic power, cause of an internal and spiritual order.³ And not only does this faculty perceive

1 LPBS: II, No 602, p. 258, Letter to C. Ollier, January 20, 1820(for 1821): "I am enchanted with your Literary Miscellany, although the last article it contains has excited my polemical faculties so violently, that the moment I get rid of my ophthalmia I mean to set about an answer to it, which I will send to you, if you please. It is very clever, but, I think, very false." And No 605, p. 261, Letter to T.L. Peacock, February 15, 1820(for 1821): "I received at the same time your printed denunciations against general, and your written ones against particular, poetry; and I agree with you as decidedly in the latter as I differ in the former. (...) At the same time, your anathemas against poetry itself excited me to a sacred rage, or caloethes scribendi of vindicating the insulted Muses." (Shelley's italics)

2 We set aside the middle part, i.e. the long recapitulation in which Shelley examines through history the effects of poetry on society, because this part has little to do with our subject.

3 SPW: A Defence of Poetry, p. 277: "But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in a lyre and produces not melody alone but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them."

"rhythm or order" in material objects (for this reason it is the principle of dance, song and of any imitative art), but also this kind of superior rhythm and order, called harmony or the beautiful, which belongs to "higher objects" and gives "highest pleasure". Poets are those in whom this faculty exists in "excess", therefore those who are impelled by their genius towards the "beautiful". But the beautiful is identical with "this indestructible order" which is in turn the same as justice, and therefore becomes the true foundation of "civil society". For such reasons poets, who stand among men as messengers and "hierophants" of beauty, do act, like Laon in The Revolt of Islam, as ministers of love and justice:

They are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society...¹

"In earlier epochs of the world(they were called)legislators or prophets", they remained such, for the clear-sighted, through the whole history of civilization, as it is shown by the role of Dante and Milton for instance, and will remain such in the present and future. On the other hand, if poetry is "connate with man", it is no less "something divine". "It is at once the center and circumference of knowledge; it is that which comprehends all science and that to which all science must be referred."² Here, knowledge and science must be understood in the Platonic sense,

1 SPP: A Defence of Poetry, p. 279.

2 Ibid, p. 293.

i.e. essentially as the apprehension of the Ideal. This is why "poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man", it "turns all things to loveliness; (...)exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful".¹ In other words, as Shelley wanted to explain in the unwritten part of his essay, the main function of the poet is "to idealize", viz. to contemplate and love the ideal truth and make it known and loved by mankind.²

3. Shelley's Poetical Achievement: Prometheus Unbound

Prometheus Unbound magnificently illustrates the same themes, by the mutual harmony of philosophical substance, dramatic development and poetic form that is the hallmark of this lyrical drama.³ In substance, the poem keeps the ideas formerly expressed from Queen Mab to The Revolt of Islam and The Mask of Anarchy, but reaches, through the re-modelling of an ancient myth and tragedy⁴, new moral depth and cosmic, metaphysical, propor-

1 SPTP: A Defence of Poetry, p. 295.

2 SPTP: A Defence of Poetry, p. 297: "Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is moved not, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

3 With chorus and songs as in the Greek tragedy.

4 SPW: PU, Preface, pp. 204-205.

tions.¹ For the subject of Prometheus Unbound is still the battle between evil and good, the opposition between a past of darkness and a future of light, and above all the fight of true justice against tyranny. But now, instead of being described through historical and political episodes, the struggle focusses on one Hero, Prometheus himself, who does not contend with human tyrants or evils but with a God, Jupiter, -symbol of universal evil. The strife of Prometheus, as conceived by Shelley, entails two major episodes which approximately correspond to Acts I and III. The first (Prometheus Bound) shows the suffering Titan who, bound to a precipice, courageously sustains the torment inflicted on his body and soul by Jupiter, the omnipotent God that Prometheus had helped in the past to gain supremacy over all the world. When he describes these sufferings, Shelley closely follows the Greek

1 E.R. Wasseman has studied particularly the metaphysical side of Prometheus Unbound and to a great extent we agree with the ideas developed (in "Shelley's Prometheus Unbound", Chapters I, "Being", and II, "Myth") on Shelley's philosophy, even though his method seems to us somewhat questionable (cf. pp. 1-7). However, because Wasseman wants to reconstruct the philosophy contained in Prometheus Unbound, he neglects too much the poetical and dramatic aspects of the poem. This is probably the reason why all the major characters are finally transformed into abstract ideas (for instance, Prometheus becomes the "One Mind", Jupiter, "only a dark shadow of Prometheus himself", Asia, "generative love" the "ideal state of the One Mind", and Demogorgon "infinite potentiality" so that: "the only real and autonomously existing actors in Shelley's cosmic design are the One Mind and the indifferent law of Necessity." (p. 112) Our point of view is closer to Baker who also emphasizes the concept of Necessity-, but does not pay less attention to the dramatic value of the poem. Moreover for Baker and for us, Prometheus remains the symbol of mankind and of "the human mind seen in its universal aspect". (Baker, C., Shelley's Major Poetry, Ch. 4: "The Heart of Cosmos", p. 112)

tradition as narrated and dramatized by AEschylus. He also extols, as his Greek model¹, the indomitable virtue of the hero who does not yield to the torturing Furies nor to the supplicating Mercury. However atrocious pain and toil may be, Prometheus will not join the worshippers of Jupiter because worship of omnipotent power is slavery:

Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
... ..
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: ...
... ..
I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

(I, 395-397, 401-402, 426-427)

But even in this first episode, there are important additions and emphases made by the romantic poet: Prometheus has become not only the benefactor and protector of mankind but its Head, as a kind of new Christ, viz. such as Shelley conceived Him.² It is the reason why the tormented Titan is afflicted by not only the torture of his body, but also by the miseries that his curse³ brought upon his fellow-men and all creatures. Moreover Shelley wants to insinuate

1 We refer to AEschylus' Prometheus Bound, (Eschyle Théâtre Complet, Trad. notices et notes par E. Chambry, Garnier-Flammarion, 1964, 247p., Pro-méthée Enchaîné, p. 125: "Il n'arrivera pas à faire mourir le dieu que j'en suis."

2 Cf. Ch., I, section "Religion and Philosophy", pp.18-23.

3 SPW: PU, I, 276-279, p. 214: "Let thy malignant spirit move / In darkness over those I love: / On me and mine I imprecate / The utmost torture of thy hate; ..."

the idea that violence mars heroism if mixed with it. Whatever courage was included in the famous challenge to Jupiter, the curse uttered by Prometheus remained a curse, i.e. an evil deed. This judgment is brought about in the tender representations and recallings made by Mother Earth to her son. Since the curse, for

Thrice three hundred thousand years

(I, 74)

all the elements of nature and men have felt the hard dominion of Jupiter and

The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'
... ..
... .. Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.

(I, 107-111, 213-214)

Therefore the elements and Earth have preserved, as "a treasured spell", "those dreadful words" "In secret joy and hope", because it is an old tradition that if someone recalls the words to Prometheus and allows him to reject them, the world will be reconciled with the offended god and live again in happiness. Prometheus does not want a reconciliation, meaning for him slavery, but he already recants his words because his intimate consciousness has changed:

... .., for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. ...
... ..
... I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within; ...

(I, 57-59, 70-71)

and he desires to hear the bitter sentences in order to overcome their evil effect:

It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;
Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

(I, 303-305)

Here Shelley underlines, once more, that the repudiation of violence is as necessary as courage to win moral victory over tyrannic omnipotence.¹ The second episode (Prometheus Unbound), Act III, portrays Jupiter's fall and Prometheus' liberation, leading to the birth of a new world. The dramatic part - strictly speaking - is still shorter in this act than in Act I. All the action takes place in scenes I, II and the first lines of scene III, where Jupiter (sc.I) is dethroned by the enigmatic figure of his son Demogorgon.² Apollo (sc.II) appears to narrate the event and foreshadows the coming of a "young spirit" over the world, before Hercules in the first four

1 In TC, Beatrice ceased to be just the moment she used revenge to appease her sufferings. The evolution of Prometheus is contrary to Beatrice, he passed from hatred to love.

2 Several critics debate on this character, whether he represents "destiny", "power", "imagination", "master of fates", the "amoral law of Necessity". The most extensive and deepest study is that of Wassenman who states in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, in three chapters, pp. 111-218, that Demogorgon is "in brief, infinite potentiality, needing only to be roused in order to release his force into the realm of being as a chain of events." (p. 133) It is difficult to follow the critic in his detailed and somewhat artificial analysis. But, even if Wassenman is correct in his interpretation, the result seems disturbing: Demogorgon tends to have the central place within the play instead of Prometheus, and the character of Asia which is so important to us, becomes secondary or at least a simple instrument of Demogorgon in the play (i.e. episodes on Fauns, Panthea's dreams, pp. 116-128). This does not seem compatible with the economy of the play, as this economy appears to the reader.

lines of scene III delivers Prometheus. The remainder of the act, scenes III and IV, although much longer, is filled with lyrical dialogues between Prometheus, the Spirit of the Hour¹, the Earth and other characters who celebrate the common liberation of the Titan, mankind and the universe. This episode as a whole illustrates the new version that Shelley intended to give to the old myth.² Contrary to AEschylus' Prometheus unbound, Shelley's Prometheus did not obtain freedom as a reward for submission to Jupiter but through a double victory over the God: the one that is the mysterious work of time and of "the abysm" of Being³, the other that is the moral victory of the just Titan over the powerful but unjust God first announced by the Earth,

Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,
Being wise and kind;

(I, 143-145)

then proclaimed by Hercules at the very moment of the deliverance,

Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.(.)

(III, 1-4)

1 Its role is described in Act III, sc.iii, 64-68, 76-83, p. 247; sc.iv, 98-204, pp. 251-253.

2 SPW: PU, Preface, p. 205: "The Prometheus Unbound of AEschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim(...)and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules.(...)But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind."(Shelley's italics)

3 Is he Demogorgon? Cf. Act II, iv, 114-116, p. 238: "If the abysm / Could vomit forth its secrets...But a voice / Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;..." Wasseman and Baker say yes.

finally praised in Act IV by the Spirits and Demogorgon himself:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
 To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

(IV, 570-578)

This original version corresponds to Shelley's moral and metaphysical conceptions: Prometheus is the symbol of a creature able to justify himself by himself, without the help of any omnipotent God, but through the understanding and love of eternal ideas which enlighten and enliven the universe.¹ On the one hand,

1 E.R. Wasserman at some length states a thesis which seems at first sight paradoxical and rather remote from ours, when he says on p. 31: "The essential subject of Prometheus Unbound is the One Mind; the extra-mental actuating power is the source of its events; and the drama is the history of the One Mind's evolution into perfection." Although this interpretation relies too much on a somewhat fragile hypothetical reconstruction (cf. pp. 30, 195-197) it has the merit of emphasizing the cosmic meaning of Prometheus as a symbolical character. Truly, Prometheus is more than an ordinary man, perhaps more than real mankind itself. As Baker says, Prometheus is at least "the mind of mankind", and with Shelley's words, he continues, "impelled by the purest and truest of motives to the best and noblest ends". (Shelley's Major Poetry, p. 92) And it can be conceded, that Prometheus is such because he is a participation or an expression of a supreme power or "One Mind". But identifying Prometheus as being the One Mind is another matter, entailing many difficulties, as it appears in the "several qualifications" (pp. 195-197) that Wasserman is forced to add to his thesis in the last chapter of his work. Therefore, it seems to us more reasonable to remain closer to the traditional and literal interpretation of Prometheus Unbound which sees essentially in the Titan the mythic Champion of mankind. Mary Shelley, Rossetti, Symons, Salt, Solve, Baker, Cameron, Reiman, Guinn, McNiece and many others are in substantial agreement that Prometheus represents the human mind". (Baker, p. 112) For a sharp criticism of Wasserman's interpretation, see also Charles E. Robinson's Shelley and Byron, The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, Baltimore & London, 1976, 291p. "Appendix B, Shelley's "One Mind", pp. 245-248: "Shelley nowhere, not even in On Life, denies the real existence of other human minds and nowhere subsumes individual minds into a universal One Mind." p. 245.

he differs from Satan because, in addition to these virtues, he is "exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement."¹ But above all Prometheus is the head and saviour of a new mankind, "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and truest motives to the best and noblest ends."² Everyone knows the extraordinary success of the Shelleyan re-interpretation and transformation of the myth: the new Prometheus has become, for many 19th century thinkers, -Marx³ in the first place, Nietzsche and Shaw afterwards, -the symbolic figure of the man to come, man liberated by himself and first freed from any worship of omnipotent Power, the atheistic version and at the same time the challenger of the Evangelic Christ.

Another central feature must be emphasized insofar as it constitutes a strong argument in support of this thesis. Between the two episodes just analyzed, Acts I and III, is set Act II, of which we have still to speak, and which also plays a major role.

1 SPW: PU, Preface, p. 205.

2 Ibid, p. 205. D. Reiman writes in Percy Bysshe Shelley that "what is important is that Prometheus, by choosing to take no vengeance against the old order, keeps himself from becoming another Jupiter(...)Prometheus' decision to turn from self-centered hatred to outgoing love marks the moment in human history that breaks the old meaningless cycle of oppression and retribution - "the despot's rage, the slave's revenge" - and introduces a new order based on forgiveness and equality."(Ch. 5, "Roman Scenes", p. 82)

3 Marx, K. "Man is his own Prometheus". "Prométhée est le premier saint, le premier martyr du calendrier philosophique. La philosophie est Prométhéenne". (Oeuvres Choisies, I, Idées, Gallimard, N. Guterman & H. Lefevre, 1963, 367p., pp. 19-20.)

At first sight this act, -where Prometheus does not appear and the characters of Asia his wife and her sister Panthea take the leading part, -seems a lyrical intermezzo. In fact, it is! Even the dialogues, for instance in scene I between Asia and Panthea in the lovely vale of the Indian Caucasus, resemble alternate songs with their long lyrical periods and apostrophes, the blooming of metaphors, images and comparisons, above all the emotional tone and music. The keynote of the whole act is given at the very beginning when Asia speaks alone while awaiting news of Prometheus from Panthea:

From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!
O child of many winds! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.
This is the season, this the day, the hour;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come!
... ..
The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not
The AEolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn?

(II, i, 1-15, 25-27)

What follows has the same poetical ring, if not more, particularly the dialogue with the Echoes filling the remainder of the scene, the semi-chorus and songs of spirits in scenes II and III, and finally the songs of Apollonian spirits and Asia herself in scene V, with

the famous lines:

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses!

(II, v, 72-81)

It would require very little change to draw from these scenes magnificent independent poems, worthy indeed of the Odes. They share the same poetical quality, with this ethereal nuance and atmosphere proper to "Ariel"¹, and have a similar inspiration. As in the Odes, the poet opens his heart and lets it speak almost directly on the lips of his characters. By means of dreams and visions, he lyrically evokes paradisaic landscapes which are the lands of fair spirits and should be the cradle of a regenerated mankind:

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake through all the broad noonday. ...
... ..

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
... ..
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way; (.)

(II, ii, 24-25, 41-42, 44-45)

Such lyrical passages are perhaps the best illustration of what

1 Cf. Maurois, A., Ariel ou la vie de Shelley.

Shelley says about his whole creation:

The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama. 1

However, Act II is not a piece apart. First, imitating a Greek model, Shelley could naturally use this mixture of dramatic and lyrical episodes characteristic of the ancient drama. Similarly, when he binds Act II to Acts I and III by the trip of Asia and Panthea to the cave of Demogorgon, he uses a device common to epic poets namely Homer, Virgil and Dante: the descent to "Infernos" and the crossing of Elysian fields. But the link between Act II and the remainder of Prometheus Unbound is much deeper than an artificial or even usual one. For this link is absolutely essential to the economy and philosophical import of the drama.² With all the strength of his heart, Prometheus longs for the return of Asia, the sweet consolation of his soul, beside him. On her side Asia awaits in that far Indian vale, scene of a sad exile her reunion with her husband:

I see a shade, a shape: ...
... ..

1 SPW: PU, Preface, p. 205.

2 Hence, D. Reiman in "Roman Scenes", Ch. 5, p. 83, has a view similar to our own, when he sees the great value of Act II. He says, "Act II, gives a metaphysical support to the moral decision of Act I". Elsewhere in his analysis, he mentions the importance of sc. IV where "Asia provides the mythical metaphysics and history that give shape to the verse drama" (pp.77-78); and he emphasizes heavily the value of sc. V later on (p. 81) as the "keystone in the drama of Shelley". We completely agree with Reiman's judgment and further his statements by saying that the whole of Act II is extremely important.

Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!

(II, i, 120, 122-123)

Certainly the love of the Titan for his tender wife, an oceanide, strongly contributed to humanize his wild virtue and to convert his proud spirit towards a milder generosity:

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care:
Henceforth we will not part, ...

(III, iii, 7-10)

This is why, indeed, the love between Asia and Prometheus is so much celebrated, because of its redeeming value, by the Spirits of the Earth and of the Hour, after the Titan has been delivered and a new world has begun.¹ Furthermore, the personal role of Asia,-and we must not forget that this character is Shelley's invention,- is no less important. Asia, oceanide but feminine creature, is the symbol of human Beauty, moral as well as physical (from this viewpoint she greatly differs from Venus), whose soul is wholly dedicated to contemplation, worship and love of the Ideal. Such

¹ SPW: PU, III, iv, 90, p. 251: "What; as Asia loves Prometheus?"
And, III, iv, 112-114, pp. 251-252: "A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms /
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me / And you fair nymphs looking the
love we feel.-"

features¹ make her perhaps the most lovely figure in Prometheus Unbound, one of the most important and significant too.² Her beauty and love of beauty have designated her as the messenger and prophet³ of justice and happiness:

... .. whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness- ...

(II, i, 68-69)

It is to fulfill such a mission as much as to satisfy her feelings that she goes to the cave of Demogorgon, in order to know the hour of deliverance for both Prometheus and the world. And it is also because she is possessed with the understanding of a prophet that she has the privilege of explaining and praising the works and passion of Prometheus for the sake of mankind.⁴ For the same rea-

1 These features appear particularly obvious in Act II, iii, when Asia contemplates the mountain on her way to the cave of Demogorgon; for instance: 10-12, etc., p. 234: "Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent! / How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be / The shadow of some spirit lovelier still, ..."; and in the same act, sc. V, when Panthea, waiting with Asia and the Spirit of the Hour the coming of Apollo, says to her sister: "I scarce endure / The radiance of thy beauty. / Some good change / Is working in the elements, which suffer / Thy presence thus unveiled." (17-18); and when Asia worships the invisible Spirit, the God of Beauty and Light.

2 D. Reiman emphasizes, like us, the role of Asia in his analysis of Prometheus Unbound and he even goes further, saying that Shelley "while retaining his skepticism(...) suggests mythically that Asia-the universal, creative force that inspires human imagination-is also the source of natural creative energy; in other words, Asia is a kind of Platonic demiurge underlying the vital powers of the entire active universe". ("Roman Scenes", p. 85)

3 Asia plays a role similar to Cythna's.

4 SPW: PU, II, iv, 34-108, pp. 237-238.

son eventually, Demogorgon allows her to climb the chariot of the young Spirit of Hope and ascend with him and her sister toward the realm of Apollo, the God of light, order and harmony. Then Asia, inspired by her vision, sings as in a prophecy, the eternal law of love and the advent of a new world:

By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
... ..
The boat of my desire is guided:
Realms where the air we breathe is love, (.)
... ..

We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray:
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously!

(II, v, 92, 94-95, 98-110)

The union between beauty and justice could not be more vividly expressed and symbolized.¹

1 This union as accomplished in the person of Asia is celebrated by Panthea in ll. 17-20: "I scarce endure / The radiance of thy beauty. / Some good change / Is working in the elements, which suffer / Thy presence thus unveiled." And also by the "Voice in the Air" who calls Asia: "Life of Life"; "Child of Light"; "Lamp of Earth". And it is because of this union that Asia's splendour contributes to change to Good, heaven and earth, nature and men: "The whole world seeks thy sympathy".

The celebration of their unity and final triumph will be indeed the themes that dominate throughout the end of the drama, namely Act III, sc. iii, and the entire Act IV. For instance, in the prophetic hymn of scene iii, where Prometheus sings the advent of the new world, the Titan describes the fundamental law of the latter as an "embrace" of love and beauty or as a simultaneous and progressive discovery of both, -the practice of justice opening the heart to beauty, and the fine Arts ("Painting, Sculpture and rapt Poesy" as well as "arts though unimagined yet to be,) becoming "the mediators of that best worship love", so that:

... ..;swift shapes and sounds, which grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

(III, iii, 60-63)

And the Earth, the Spirit of the Earth, the Spirit of the Hour proclaim the same truth in their answers (end of scenes iii and iv). They extol in particular how the liberation of Prometheus, and the consequent justification of men have made mankind and all the world beautiful: "ugly" when unjust, men have been transformed into "mild and lovely forms", "imaged as in a sky", and celebrating "the happiest change of all". Act IV, a later addition (but a natural one to complete the drama), continues the same lyrical celebration through choruses of Spirits, followed by dialogues between Earth and Moon personified¹, the Oceanides and the new god Demogor-

1 The dialogue between Earth and Moon underlines the universal and cosmic extent of the reform.

gon, who summarizes in a few verses Shelley's intimate hope for mankind:

Thou, Earth calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:(.)

(IV, 519-522)

4. The Last Poems

The same pursuit of the two ideals and the same unity appear again in the last great poems that Shelley wrote: namely, Ode to Liberty, Ode to Naples, Hellas and The Witch of Atlas. The first three are obviously motivated by a political purpose, as their titles show. They were written to support revolutionary movements in Spain, Naples and Greece. Nevertheless one finds in these poems many allusions to moral, social and even physical beauty, either in the evocation of landscapes and cities:

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven! ...
... ..
Florence! beneath the sun,
Of cities fairest one, ...

(S. I, 51-52; A. IIB, 116-117)

or in lyrical soarings:

Spirit of Beauty! at whose soft command
The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison
... ..
... .., oh, let be
This city of thy worship ever free!(,)

(E. IIB, 155-156; 175-176)

either in the celebration of Liberty,

A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. (,)

(I, 1-5)

or in political and historical considerations as in all the stanzas of this Ode and the development of Hellas:

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning star.

(ll. 1066-1069)

Similarly in The Witch of Atlas the Witch, a symbol of beauty, spreads her magic around the world like the lady of the garden in The Sensitive Plant. But she is also concerned with the attainment of a social and moral beauty for men. At night, she passes amidst sleeping men, embellishing to a greater degree the thoughts of those that are already good and giving remorseful dreams to those who are wicked, so that they may be converted to truer sentiments.¹ Therefore, the unity between the two ideals of beauty and justice gleams as Shelley's constant theme and testament.

1 SPW: The Witch of Atlas, LX-LXXVII, pp. 384-387.

C O N C L U S I O N

CONCLUSION

THE INDIVIDUAL QUALITY OF SHELLEY'S ROMANTICISM

In order to conclude the foregoing analysis and summarize the distinctive and prominent features of Shelley as a poet, it can be said that his outstanding qualities are the openness, variety and wealth of his mind. Openness, because he was interested in the great political problems of his time, the main philosophical questions and almost all the sides of European civilization, literary, artistic, social, moral, religious. Variety, in spite of a strong constancy in themes and some repetition or even monotony in his expression, because his Prose Works deal with many different subjects in metaphysics, morals, politics and aesthetics, while his Poetical Works comprise all these themes in an original way and pertain to almost every genre of poetry, descriptive, lyrical, narrative, dramatic, and satiric. The wealth of his genius is no less striking, either in the wonderful broadness of his culture, or in the flow, which seems so spontaneous, of images, metaphors, symbols and music. Moreover, what is astonishing about the strength of this genius is that it continues to diffuse today, as it did for its contemporaries, rays of light and fervour for the Ideal. In brief, Shelley seems to have achieved in his being and works the goal which he assigned to the poet in

his Defence of Poetry: a unity between philosophy, poetry and life.

In many respects, Shelley wholly belongs to the Romantic Movement. He shares with the Romantics, in particular with Wordsworth and Coleridge, their claim for a renewal in poetry, their faith in the human role of the poet and their taste for modernity. But this creed takes in Shelley's mind a more universal dimension because, like Godwin and the Encyclopedists, the primary sources of his philosophy, he believed in the various forms of progress, scientific, social and moral. As the other Romantics from Wordsworth to Keats, he cultivated the prevalence of sensibility and imagination over logical reason, at least in creative activities, and he had this perception of Nature which was so different from the Augustans'. No less romantic are his dislike for the mediocrity of everyday life, his pessimistic view of present society which he finds unjust, unorganized if not evil, his aversion for the rich and the powerful, and even some "morbid feeling"¹ about social life. This mood led him to seek solitude as his allegorical *Alastor*, and to feed his imagination with dreams and idealistic thoughts.²

However, there is an uniqueness in Shelley's Romanticism:

1 SPW: Note to the Witch of Atlas, by Mrs. Shelley: "I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched."

2 *Ibid*, p. 389.

it is a very speculative romanticism. As a man, as a genius, he is certainly in a very high degree an emotional, sensitive and imaginative being. But more than that perhaps his is an intellect which enjoys thinking on philosophical ideas. Ideas are for him something truer and, as it were, more real than the sensible world. This is why his romanticism is so deeply and naturally mixed with Platonism. Hence the subject of this thesis. His inspiration, although often occasioned by observation, experience and emotion, takes almost always its source above the material world, namely in an Ideal which is both justice and beauty. In this regard, Shelley inaugurates a trend of Romanticism very different from Byron's i.e. directed toward the reform of mankind; in a word, a romanticism that turns the emotional and imaginative powers of man upward rather than downward, therefore prefers light, hope and beauty to darkness and melancholy.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

FIRST EDITIONS OF SHELLEY'S WORKS*

Lines Addressed to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on his being appointed Regent, by Philopatria Jun (pseud.) (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1811. (This copy, an exceedingly rare piece, is a photostat facsimile reproduced from the copy in the H.E. Huntington Library.)

The Necessity of Atheism by Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Reprint of the original edition produced in 1811. Ed. by T.J. Wise and Percy Vaughan. Issued for the Rationalist Press Ass. Ltd. by arrangement with the Shelley Society. London: Watts & Co. 1906.

Queen Mab; a Philosophical Poem: with notes by Percy Bysshe Shelley. London: printed by P.B. Shelley, 1813.

Alastor: or the Spirit of Solitude: and other poems by Percy Bysshe Shelley. A facsimile reprint of the original edition, first published in 1816. London: 1885: Reeves and Turner.

History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland: with letters descriptive of a sail around the Lake Geneva and of the glaciers of Chamouni. London: Hookham and C. and J. Ollier, 1817.

The Revolt of Islam; a Poem in Twelve Cantos by Percy Bysshe Shelley. London: for C. and J. Ollier, 1818.

The Cenci. A Tragedy, in Five Acts by Percy Bysshe Shelley. Italy: Printed for C. and J. Ollier, London, 1819.

Epipsychidion, a Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, London: Selwyn and Blount, 1821.

Hellas, a lyrical drama by Percy Bysshe Shelley, London: C. and J. Ollier, 1822.

Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by Mrs. Shelley. London: John and Henry L. Hunt, 1824.

* Collection of Rare Books: Archives of Bancroft Library, University of Berkeley, California.

The Masque of Anarchy, A Poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, now first published, with a Preface by Leigh Hunt, London: Edward Moxon, 1832.*

The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Ed. by Mrs. Shelley, 4 vols. London: Edward Moxon, 1839.*

Relics of Shelley. Ed. by Richard Garnett, London: Edward Moxon, 1862.*

A Philosophical View of Reform, Now Printed for the first time. Together with an introd. & appendix by T.W. Rolleston, Humphrey Milford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920.*

CRITICAL EDITIONS

CLARK, D.L., ed. Shelley's Prose or the Trumpet of a Prophecy, ed. by D.L. Clark with an introd. and notes, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966.

HUTCHINSON, T., ed. Shelley Poetical Works, ed. by T. Hutchinson, A New edition, corrected by G.M. Matthews, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

INGPEN, R. and W.E. Peck, eds. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. 10 vols. London: Ernest Benn, 1926-1930.

ROGERS, N., ed. The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by N. Rogers, in 4 vols. Vols. I & II. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

ROSSETTI, W.M., ed. The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, 2 vols. London: Edward Moxon, 1870.*

PRIMARY BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

BIAGI, G., The Last Days of Percy Bysshe Shelley, New details from unpublished documents. London: T. Fisher Unwin: 1898.*

BYRON, N. Lord, Lord Byron Selected Prose, ed. with notes and biographical details, by P. Gunn, London: Penguin Bks, 1972.

CLAIRMONT, M.J.C., The Journals of Claire Clairmont, ed. by Marion Kingston Stocking. Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1968.

HOGG, T.J., Shelley at Oxford, with an introd. by R.H. Streatfeild, London: Methuen & Co. 1904. *

The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London: Edward Moxon, in 4 vols. Two vols. 1858.*

HUNT, L., The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries, 2 vols. London: Smith Elder Co. 1850. *

MEDWIN, T., The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London: Thomas Cantley Newby, 2 vols. in one cover, 1847. *

The Shelley Papers: Memoir of Percy Bysshe Shelley, by T. Medwin, Esq., and Original Poems and Papers by Percy Bysshe Shelley: Now first collected. London: Whittaker, Treacher and Co. 1833. *

PEACOCK, T.L., The Works of T.L. Peacock, The Halliford edition of the Works of T.L. Peacock, ed. by H.F.B. Brett-Smith and C.E. Jones, New York: AMS Press Inc., 10 vols. 1967. (Vol. VIII, Essays, Memoirs and Letters and Unfinished Novels: The Four Ages of Poetry.)

SHELLEY, P.B., The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by F.L. Jones, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Shelley and Mary, Vols. I and II, London: Printed for Private Circulation only at the Chiswick Press, 1882. (Only 12 copies of Shelley and Mary were printed in 1882, comprising all the published poems, letters, diaries in the hands of the Shelley family.) (It was their son, Sir P. Florence Shelley who wished to have these documents published.) *

TRELAWNY, J.E., Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author, the Penguin English Library, ed. with an introd. by D.W. Wright, London: Penguin Bks, 1973.

Letters of Edward John Trelawny, edited with a brief introduction and notes by H. Buxton Forman and C.B. Henry Frowde, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910. *

WILLIAMS, E.E., Journal of Edward Ellerker Williams, Companion of Shelley and Byron in 1821 and 1822, with an introd. by R. Garnett, London: Elkin Mathews, 1902. *

SECONDARY SOURCES

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL

BAKER, C., Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of a Vision. Princeton: Princeton University Press, paperback edition, 1973.

BARRELL, J., Shelley and the Thought of his Time, A study in the History of Ideas, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947.

BLUNDEN, E., Shelley: A Life Story, London: Collins, 1946.

BRAILSFORD, H.N., Shelley, Godwin and their Circle, London: Thorton, Butterworth, 1930.

BUTTER, P., Shelley's Idols of the Cave, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1954.

CAMERON, K.N., The Young Shelley, Genesis of a Radical, New York: Collier Bks, 1962.

_____, Romantic Rebels, Essays on Shelley and His Circle, Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 1973.

_____, Shelley: The Golden Years, Cambridge, Mass., : Harvard University Press, 1974.

CAREY, G., Shelley, Literature in Perspective, London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1975.

CURRAN, S., Shelley's Cenci, Scorpions Ringed with Fire, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

_____, Shelley's Annus Mirabilis, The Maturing of an Epic Vision, San Marino, Calif.,: Huntington Library, 1975.

DUERKSEN, R.A., Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature, The Hague: Mouton, 1966.

_____, Shelley Political Writings, including a Defence of Poetry, New York: Miami University, Appleton Century-Craft, 1970.

GRABO, C., A Newton among Poets, Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound, by C. Grabo, New York: University of Chicago, Cooper Square Publishers Inc. 1968.

HOLMES, R., Shelley, the Pursuit, London: Weidenfeld Nicholson, 1974.

HUGUES, A.M.D., Shelley Poetry and Prose with Essays by Browning, Bagehot, Swinburne and Reminiscences by Others, with an introd. and notes by A.M.D. Hughes, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973.

_____, The Nascent Mind of Shelley, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

LA CASSAGNERE, C., La mystique du Prométhée Unbound, essai d'interprétation, Situation No 27, Lettres Modernes, Paris, Minard, 1970.

MARSHALL, J., The Life and Letters of Mary W. Shelley, by Mrs. J. Marshall in 2 vols. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd. Publishers of Scarce Scholarly Bks, 1970.

MAUROIS, A., Ariel ou la vie de Shelley, roman. Paris: J. Ferenczi et fils, ed., le livre moderne illustré, 1929.

McNIECE, G., Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea, Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1969.

MURPHY, G., The Dark Angel: Gothic Elements in Shelley's Works, London: Lewisburgh Bucknell Press, AUP, 1975.

NORMAN, S., Flight of the Skylark, The Development of Shelley's Reputation, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.

NOTOPOULOS, J.A., The Platonism of Shelley: A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind. Durham: 1949.

O'MALLEY, G., Shelley and Synesthesia, Nebraska: Northwestern University, 1969.

PERRIN, J., Les structures de l'imaginaire Shelleyen, Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1973.

POWER, J., Shelley in America in the Nineteenth Century, His Relation to American Critical Thought, and his Influence. New York: Gordian Press, 1969.

RIEGER, J., The Mutiny Within; The Heresies of Percy Bysshe Shelley, New York: George Braziller, 1967.

REIMAN, D.H., Percy Bysshe Shelley, by Donald H. Reiman, The Carl H. Pforzheimer Library, New York: St Martin's Press, 1969.

REITER, S., A Study of Shelley's Poetry, by S. Reiter, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 1967.

ROBINSON, E.C., Shelley and Byron The Snake and Eagle Wreathed in Fight, by C.E. Robinson, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

ROSSETTI, W.M., A Memoir of Shelley with a fresh preface, London: Printed for the Shelley Society by Richard Clay & Sons, 1886, 1st ed., 2nd ed., New York: AMS Press Inc. 1971.

_____ A Study of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, A Study of its Meaning and Personages. London: Printed for Private Circulation MDCCCLXXXVI. *

ROSSETTI, L.M. (Brown), Mrs Shelley, London: Allen, 1890.

SALT, H.S., Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet and Pioneer, New York: Kennikat Press Inc. Reprint of 1887, 1968.

_____ A Shelley Primer, New York: Kennikat Press Inc. Reprint of 1887, 1968.

SCHULZE, E.J., Shelley's Theory of Poetry, A Reappraisal, by E.J. Schulze, The Hague: Mouton & Co. 1966.

SMITH, G.B., Shelley a Critical Biography, by G.B. Smith, New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., Publishers of Scarce Scholarly Bks, 1974.

WALKING, W.A., Mary Shelley, New York: Rutgers State University, Twayne Publishers Inc. 1972.

WASSERMAN, R.E., Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, A Critical Reading by E.R. Wasserman, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965.

_____, Shelley: A Critical Reading, by E.R. Wasserman, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.

WHITE, N.I., Portrait of Shelley, New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1945.

WOODMAN, R., The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Studies and Text, no 12, 1964.

HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

BURKE, E., Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event, ed. with an introd. by C.C. O'Brien, London: Penguin Bks, 1970.

COUVRAI, Louvet de, J.-B., Mémoire de Louvet de Couvrai sur la Révolution française, 1ère éd. complète avec préface, notes et tables par F.A. Aulard, Paris: librairie des Bibliothèques, 1889. (rare book at Ottawa University)

D'HOLBACH, P.-H., baron, Système de la Nature, ou des lois du monde physique et du monde moral. Nouv. éd. avec des notes et des corrections, par Diderot, éd. avec une introduction par Yvon Belaval, Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1966.

_____, D'Holbach, Textes Choisis, Tome I, Le Christianisme Dévoilé, La Contagion Sacrée, Histoire Critique de Jésus-Christ, préface, commentaire et notes par P. Charbonnel, Paris: Editions Sociales, 1957.

GODWIN, W., Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, with selections from Godwin's Other Writings. Abridged and edited by K. C. Carter, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

HUME, D., A Treatise on Human Nature, in 2 vols. Introd. by A.P. Lindsay, London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1974.

_____, The Essential Hume, ed. with an introd. by R.P. Wolff, New York: The New American Library, 1969.

Hendel, _____, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. by C.W. Hendel, New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, the Books-Merill Co. Ltd. 1955.

LOCKE, J., An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, in 2 vols. ed. with an introd. by J. W. Yolton, London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1972.

MALTHUS, T.R., An Essay on the Principle of Population and a Summary View of the Principle of Population, ed. with an introd. by A.Flew, London: Penguin Bks, 1970.

PAINE, T., The Rights of Man, ed. with an introd. by H. Collins, London: Penguin Bks, 1969.

_____, Common Sense and The Crisis, New York: Anchor Bks, Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973.

PLUMB, J.H., England in the Eighteen Century. No 7, Pelican History, London: Penguin Bks, 1972.

RUDE, G., Paris and London in the 18th Century, Studies in Popular Protests, London: Fontana / Collins, 1974

_____, Revolutionary Europe, 1783-1815, G. Rude, London: Fontana / Collins, 1971.

SPINOZA, B. de, The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, a Theologico-Political Treatise and a Political Treatise, tr. from Latin with introd. by R. H.M. Elves, with a bibliographical note by F. Cordasco, New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1951.

TALMON, J.L., Romanticism and Revolt, Europe 1815-1848, London: Thames and Hudson, 1967.

VOLTAIRE, Lettres Philosophiques ou lettres Anglaises, avec le texte complet des remarques sur les Pensées de Pascal, introd. et notes par R. Naves, Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1939.

_____, Dictionnaire Philosophique, avec introd. variantes et notes par J. Benda, texte établi par R. Naves, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 1954.

_____, Le Siècle de Louis XIV, introd. par E. Bourgeois, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1893.

ARTICLES, NOTES & NEWS, REVIEWS *

BEAN, C.J., "The Poet Borne Darkly: The Dream-Voyage Allegory in Shelley's Alastor", KSJ: Vol. XXIII, 1974, pp. 60-76.

BENNETT, R.J., "Prometheus Unbound, Act I, The play's the thing", KSJ: Vol. XXIII, 1974, pp. 32-51.

CAMERON, K.N., "Shelley Scholarship: 1940-1953 A Critical Survey.", KSJ: Vol. III, 1954, pp. 89-109.

_____, Shelley: The Golden Years, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974, KSJ: Vol. XXV, 1976, Reviewed by W.R. Campbell, pp. 151-161.

CAMPBELL, R.W., "Shelley's Concept of Conscience", KSJ: Vol. XIX, 1970, pp. 49-62.

_____, "Shelley's Philosophy of History: A Reconsideration", KSJ: Vol. XXI-XXII, Double Issue, 1972, pp. 43-63.

CHEWNING, H., "William Michael Rossetti and the Shelley Renaissance", KSJ: Vol. IV, 1955, pp. 81-96.

CRONIN, R., "Shelley's Witch of Atlas", KSJ: Vol. XXVI, 1977, pp. 88-100.

CURRAN, S., Shelley's Annus Mirabilis: The Maturing of an Epic Vision, San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, 1975, KSJ: Vol. XXVI, 1977, Reviewed by D.H. Reiman, pp. 117-120.

DONOGHUE, W.J., "Shelley's Beatrice and the Romantic Concept of Tragic Character", KSJ: Vol. XVII, 1968, pp. 53-73.

HALLIBURTON, G.D., "Shelley's 'Gothic' Novels", KSJ: Vol. XVI, 1967, pp. 39-49.

HOLMES, R., Shelley: The Pursuit, New York: E.D. Dutton & Co. 1975, KSJ: Vol. XXV, 1976, Reviewed by K.N. Cameron, pp. 162-169.

HURT, R.J., "Prometheus Unbound and Aeschylean Dramaturgy", KSJ: Vol. XV, 1966, pp. 43-48.

JONES, F.L., "Canto I of The Revolt of Islam", KSJ: Vol. IX, 1960, pp. 27-33.

MURRAY, B.E., "Mont Blanc's Unfurled Veil", KSJ: Vol. XVIII, 1969, pp. 39-48.

* The Keats-Shelley Journal, published by the Keats-Shelley Association of America, Inc. (KSJ)

POLLIN, R.B., " Godwin's Memoirs as a Source of Shelley's Phrase 'Intellectual Beauty' ", KSJ: Vol. XXIII, 1974, News and Notes, pp. 14-20.

REIMAN, D.H., " Shelley in the Encyclopedias ", KSJ: Vol. XII, 1963, pp. 55-66.

_____, Shelley's Triumph of Life: A Critical Study on a Text Newly Edited from the Bodleian Manuscript, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1965, KSJ: Vol. XV, 1966, Reviewed by James Rieger, pp. 128-136.

ROBINSON, E.C., Shelley and Byron: The Snake and the Eagle Wreathed in Fight, Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, KSJ: Vol. XXVI, 1977, Reviewed by Stuart Curran, pp. 114-117.

ROGERS, N., The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by N. Rogers. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Vol. I, 1972, Vol. II, 1975, KSJ: Vol. XXV, 1976, Reviewed by E.B. Murray, pp. 149-162.

SMITH, P., " Restless Casuistry: Shelley's Composition of The Cenci ", KSJ: Vol. XIII, 1964, pp. 77-86.

THURSTON, N., " Shelley and the Duty of Hope ", KSJ: Vol. XXVI, 1977, pp. 22-28.

VIVIAN, H.C., " The One Mont Blanc ", KSJ: Vol. IV, 1955, pp. 55-65.

WASSERMAN, R.E., Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Critical Reading, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965, KSJ: Vol. XVI, Reviewed by D.H. Reiman, pp. 99-102.

_____, Shelley: A Critical Reading, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971, KSJ: Vol. XXI-XXII, 1972, Reviewed by Ross G. Woodman, pp. 99-102.