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SHELLEY'S LANGUAGE AND THE LANGUAGE OF REFORM

The University of Oklahoma

PH.D.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

SHELLEY'S LANGUAGE
AND THE
LANGUAGE OF REFORM

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
EDWARD CARL NOLTE
Norman, Oklahoma
1979

**SHELLEY'S LANGUAGE
AND THE
LANGUAGE OF REFORM**

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SHELLEY'S LANGUAGE AND THE LANGUAGE OF REFORM

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Shelley's poetry has been condemned and praised to extremes since the emergence of the New Criticism in the post-World War I era. At the heart of this controversy is Shelley's language which abridges the Augustan coordinates of claritas.

Shelley's conception of language rests upon a view which holds that language has no fixed ontological basis, but rather that language is linked to the world by its power to shape human behavior. This vaticinatory conception of poetic language finds its expression in the innovative similitudes and metaphors of Shelley's lyrics.

These "before unapprehended relationships," as Shelley called them, are created to restore the audience's sovereignty to the act of knowing the world and hence enable it to recover the universe from the preformulated symbolic complex of the Augustans. Instrumental in this poetic-alchemic process is Shelley's deliberate use of endearing lyrical forms, such as the Spenserian stanza, dramatic blank verse, and the canzone.

In turn, these forms seek to enchant and overcome his audience's sense of disbelief at the newly created perception of the universe. Thus, Shelley's aesthetic of poetry seeks to catalyze the recovery, and hence rediscovery, of the universe, and to lead his audience to the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. In time, this triad of virtues will become the causative agents of the social and political reform of the world.

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Introduction

Since the emergence of New Criticism in the post-World War I era, the question of Shelley's place among the major English poets has received serious evaluation. These judgments have spanned the entire critical spectrum, damning and praising Shelley's poetry to extremes. To a considerable degree, this wide divergence of views about Shelley's poetry exists because of differing concepts about the nature of poetic language, a divergence that has its antecedents in the Platonist-rationalist controversy of the eighteenth century.

This controversy over the nature of language has continued into contemporary times, but no one theoretical approach has gained widespread acceptance among scholars. However, this absence of a widely accepted theory of language has not diminished the intense scholarly interest in Shelley's language nor has it resolved the question of his position among English poets. In fact, little of this criticism has shed light on the central unresolved problem of Shelleyean scholarship: what is the nature of Shelley's language.

Confounding this issue, as this study will illustrate, is the fact that Shelley's own theory of language is problematic. Throughout his prose writings, he posits the view that poetic language has no ontological basis. Poetic language, he insists, is a medium of expression which the poet must

shape in response to the occasion which prompts it and toward the form which emerges from this response. An extension of Shelley's precept is that language itself is the discoverer of being and the process by which the poet formulates ontologies. These ontologies, lyrically arranged, are probes into the nature of reality which reveal the epistemological, psychological, and moral truths of the universe. These truths recover the world from the familiar modalities of perception and liberate the reader from the pedestrian insights of the universe which ordinary language fashions.

For Shelley, these heretofore undiscovered relationships in the universe which language reveals come to be known by a metaphorical process. However, the metaphorical representation which Shelley urges on us is complex, diverse, and at times labyrinthine. These diversities and complexities occur in Shelley's poetry because his metaphorical representation has its analogical basis in the matrix of the pre-Copernican universe. In contrast to the poets and belletrists of early Hanoverian England, who possessed an aesthetic of poetry which emphasized the harmonious relationships of a diverse universe, Shelley's aesthetic is a symbolic complex freed from this preformulated verbal package. But his aesthetic of poetry--to free language from its traditional moorings--demands of its audience a Coleridgean act of faith, "the willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."

However, to break or suspend old language links while simultaneously forging new ones has been the major obstacle for some readers and impossible for many. But for Shelley, the adoption of his literary credo would then enable his audience to discard moribund language and the social values inherent in it, and hence prepare themselves for his ultimate goal: the reform of the world. In such an aesthetic, poets would, in fact, become the "unacknowledged legislators of the world" and their poetry the means of this reform.

CHAPTER I -- APPROACH

Hamlet: . . . suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that o'er-step not the modesty of nature: for any thing overdone is from the playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as t'were the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

First

Player: I hope we have reformed that indifferently with us, sir.

Hamlet: O, reform it altogether.

It may seem out of place to begin a study of Shelley with a quotation from Hamlet, but the subject of reform--the reform of drama and its nexus to the reform of the world--is at the very heart of this study. At first glance, the topic seems a far-fetched one, suggesting an implausible relationship between art and society. But a closer scrutiny of Shelley's dramatic poetry and the ideal civilization he sets forth in his verse dramas suggests such a link. For as Shelley states in his Defence of Poetry,

the drama being that form under which a greater number of modes of expression are susceptible of being combined than any other, the connexion of poetry and social good is more observable in drama than in whatever other form.¹

¹Ellsworth Barnard, ed. Shelley: Selected Poems, Essays and Letters, (New York: Odyssey Press, 1944), p. 546; all subsequent references to the Defence are to this edition. The italics are mine.

But this utilization of drama as a force for social regeneration rests on another aspect of reform: the reform of poetic language and its formal literary arrangement. Thus, as Shelley argues earlier in the Defence,

If no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations of language which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse.²

The sources and models of this reform in poetic language are the "ancient English poets, [Shakespeare and Milton] a study of whom might incite us to do that for our age which they have done for theirs."³

The thrust of Shelley's argument in his prefaces and the organizing principle in his verse dramas is that moribund language is the source of the ritual bondage which prevents social regeneration. In turn, the remedy is a poetic language revitalized and purified,⁴ so as to

²Defence, p. 532.

³Thomas Hutchinson, ed. Shelley: Poetical Works, 2nd ed., rev. G. M. Matthews, (London: Oxford, 1969), p. 278; hereinafter cited as Poetry, followed by pagination. In this preface, Shelley echoes Wordsworth in insisting that the language of poetry "must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong" (p. 278), but his style follows Milton and Shakespeare, apparently because their poetry is better suited to the "nobler purposes of human intercourse" (p. 278). Shelley's reform of language is more fully treated in Chapter III.

⁴Pure in the sense that the narrator of Hawthorne's "Earth's Holocaust" describes Shelley's poetry: "Speaking of the properties of flames, methought Shelley's poetry emitted a purer light than almost any other productions of

become the suitable medium of social reform. Yet all these aspects of reform really stem from the same concern in Shelley: a consciousness that the culture of his own time was in opposition to Nature itself.

This opposition between culture and Nature existed in the disparity between the actual state of political and social affairs in late Georgian and Regency England, and an ideal civilization organized on the agency of love as set forth in Shelley's poetry. To Shelley, such a civilization would be coterminous with Nature, and in it men would be free from ecclesiastical oppression and tyranny, and social justice would be the order of the day. Though the configuration of Shelley's world would resemble the archetype of the Garden of Eden, it would be different in that "idealisms of moral excellence"⁵ would lead men from innocence to a knowledge of good and evil. Thus, in Shelley's view, mankind would not exist as Adam had in a state of subservient innocence. Indeed, for Shelley, this kind of subservient innocence had led the first man to self-deception, forced him into ecclesiastical and political bondage, and deprived him of liberty, justice, and freedom.

Shelley's consciousness of his culture's opposition to his day, contrasting beautifully with the fitful and lurid gleams and gushes of black vapor that flashed and eddied from the volumes of Lord Byron" (Hyatt H. Waggoner, ed. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Tales and Sketches, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964, p. 366).

⁵Preface to Prometheus Unbound, Poetry, p. 207.

Nature occurs as an acute awareness that the waning Augustan social order was unable and unwilling to cope with the two most pressing social priorities of his day: the Napoleonic Wars and the techno-political impact of the Industrial Revolution. The latter of these especially affected the consciousness of Shelley and became for him the clearest example of England's cultural degeneracy. Owing to Parliament's preoccupation with the French Revolution, the growing political and social inequities brought on by the Industrial Revolution between 1790-1815 remained largely unsolved. Because of England's aggression abroad, many political and social leaders considered it unpatriotic to question the continued delay of reform, and both Crown and Parliament equated dissent with treason and reform with revolution. To Shelley, Parliament's reluctance to enact legislation correcting the social ills and political inequities was intolerable and unconscionable.

Parliament had refused to act because the premises of Augustan culture assumed that institutional continuity from generation to generation was the keystone for social stability and the best bulwark against domestic insurrection. But during the wars with France, the Hanoverians and their parliamentary supporters had used these two premises of social order to stifle the reform movement at home. They maintained that Parliament had no responsibility to interfere or disturb this institutional continuity. Furthermore, they

viewed such agitation for reform as the work of Jacobins, bent on destroying the "peace of the Augustans." Hence, Parliament enacted no social legislation⁶ which would have ameliorated the squalid living conditions of the new northern industrial centers, redistricted the "rotten boroughs," or enlarged the franchise to the burgeoning middle class. Quite to the contrary, Parliament moved to repress reform movements. As if to show its indifference to reform, it passed the Combination Acts of 1799-1800,⁷ which restricted the development of labor unions. Consequently, Shelley viewed this political recalcitrance as corrupting English culture, and he looked to other models of civilization as

⁶The Justices of the Peace began a poor relief system in the Southern and Midland counties in 1795 rather than Parliament. The practice came into effect as a corrective to the decline of the cottage industry, caused by the growth of manufacturing in the Northern counties. G. M. Trevelyan in his Shortened History of England (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965) notes that "the landlord class . . . decided not to compel the farmers to pay a living wage. They adopted instead a policy elaborated by the Berkshire Magistrates at Speenhamland in 1795, namely to give rates in aid of insufficient wages. To keep the poor alive, it was decided to tax the rate-payers, instead of forcing farmers and employers of labour to shoulder their proper burden . . . It was a fatal policy, for it encouraged farmers to keep down wages. The system, which lasted till the New Poor Law of 1834, made the rural labourer a pauper, and discouraged his thrift and self-respect" (pp. 457-458).

⁷J. A. Williamson in his The Evolution of England, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952) notes that the passage of the act "was not purely economic, for the unions tended to fall under the control of Radicals who preached the doctrine of Thomas Paine, and it was partly for this reason that they were suppressed" (p. 356). Incredible as it may seem, the bill was introduced by William Wilberforce.

guides for the restoration of liberty, justice, and freedom to England.

Shelley found these superior concepts of social order in the civilizations of Hellenic Greece, Renaissance Italy, and Elizabethan England. Believing that these respective civilizations had been formed shortly after man's emergence from a state of near primitivism, he also believed that their language must have been close to its natural state as well. Hence, language in this state was coterminous with Nature, "all creation, that which rules and guides the world, the personified sum and order of cause and effect."⁸ And in the subsequent ages when this language degenerated, so had these cultures and civilizations; consequently, tyranny, oppression, and thralldom had set in. These similar conditions Shelley found in his contemporary England. And so by eliminating the degenerate features of poetic language and reforming it in accordance with the shaping, formative power of language in these earlier civilizations, Shelley hoped to spark a new golden age in England.

The civilizing, creative power of this language was the analogizing power of its metaphors, the power to analogize the concepts of liberty, freedom, and justice. Just as this language had been a catalyst for the greatness of these past cultures, so then would it nourish the minds of Regency

⁸Frederick S. Ellis, ed. A Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, (London: Clarendon Press, 1892).

England and create a new golden age. By contrast, a similar link existed between the degenerate poetic idiom and moribund political and social institutions of England. For them to be renewed, language itself, the shaping instrument of men's intellects, would first have to be revitalized and purified.

In addition to the analogizing power of the language in these earlier, superior civilizations, Shelley viewed their achievements in epic and drama as consonant and compatible media for the transmission of the ideals of justice, liberty, and freedom. Thus, as the Aeschylean dramas had been the harbinger of the Hellenic Golden Age, Dante's epic the herald of the Italian Renaissance, and the Elizabethan drama and epic as the cause and effect of the English Renaissance, so then would the reformation of these literary forms with a revitalized language become the suitable media for the articulation of the opposition between culture and Nature.

As this study will further illustrate, Shelley's consciousness of the opposition between culture and Nature became acutely sharpened by the political and social events between Waterloo and Peterloo. In conjunction with his own deep reading of Hellenic and Renaissance writers, the events during the years 1815-1819 help shape the poetry which followed in their wake. Thus, it becomes necessary to utilize a critical perspective that views Shelley's language and its formal literary arrangement as a medium which

directly arises from the historical matrix of his own times and to consider, briefly, why other critical perspectives have failed, in part, to do so.

In the past decade or so, serious efforts have been made to expand the horizon of literary scholarship from exclusively literary concerns to the relationship between literature and the literary work's historical matrix.⁹ Some of this scholarship has been directed against the methodology of the New Critics,¹⁰ while other efforts have sought to go beyond Formalism,¹¹ though still utilizing its methods of literary analysis. Though some of these efforts have been in the direction of structuralist criticism, none at present has considered the ways in which the language and form of Shelley's poetry mediate the poet's consciousness

⁹Geoffrey Hartman, Beyond Formalism: Literary Essays 1958-1970, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); hereinafter cited as Hartman, followed by the title of the essay and pagination.

¹⁰The term defies precise analysis and it seems advisable here to follow the definition set forth in W. F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard's A Handbook to Literature, rev. C. Hugh Holman (New York: Odyssey Press, 1962), from which the following is gleaned: the critical effort begins with the literary work itself, utilizing explication du texte, and an insistence that the "morality and value of a work of art is a function of its inner qualities and that literature cannot be evaluated in general terms or terms not directly related to the work itself" (italics mine; pp. 214-315).

¹¹Hartman defines Formalism as "a method of revealing the human content of art by a study of its formal properties" (p. 42). He subsumes New Criticism under this crisp definition, but Thrall, Hibbard, and Holman see it as examining a particular work in light of its generic characteristics.

of the opposition between culture and Nature.

Typically, literary scholarship on Shelley has traced the foreign and native influences on his work, shown the development of his style, and assessed his individual talent within the Romantic tradition.¹² Additionally, explicatory criticism has analyzed his poetry, illustrating the ways in which his imagery, versification, and diction work toward a telic unity.¹³ No one would seriously argue that this scholarship has been unimportant, and this study acknowledges a large debt to that effort. But on the whole, this scholarship in the past 30 years has separated the formal literary concerns of Shelley's poetry from their relationship to the historical tensions and conflicts of the Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic Era.

This separation of formal literary concerns from the poem's historical matrix of which it is a part is not unique and has resulted in myopic views of Shelley's poetry. Marxist critics, for example, have emphasized historical concerns at the expense of literary ones, viewing Shelley's poetry as foreshadowing a proletarian utopia or as Godwinism

¹²Albert C. Baugh, ed. A Literary History of England, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 1230-1240).

¹³A full list of explications is available from numerous sources, but Harold Bloom's The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry, (London: Longmans, 1962) is one such reading of Shelley.

in meters.¹⁴ Another critic, Northrop Frye, has also viewed Shelley's poetry from a different perspective. His contribution to Shelleyan scholarship has been to describe and delineate the central myths in Shelley's poetry, thus illustrating the significant features of myth displacement in Shelley.¹⁵ However, a comparison of the two critical systems illustrates two shortcomings. In the former, historical concerns override literary ones in a narrow philosophical bent, while in the latter descriptive categories of Shelley's archetypal patterns do not provide a link to the historical events of his own era, 1792-1822.

One school of literary scholarship which has attempted such a bringing together of literary form and the historical matrix of literature is that of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Predicated on the assumption that the function of myth (and literature as well) is to resolve social tensions which operate continuously throughout history, Lévi-Strauss's system views literary form as a medium for reconciling these

¹⁴Marx is quoted as having praised Shelley to this end in "Shelley and Socialism," *The Shelley Society's Papers*, Ser. 1, No. 2, Pt. II, but the author provides no source for the quotation. The view of Shelley as a Marxist is more fully discussed in Eleanor Marx's and Richard Aveling's *Shelley's Socialism*, (Manchester: L. Preger, 1947); Henry Noel Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle*, 2nd ed. (London: Cumberledge, 1951) is the source of the view that Shelley's poetry is Godwinism in meters.

¹⁵Northrop Frye, *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 3-51.

tensions.¹⁶ However, though his analysis of the Oedipus myth brilliantly demonstrates the efficacy of his method, he fails to account for the variations in the form of the myth. Thus, his critical method is unsuitable for Shelley, who utilizes different literary forms, but who articulates a similar theme, the "myth of freedom."¹⁷

Another structuralist critic, I. A. Richards, does focus on literary form, explaining its function as resolving societal tensions and conflicts by providing a telic unity for these tensions.¹⁸ However, Richards's system does not grapple with how the synchronic features of a particular form (ode, sonnet, or epic) harmonize or create a resolution to a particular historical, diachronic problem,

¹⁶Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structure of Myth," Journal of American Folklore, 68 (Oct.-Dec., 1955), pp. 428-444.

¹⁷Northrop Frye, The Critical Path: An Essay on the Social Context of Literary Criticism, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971). Frye is not especially clear on this term. The myth of freedom is part of the myth of concern, "a part that stresses the importance of the non-mythical elements in culture, of the truths and realities that are studied rather than created, provided by nature rather than by a social vision. The myth of freedom thus constitutes the 'liberal' element in society, as the myth of concern constitutes the conservative one, and those holding it are unlikely to form a much larger group than a critical, and usually an educated, minority. To form the community as a whole is not the function of the myth of freedom: it has to find its place in, and come to terms with, the society of which it forms a part" (p. 45). Shelley's relationship to the myth of freedom will be fully discussed in a later chapter.

¹⁸Hartman, "Toward Literary History," Beyond Formalism, pp. 365-366.

nor does his method specify the harmony or resolution which the form creates. Though Richards's system may explain the rhetoric of the pastoral elegy, for example, it does not explain Shelley's use of the form in his lament for Keats; e.g., how the form mediates Shelley's consciousness of Keats's death.

In sum, it would appear that Richards's efforts focus on the synchronic aspects of the poem as do the efforts of the formalists and the New Critics. Secondly, no system grapples with both the synchronics of literary form and the diachronic mode of reconciliation inherent in the relational concepts of Shelley's poetry. Thus, no critical analysis has attempted to view Shelley's literary form as a link or nexus to his consciousness of the waning Georgian social order and his single-minded "passion for reforming the world."¹⁹ The reasons for this, largely, have been the popularity and efficacy of the New Criticism in the past 30 years.

As a corrective to the moralizing strain of Victorian criticism, the New Critics called attention to the primacy of the literary work itself. Their attention was devoted to the synchronic features of the poem's language--its imagery, diction, and versification. Secondly, their critical focus has also meant an avoidance of literature's

¹⁹Preface to Prometheus Unbound, Poetry, p. 207.

relationship to the larger milieu of its composition because that question was beyond the parameters of the method itself. Thus, for the most part, New Criticism balked at further efforts to go beyond the poem itself, and poets like Shelley (Keats is an exception) have received short shrift from the practitioners of this kind of criticism. The reasons for this lie in a complex interplay of the New Critics' view of literary history,²⁰ their aversions to contemporary politics, and American social history since the 1920's.

Smarting under the stings of various legislative and Congressional committees since the 1920's and more notably since 1945, the American universities welcomed a system of literary scholarship which focussed on literary concerns

²⁰In Frederick A. Pottle's "The Case of Shelley," English Romantic Poets, ed. M. H. Abrams, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960) he speaks of the modern critical sensibility as "skeptical of all large syntheses based on faith, indeed of all large syntheses whatsoever. It wants no prophetic poetry, at least no poetry of millennial prophecy. It shuns commitments; if it makes them, it wants to know thoroughly what it is letting itself in for. It is very suspicious of pronounced rhythms in verse. It wants its poetry developed, not by explicit statement, and not by a flood of images each relevant at only one point, but by the developed image, a large image firmly held, displaying point after point of relevancy. It dislikes metaphors within metaphors. Above all, it wants no simplification or purification of experience in the interests of alleged beauty or of an alleged higher truth. It insists that since the experience of the actual world is always a complex of the pleasant and the disgusting, of the beautiful and the ugly, of attraction and horror, poetry must hold the discordant elements together, not allow them to separate. Poetry must operate through Irony, Paradox, and Understatement." (pp. 296-297).

and which avoided the politics of literature. Additionally, this "new criticism" was compatible with the textual critics and the source and analogue school of scholarship. Finally, as the Marxist literary critics had demonstrated in the 1930's by their emphasis on the historical concerns of literature, there was much folly in considering literature in terms other than exclusively literary ones. But the New Critics, it seems to me, perpetrated an equal critical injustice by avoiding the historico-political dimension of Shelley's poetry.²¹ Stressing the synchronic aspects of his poetry

²¹However, the relationship between Shelley's politics and poetry did receive critical attention in the 1940's, such as Carl Grabo's The Magic Plant: The Growth of Shelley's Thoughts, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1939), Newman Ivey White's biography, Shelley, 2 vols. (New York: Knopf, 1940), and the work of Kenneth N. Cameron. Cameron's efforts are of interest to this study, especially The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical, (New York: MacMillan, 1953), "The Social Philosophy of Shelley," Sewanee Review, L (1942), pp. 457-466, "Shelley, Cobbett, and the National Debt," JEGP, XLII (1943), pp. 197-209, "Shelley and the Reformers," ELH, XII (1945), pp. 62-86, "A Major Source of the Revolt of Islam," PMLA, LVI, (1941), pp. 175-206, and "The Political Symbolism of Prometheus Unbound," PMLA, LVIII (1943), pp. 728-753. Recently, these efforts to view Shelley's poetry and politics in a historico-political matrix have culminated in Carl Woodring's Politics and English Romantic Poetry, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1970), which I regard as the seminal study in this area of Shelleyan scholarship. For a general summary of the limitations of an historical interpretation of literature, see Morse Peckham's "On the Historical Interpretation of Literature," in his The Triumph of Romanticism, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 445-451. His opening caveat is noteworthy: "A theory of historical interpretation depends upon a theory of interpretation. And a theory of interpretation depends upon a theory of meaning. A theory of meaning depends upon a theory of language, and a theory of language depends in turn upon a theory of mind. If we had these theories in reasonably satisfactory shape we could begin

in their method of literary analysis, they found Shelley's poetry lacking in those qualities which are so characteristic of Donne and Jonson.²²

While the New Critics praised some of Shelley's shorter lyrics such as the Ode to the West Wind for its telic unity, they avoided or neglected other poems like the Ode to Naples and the Ode to Liberty. By and large, the New Critics avoided Shelley when they could and dismissed him when they couldn't because they objected to his style. At the center of their objections was a preference for language and its formal literary arrangement which stressed a resolution and conservation of social forces. As against this aesthetic preference, Shelley's language emphasized social reform and regeneration.

Shelley's politics called for reform, and like Hamlet's injunction to the players, reform altogether. In his earlier works, like Queen Mab, Shelley called for institutional reform, and while never losing sight of that goal, later called for individual reform as in Prometheus Unbound.

to grapple with the effect the attribute 'historical' has upon the term 'interpretation'" (p. 445).

²²Eliot's objection to Shelley appears to be grounded in his dislike of Shelley's subject matter or content. Eliot praises Shelley's virtuosity but regrets that "Shelley did not live to put his poetic gifts, which were certainly of the first order, at the services of more tenable beliefs." (p. 295). But to F. R. Leavis and Allen Tate, "Shelley is not a great artist dealing with an unfortunate subject-matter; he is a bungler, a bad craftsman, and therefore (italics Pottle's) a bad poet." (Pottle, p. 295).

Both of these ideas were in sharp contrast to the prevailing political atmosphere in America after World War II; but more significantly, Shelley's language and its formal literary arrangement were of variance with the basic tenets of the New Criticism, which stressed that poetry "must operate through Irony, Paradox, and Understatement."²³ Thus, with threats to social and political stability rampant on the Continent, and with the American homeland "threatened" by foreign ideologies emphasizing the shortcomings of the capitalist system, a poet who urged institutional reform and whose style and craftsmanship were at variance with the basic tenets of the New Critics was unlikely to become a mainstay in the catalogue of acceptable poets.

Given the hostile political atmosphere of the past fifty years to those ideas which suggested a wholesale reform of American institutions, the New Criticism offered a mode of interpretation and judgment of literature that avoided a confrontation with secular ideologies. Further, this method engendered the good will of legislatures and boards of overseers because it was not a system of knowledge likely to be adopted by the masses in their daily pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. It was elitist in its assumption about who could interpret literary art, for it required of its votaries erudition in such subject areas as Thomistic psychology and

²³Pottle, p. 247.

classical rhetoric. Moreover, it pronounced as sacred a tradition in English poetry far removed from the common-places of contemporary politics. By contrast, Shelley's poetry seemed anarchic, Marxist, or somehow both.²⁴

This critical tradition balked at the poetry of Milton, the Romantics, and the Victorians and exalted a poetry of irony, paradox, and witty conceits like those found in the court poets of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Its apologists and supporters made little effort to hide the fact that despite their shrugging off of any attempts to deal with contemporary political controversies, their socio-political orientation was notably conservative and largely occupied with extolling and sanctifying a literature which stressed what Northrop Frye calls the "myth of concern."²⁵

The "myth of concern" is that body of tales and legends

²⁴In addition to the utopian idealism of Shelley's politics, the uncertainty of Shelley's philosophic center doubtless bothered the New Critics as well, a problem that plagues contemporary scholarship. As the editors of The English Romantic Poets, ed. Frank Jordan (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1972) have noted, Shelley's philosophy "has not been examined critically by a professional historian of British philosophy" (p. 354). However, the Platonic influences have been examined in James A. Noutopoulos's The Platonism of Shelley, (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1949) and have not been found wanting. A helpful guide to the relationship of Shelley to the philosophic ideas of our era is Joseph Barrell's Shelley and the Thought of His Time: A Study in the History of Ideas, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947). The most comprehensive study of the poet's philosophic profile may be found in C. E. Pulos' The Deep Truth: A Study of Shelley's Skepticism, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954).

²⁵Frye, The Critical Path, p. 36.

which emphasizes and celebrates centripetal social patterns and institutions. These narratives strengthen, reinforce, and hold society together, and poets articulate them so as to stress the value of integrating the individual into existing social patterns. In doing so, the poet's consciousness of history reflects the necessity of restoring stability following a prolonged disruption of social order. To accomplish his rhetorical objectives, the literary artist relies on those forms which he believes can mediate the re-establishment of social order. Thus, the poets of the late seventeenth century, confronted by the aftermath of the Civil Wars, found in the literature of Augustan and Antoninean Rome, the models of spiritual authority for the restoration of social stability and order.

In a similar manner, the New Critics believed themselves to be at a comparable historical juncture at the end of World War I. Seeking to mediate the re-establishment of social order in their art and criticism, they found the aesthetics of the Augustan tradition greatly to their liking. For them, the Augustan tradition in England became the well springs of their art and criticism. And Shelley's poetry would not fit into the Augustan preferences of literary style, nor did it favorably compare to the political tone of Jonson, Dryden, and Pope, its foremost artists.

Finding in Augustan and Antoninean Rome the historical parallel for their own predicament, these poets extolled

Charles II's accession to the throne as the paradigm for the return of social stability under the Jacobians and the return to the order of nature which the interregnum had interrupted. As W. H. Auden remarked in his discussion of the rise of classicism after the Restoration,

To an age exhausted by religious wars, weary of unending dogmatic disputes and exasperated by fanatic individual interpretations of Scripture, here at last, the possibility of peaceful consent seemed to open up. Here was a god the existence and nature of whom could be ascertained by the use of the human reason which in all sane men comes to the same conclusion, when freed from personal passion and prejudice.

Indeed through the latter half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, there is an attempt in every field, religion, politics, art, etc., to do for that time what their mediaeval predecessors had done for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries i.e., to construct a new catholic church, catholic society, and catholic art, to found a new Good City on the basis of sound reason, common sense, and good taste.²⁶

It was the basis of this literary tradition that the New Critics canonized as the authentic tradition of English poetry, a tradition which began with Donne, deteriorated with Dryden, and re-emerged in the Anglo-American Imagism of Pound and Eliot. Both Pound and Eliot believed themselves to be artists facing a predicament which was similar to that of the poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their problem, as Auden had pointed out, was "to found a new Good City on the basis of sound reason, common sense,

²⁶W. H. Auden, The Enchafed Flood or the Romantic Iconography of the Sea, (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 46-47.

and good taste." In other words, they were seeking a spiritual authority that would form the basis of their art. For Eliot, that spiritual authority had its headwaters in the later Elizabethans and Jacobeans. He said: "May we not conclude, then, that Donne, Crashaw Vaughan, Herbert and Lord Herbert, Marvell, King, Cowley at his best, are in the direct current of English poetry, and that their faults should be reprimanded by this standard rather than coddled by antiquarian affection?"²⁷

Further, he argued, at the time of Dryden, a "dissociation of sensibility" in language had set in and the poets after Dryden "revolted against the ratiocinative, the descriptive; they thought and felt by fits, unbalanced, they reflected."²⁸ Eliot continued his attack in "The Metaphysical Poets" by defaming the Romantics and Victorians, stating that the poets since Dryden had only worsened the situation, but with the rise of Imagism this sensibility in poetic language had been restored. Although Eliot felt that Shelley, in one or two passages, had come close to this older sensibility in The Triumph of Life,²⁹ it is clear that Shelley is within the fold of those poets whose work

²⁷T. S. Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets," in Major British Writers ed. G. B. Harrison, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1959), II, 850.

²⁸Major British Writers, II, 850.

²⁹Major British Writers, II, 850.

displays a dissociation of sensibility.³⁰ And for nearly two generations in America after World War I, the poets admired by Eliot became the models of poetic excellence and spiritual authority, shaping the form of literary history and criticism in the academies. Thus, in addition to being unsympathetic with Shelley's political and social world view, the New Critics objected to his style and craftsmanship which, in their judgment, lay outside the mainstream of English poetry.³¹

³⁰Major British Writers, II, 850; Eliot did have a few good things to say about Shelley's revival of Elizabethan verse in The Sacred Wood, (London: Methuen & Co., 1920), p. 23, but in a later collection of critical essays, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, (London: Faber & Faber, 1932) he finds Shelley's "ideas repellent" (p. 89) and the Epipsychidion to be full of "bad jingling" as well (p. 91). It is also noteworthy that Eliot rejected Shelley's mode of literary invention and its effect on the establishment of culture and civilization. He pejoratively called Shelley's premise of poetry in the Defence "perhaps the first kinetic or revolutionary theory of poetry." (pp. 94-95). But Joel L. Spingarn in his Literary Criticism in the Renaissance (New York: Columbia, 1908), 2nd. ed. notes that Shelley's view of poetry is not new or unique: "It may have been observed that during the Renaissance there were two distinct conceptions of the origin of poetry. One, which might be called ethical, was derived from Horace, according to whom the poet was originally a law-giver, or divine prophet; and this conception persists in modern literature from Poliziano to Shelley" (p. 188).

³¹One critic who has placed Shelley in the mainstream development of English poetry is Earl Wasserman. Beginning with "Adonais: Progressive Revelation as Poetic Mode," ELH, XXI (1954), pp. 274-326, he extended his New Critical analyses to "Mont Blanc" and "The Sensitive Plant" in The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassic and Romantic Poems, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1959), pp. 195-304, and Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Critical Reading, (John Hopkins University Press, 1965). The capstone of his scholarship appeared in Shelley: A

Essentially, then, Eliot, Pound, and more notably F. R. Leavis³² discovered an older critical tradition and sensibility in literature around which they fashioned a new classicism. Like their modal grandfathers, the Augustans, the artist-critics of the 1920's shaped a poetic-critical sensibility, the heart of which was the myth of the concern. At the crucial center of this concern was a disenchantment with excessively metaphoric language, and, as Pottle has noted, "a disaffection with the poetry of millennial prophecy."³³

Critical Reading, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1971), the most thoroughgoing treatment of the moral and psychological dimensions of Shelley's poetry. Despite Wasserman's skillful blend of thematic and structural analysis with an encyclopedic knowledge of the Restoration, Georgian, and Regency Periods, his scholarship avoids the political dimension of Shelley's poetry.

³²Pound liked Act V of The Cenci, but in the Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T. S. Eliot, (New York: New Directions, 1954) Pound declared that the "'The Sensitive Plant' was one of the rottenest poems ever written" (p. 53). Leavis, however, presents the most exacting attack on Shelley's poetry in Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry, (New York: George W. Stewart, 1947): "Even when he is in his own unmistakably a distinguished poet, as in Prometheus Unbound, it is impossible to go on reading him at any length with pleasure; the elusive imagery, the high pitched emotions, the tone and movement, the arduous ecstasies and despairs, are too much the same all through. The effect is of variety and emptiness (Arnold was right) as well as monotony" (p. 210). Moreover, he finds the whole Spenserian-Miltonic tradition artistically inept and valueless.

³³Pottle, p. 296.

The sources of these disenchantments and disaffections with metaphor and millennialism merit further scrutiny because they form the bases of Augustan culture. Thus, by elucidating the bases of Augustan culture, conservation and resolution, the bases of Shelley's poetry, reform and regeneration, will be more sharply contrasted.

CHAPTER II: RESOLUTION AND CONSERVATION: THE TONE OF AUGUSTAN CULTURE

The broad outlines of the Augustan cultural tradition which the New Critics favored, bear further examination for the light they shed on the Augustan attitude toward language and for the contrast they create for Shelley's poetic diction especially. Essentially, those attitudes embraced cultural forms which favored conservation and resolution of opposing social forces or, to reiterate a term mentioned in Chapter I, they favored centripetal social tendencies. These centripetal socializing forces had as their semantic center, order, and stood in sharp contrast to the centrifugal social forces of Shelley's semantic center, reform. In turn, these differences resulted in contrastive constructs of social reality, constructs which had their correspondences in preferences of poetic language and its formal literary arrangement.

The late Georgian and Regency construct of social reality had its origins in the chief political and social events of the preceding century: the Restoration, the Glorious Revolution, and the long period of Whig political leadership in Commons, followed by a return to a more conservative leadership in the last decades of the century.

With the Restoration of Charles II, England had hoped to achieve a lasting and enduring social stability which it

had not experienced since the reign of Elizabeth. But the Restoration did not quell the religious and political factionalism of Dissenters and Nonconformists, as indicated by the Act of Uniformity (1662), the Conventicle Act (1664), and the Test Act (1673). These repressive actions were the major means by which an effective combination of the Court, High Church, and Tory Party flaunted the spirit of the Restoration.

The advent of James's reign exacerbated these difficulties. His policy of staffing benefices, the judiciary, and the Army with Roman Catholics finally led to the desertion of even his Tory Supporters. Thus, James's Romanist policies threatened the vested interests of the Church, municipalities, the Universities, Parliament itself, and eventually led to a coalition of those interests against him, which enhanced William of Orange's prestige as a candidate for the kingship. James's political demise culminated in William's successful crossing of the channel and the subsequent ineffectiveness of the Royalist forces. Shortly after William's accession to the throne, the Toleration Act (1689) settled the major divisive issue of religion and laid the political framework for the growth of British civil liberties.³⁴ With a Protestant monarch on the throne,

³⁴Admirably discussed in G. M. Trevelyan's A Shortened History of England, (Baltimore: Penguin Press, 1965), 271-353.

Milton's dream of the liberty of unlicensed printing came to pass with the lapsing in 1695 of the Censorship of the Press. This freedom would not be seriously threatened again until the time of Shelley's majority.

Throughout the reign of William and Mary, the balance of Parliamentary power was evenly divided between Whig and Tory, neither party holding power very long. With the death of William and Mary and the coronation of Anne, the Tory party gained a brief advantage at the terminus of her reign. But while the Tories sought favor with Anne, the Whig leadership was effectively courting the hand of the Elector of Hanover, thereby laying the basis for their successful relationship with the future George I.

The success of the Whig political leadership during 1714-60 lay in their ability to take optimum advantage of the Revolution Settlement of 1689. Essentially, the Whigs pressed no legislation which disturbed the vested interests of the Church, the chartered corporations, the Universities, the municipalities, but rather sought an accommodation with them. This accommodation took the form of non-interference by Commons and the Court with the vested interests, and by having patronage matters handled by the Prime Minister's majority party.

However, the long term effect of this accommodation of the major social political forces in English life was to rigidify institutional life and to make "reform" a term of

opprobrium in the late Georgian and Regency Periods. Indirectly, then, this accommodation ran counter to the major focus of Shelley's poetry, which urged reform as an alternative to revolution, the long term consequence of long delayed reform. In effect, the Revolution Settlement of 1689 and the long period of Whig political ascendancy reconciled the major social forces in England. It established a center of vital interests for the dominant social forces which would only tolerate change that did not substantially alter their status vis-a-vis the Settlement of 1689.

Thus, when George III sought to recover the patronage powers granted the Crown by the Settlement of 1689, he only challenged a prerogative inimical to the interests of the Whigs, not to the vested interests as a whole as James II had. From 1760-81, George III's recovery of the patronage power, which Commons had dominated, was successful, but the policy carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. With George III in control of political patronage, the Prime Minister answered to the Crown rather than Commons; hence, domestic and foreign policy were in the hands of the Hanoverian monarch. This arrangement ultimately proved disastrous because George III was unwilling to adopt a moderate stance toward the American colonies. His failure to reach an accommodation with them signaled the end of the Crown's control of the Ministries forever. By the end of the American Revolution, Pitt the Younger and Edmund Burke had

restored the control of the Ministries to the leadership of Commons.

Burke's Economic Reform Bill (1782) greatly reduced the Crown's power over patronage matters, and Pitt's ministry a year later began the modernizing of the Cabinet. Pitt's reform of Commons, however, was stopped short when he attempted to reduce the most blatant inequities of the rotten borough system because his own party rebuffed him. In this matter, the issues were clear: reform meant changing the accommodations of the vested interests which had evolved since the Settlement of 1689. Since reform would have changed the voting strength of the squirearchy, Pitt's measure was defeated since it affected a vital interest.

The resistance to reform at this crucial moment (1792) in British history stemmed from a fear among the established social forces of Court, Church, and squirearchy as well as the vested interests of the chartered corporations and municipalities, that reform would usher in an era of barbarism and the destruction of the existing social order. Although Burke had argued in 1790 for reform as indigenous to the British governmental system,³⁵ the clear example of the autumn and

³⁵"By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of our policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are handed down to us, and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the

spring massacres of 1792-3 in France firmly united the vested interests in their opposition to reform--any change in the existing political arrangement. Hence, because the vested interests feared reform as a prelude to the social and political catastrophes underway in France, they successfully resisted substantive social change until the Reform Bill of 1832.

Yet there were other cultural forces to the resistance of reform in addition to the vested interests which were inimical to Shelley's ideas of reform. In the main, these forces had their well springs in the legacy of Augustan and Antoninean Rome.

From the end of the Glorious Revolution to the death of Queen Anne, political factionalism tapered off sharply from the level of acrimonious debate so common during the Restoration and so prevalent in Restoration comedy. By the time of Joseph Addison's Cato (1713), both Whig and Tory could view

mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete" in E. J. Payne, ed. Burke: Select Works, "Reflections on the Revolution in France," (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1877), II, 39.

the drama and applaud alike its political ideas.³⁶ Also, Richard Steele's The Conscious Lovers (1723) illustrated a further decline in wit aimed at making fun of the lower social orders, the character of Sealand functioning as the advocate of middle class morality. And finally George Lillo's The London Merchant (1731) depicted a middle class protagonist whose values stressed the reconciliation and resolution of social differences. In a sense these dramas are the bellweathers for the emergence of a social attitude which the majority of Englishmen could agree on: increased toleration of social and religious differences. For the most part, then, the vast majority of English citizens were in favor of conservation and resolution of opposing social forces. With the last Pretender safely closeted in 1745, most Englishmen of mid-century believed

themselves to be living in a second Augustan age. The wars of religion were over. Civil strife in its bloodier forms was coming to an end. England was believed to have arrived at a satisfactory and stable compromise in civil government and religious toleration by the Glorious Revolution of 1688-9. The great figures were no longer Cromwell and Milton, but Walpole and Pope. It was possible to believe that civility and politeness were fast reaching the point where they might be seen to link hand with the last great ages of moderation, equability and peace--the ages of the Emperor Augustus and of the Antonines--

³⁶British Dramatists From Dryden to Sheridan, ed. George H. Nettleton and Arthur E. Case rev. George Winchester Stone Jr., (Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston, 1969), 595. The editors note that on the whole the Whig acceptance of Cato was greater than the Tory response, however.

after so many centuries of Gothic barbarism, unrelieved save for the brief glory of the Italian Renaissance. Moreover, the Augustan Age believed in 'Europe,' and in a single European civilization, historically bounded by the frontiers of the Roman Empire.³⁷

From their mid-century vantage point, the Augustans perceived Imperial Rome as the high point of civilization followed by an age of superstition and barbarism, the Middle Ages. The Italian Renaissance had led the way to the recovery of those civilizing values, and their own, the Enlightenment, was the fulfillment of this recovery from superstition and barbarism--a recovery which had begun since the Restoration of Charles II. Hence at mid-century, social equilibrium, stasis, and order among the dominant social components of church, crown, and Parliament comprised a construct of social order which had as its basis a cultural homogeneity based on Imperial Rome--a construct which Shelley was by and large to reject.

But by the last decade of the century this construct of order seemed threatened. With the Revolution in France underway, it seemed to the vested interests that France was about to experience a social and political crisis equal in importance to the regicide of Charles I. Indeed, the implications of the September Massacres in 1792 seemed as portentous as the fall of the Roman Empire to Georgian England,

³⁷R. J. White, The Age of George III, (New York: Walter Publishing Co., 1968), 161-162; hereinafter cited as R. J. White followed by pagination.

and hence the advent of yet another era of barbarism, superstition, and violence similar to the Middle Ages appeared to loom on the horizon.

Separated from the Continent by the Straits, Britain itself seemed in imminent danger of being engulfed by the tidal waves from the Revolution in France. To effectively counter the possibility of such an event occurring in England, the vested interests formed a bulwark of opposition to reform which linked the reformer's proposals to the holocaust in France, thus portraying themselves as the defenders of the civilizing values of Augustan and Antoninean Rome and the saviors of Georgian England.

The bulwarks of conservatism against reform had formidable forces. Chief among them was the cultural homogeneity of the country's political and social leadership, a homogeneity founded on hereditary social class and education in the ideals of Imperial Rome. Still largely agrarian at mid-century, Augustan England was ruled by the gentry, those 700-800 families³⁸ who provided the leadership of the vested interests, especially the Court, Parliament, and the Church. As in the case of Shelley, these families educated their young men at Eton or Harrow, and then sent them to Oxford

³⁸R. J. White, p. 170. The great families earned approximately £3000-4000 per annum, and by the end of the century, some 400 of them had incomes of £10,000 per annum. In Newman Ivey White's Shelley, (New York: Knopf, 1940) he states that at the death of Shelley's grandfather, his estate was valued at £200,000 (I, 395).

or Cambridge before the "Grand Tour." The educational background of these young men consisted chiefly in an exposure to the cultural achievements of Latinity, especially the literary and political legacy of Augustan and Antoninean Rome. The main purpose of this education was to inculcate these young men with the values, political models, and styles of social leadership pertinent to their roles as prospective guardians of the English state.

So pervasive and intense was the effort to inculcate the young gentry with the cultural heritage of Latinity that when Pitt was interrupted in Commons in the midst of a quotation from the Aeneid, the "whole house, Whigs and Tories alike, rose as one man to supply the end."³⁹

In the face of the French Revolution, this cultural homogeneity and attachment to the achievements of Latinity became one of the major bulwarks against reform and change in Shelley's lifetime. Having before their mind's eye the example of the Roman Empire's collapse under the pressure of the Teutonic invasions, proud of their social harmony achieved under the Settlement of 1689, and fearing a return to barbarism, civil war and bloodshed of the Interregnum which they witnessed in France, the vested interests concluded that institutional and social change was the harbinger of social upheaval, discord, and factionalism. Thus, the vast majority

³⁹ André Maurois, Ariel: The Life of Shelley, (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1924), 2.

of the political and social leadership from 1792 to 1832 (the Reform Bill) maintained that the order, social equilibrium, and stasis which had prevailed since 1689 must be maintained. Consequently, they linked the proposals of Godwin, Paine, and other reformers to the Jacobin holocaust in France, and portrayed themselves as defenders of the civilizing values of Augustan and Antoninean Rome, staving off a return to a second "Middle Age." In fine, the conservatives seemed determined to sustain Gibbon's judgment that a return to the ignorance and barbarism of the Middle Ages was unlikely because

the abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame: republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times.⁴⁰

Thus, from 1792 to 1832, the dominant interests of Georgian England aligned themselves much in the fashion of points on a circle which had a common center point--order. The quintessential element of that order was the Revolution Settlement of 1689 which had been the mainstay of stasis, equilibrium, and concord among the vested interests and, they believed, the sine qua non for the social harmony of past century. It would, they also believed, serve as the

⁴⁰Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J. B. Bury, (New York: Heritage Press, 1946), II, 2343. Cited as Gibbon hereinafter.

model for the future.

Inasmuch as the failure to maintain order within the Empire had been a cause of the first Augustans' decline and fall, and inasmuch as this diminution of order from within had led to the eventual triumph of the Teutonic invaders, the second Augustans spared no effort to quell reform at home and vanquish barbarism abroad. They believed that their failure to do so would result in the destruction of "The Second Temple," as Dryden had called it,⁴¹ the emergence of a new era of barbarism, and as Gibbon had pointed out, a new concern with mysticism and superstition.⁴²

This defensive perimeter to maintain the continuity of British institutions contributed in no small way to Shelley's dilemma as a literary artist in the late Georgian and Regency periods. The literary forms which had been suitable for the Augustan themes of reconciliation and social harmony--themes celebrated by the major poets since the Restoration--had declined in popularity in the early Georgian period. The poetic miscellanies from early to mid-century illustrate that

in brief, the dominant mold from 1660 to about 1730 or so was the heroic couplet; thereafter, blank verse became increasingly popular until

⁴¹I am indebted to W. J. Bate's The Burden of the Past and the English Poet, (Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press, 1970) for the term which comes from John Dryden's "To Mr. Congreve" (3-27). Further cited as Burden of the Past.

⁴²Gibbon, I, 307.

it eventually displaced its predecessor. The Dryden-Tonson miscellanies, which kept appearing from 1684 to 1727, had over 80% of their offerings in closed couplets; in Dodsley's similar collection of 1748 the number drops to one half and in 1758 continuation becomes a mere quarter. Blank verse took up only 13 pages of the final version of Tonson in 1727, and most of these represented John Phillip's burlesque of the form, The Splendid Shilling; in Dodsley there were 130. Other changes are equally illuminating: octosyllabics quadruple in popularity in the later versions of even Tonson and double again from 140 to 278 pages in Dodsley; there are no Spenserian stanzas in the earlier work but 170 in the latter; there are few stanzas of any kind in Tonson, while in Dodsley actually wrest dominance from the couplet, filling one-fourth of the first three and over one-half of the second three volumes.⁴³

But even though the pentameter couplet declined in popularity by the 1730s, no single poetic kind replaced it and achieved the widespread dominance which the pentameter couplet had from 1660-1730. Instead, the poetry after the 1730s through 1800 illustrates diverse efforts within a variety of modes and genres. Yet throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century, Pope's achievement in the pentameter couplet remained the standard of excellence in poetry for most critics. Typical of this feeling was Samuel Johnson who remarked in his Lives of the Poets that "to attempt any

⁴³Minor English Poets 1660-1730, comp. David P. French, (New York: B. Blom, 1967), ix-x. Bate states that Milton was probably the most popular poet for eighteenth-century England. The period saw over a hundred editions of Paradise Lost, and over seventy of the complete poems (Burden of the Past, p. 22). Milton's influence on the development of verse forms used by Shelley will be discussed later.

further improvement of versification will be dangerous."⁴⁴

Yet the poetry after the 1730s through 1800 displays a remarkable searching after newer forms and diction,⁴⁵ most of which met with disparagement from the critics. Though Johnson admired Milton's achievement in Paradise Lost,⁴⁶ he still disliked the development of the new Miltonic school, because he disapproved the admission of any archaisms into poetic diction. These admissions into poetic language, he felt, reminded him of the savagery of poetry before Dryden.⁴⁷

The main struggle for a new poetic idiom after 1730 centers, in large part, over the theories of the origin of language. By and large, there are "two clusters of views that diverge sufficiently to deserve different names. The first may be called rationalist because its adherents accorded early man a large measure of control over the kind of language he consciously determined to establish," while the second may be called the "Platonist view since it postulated

⁴⁴Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. Birkbeck Hill, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1905), II, 251.

⁴⁵As. R. D. Havens' The Influence of Milton on English Poetry has noted (New York: Russell and Russell, 1922). Milton's influence on the development of Shelley's blank verse will be treated later in this study.

⁴⁶Rambler #90 in Samuel Johnson: Essays from the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler, ed. W. J. Bate, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 145-156.

⁴⁷Lives, I, 421.

a form or spirit or idea in language that was virtually beyond human control and that all languages developed more or less effectively toward realizing."⁴⁸

While both sides agreed that perspicuity in poetic language was the central issue in the debate, the chief stumbling block to agreement in the arguments was the role that metaphor played.

The rationalists believed that metaphor, figurative language, and rhetorical adornment obscured meaning in poetry and they associated obscurity of meaning in language with Gothic barbarism, primitivism, and lack of social cultivation. Furthermore, in their perspective of history, the rationalists associated obscurity of meaning caused by metaphor with the political and religious zealotry of the Interregnum and Restoration. To the rationalists, these zealots had used metaphor in their tracts to arouse popular passions, and these unchecked passions were the major cause of England's domestic troubles in the period 1649-1688. Thus, their two-fold rejection of metaphor was really one: the use of metaphoric language in poetry was the mark of the barbaric and the uncivilized poet and, hence, was the root

⁴⁸Alex Page, "The Origins of Language and Eighteenth Century Criticism," JEGP, (LXXI), 12-21. I am indebted to Page for the two-fold division here, but a broader treatment may be found in Rene Wellek's The Rise of English Literary History, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 47-94.

cause of human discontent. The relief for that cause was language of "mathematical plainness" as advocated by Bishop Sprat, a belief that Shelley was to reject in his Defence and the prefaces to his verse dramas.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, there arose a growing chorus of critics whose stricture against metaphor echoed Bishop Sprat's earlier injunction to the Royal Society for perspicuity in language. Jonathan Swift, for example, in his Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue (1712) called for an authoritative body that would guard against deterioration of the language by refusing to let words become obsolete, and that would ensure its stability by admitting new words (neologisms and archaisms) only upon the most pressing, proven need.⁴⁹ Another critic, Leonard Welsted, believed that "the English language is not capable of a much greater perfection than it has already attained."⁵⁰ By the term, "perfection," Welsted meant the perspicuity of the Queen Anne journalists and the avoidance of figurative language.

Further evidence linking metaphor in language with man in a state of barbarism is found in William Warburton's The Divine Legation of Moses (1741) in which he stated that

⁴⁹Jonathan Swift, "A Proposal for Correcting the English Tongue," eds. Herbert Davis and Louis Landa, Prose Works, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957) IV, 5-20.

⁵⁰The Works in Verse and Prose of Leonard Welsted, ed. John Nichols, (London, 1787), 122.

primitive man's inability to avoid metaphor or uncivilized language was owing to his "rusticity of conception."⁵¹ Hence, in an uncivilized state man was unable to communicate perspicuously, and in Warburton's view the language of cottagers, tenant farmer's and other "uncultivated forms of speech" were the accoutrements of early, uncivilized man. Thus, the suitability of this language as a poetic idiom was contrary to the civilized interests of society, and "good" writers avoided it. Poetry which utilized this kind of diction was uncultivated and potentially dangerous to social stability, the central concern of late Georgian and Regency social leadership.

A similar view linking metaphor and barbarism is found in James Harris's Hermes: Or, A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar (1751) in which he viewed metaphor as a kind of "blemish" on intelligibility and as a corrupting importation from the Orient where vast disparities between tyrants and slaves had given rise to hyperbole and hence to all the tricks of metaphorical language.⁵²

⁵¹William Warburton, The Divine Legation of Moses, 2nd. ed. (London, 1742), p. 147.

⁵²James Harris, Hermes: Or A Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Language and Universal Grammar, (1751) [Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1968]. Harris noted that "their ideas became consonant to their servile state, and their words became consonant to their servile ideas. The great distinction, forever in their fight, was that of tyrant and slave (*italics his*); the most unnatural one conceivable and

In the main, then, rationalist critical theory sought a poetic diction that was free from cant, devoid of archaisms, and steered a clear course toward perspicuity. The rationalist concern for a poetic idiom with an established, normative diction may be viewed as an adjunct of the Georgian social construct of reality--order. The Georgians, by and large, believed that metaphor, rhetorical adornment, and figurative language in poetry obscured clarity of meaning. Such obscurity in poetic language had been associated with the barbarisms of the Middle Ages or the oratorical excesses of the political zealots during the Interregnum. And after the massacres in France of 1792-3, notions for political reform were likely to be similarly regarded by the Hanoverians as a return to the social chaos of the Interregnum or worse, the Middle Ages. In fine, the rationalists argued for a poetic language that "reflected, at one or more removes, a pattern of objective reality,"⁵³ a pattern embodied in Pope's achievement in the pentameter couplet.

the most susceptible of pomp, and empty exaggeration. Hence they talk'd of Kings as gods, and of themselves, as the meanest and most abject reptiles. Nothing was either great or little in moderation, but every sentiment was heightened by incredible hyperbole. Thus tho' they sometimes ascended in the great and magnificent, they as frequently degenerated into the tumid and bumbast (*italics his*) pp. 409-410. Harris' book was frequently reprinted, going through successive editions in 1765, 1771, 1773, 1798, 1806, and 1825 (editor's note).

⁵³p. W. K. Stone, The Art of Poetry 1750-1820, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967), p. 144

In contrast to the foregoing rationalist views that metaphor, figurative language, and rhetorical adornment obscured meaning in poetry was the opposing or Platonist view that metaphor in language aided perspicuity, a view similar to Shelley's. Though the rationalists had argued that emotionally charged language was a vestige of man's primitivism, barbarism, and uncultivated passions, the Platonists urged the view that metaphorical language approximated language in its original state. As the approximation to the original state was a use of language in its pristine and nascent form, it followed that such language was clear, and therefore, an aid to perspicuity. Even a rationalist theologian like James Beattie would admit that "the first language, whatever it was, must have been perfect," but since its inception, this "language has deteriorated." Hence, he hoped that contemporary writers would do something to restore poetical language to its original purity.⁵⁴ Additionally, William Duff in An Essay on Original Genius (1767) and Daniel Webb in Observations on the Correspondence Between Poetry and Music (1769) made much of the "bold glowing metaphors of early poets,"⁵⁵ though Thomas Leland put it more succinctly in A Dissertation on the Principles

⁵⁴James Beattie, Essays: On Poetry and Music, etc. (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1778), p. 229.

⁵⁵Page, p. 15.

of Human Eloquence (1764):

As (forms of figurative language) . . . were not originally the inventions of artifice, but naturally and necessarily arose, in the natural and necessary progress of human speech, so they owe the principal part of their beauty, and their whole power of affecting, to their being conceived as the obvious, unstudied result of a mind labouring with violent emotions, and earnest to convey the whole force of its conceptions.⁵⁶

Thus, in the Platonist view of language, the denotative aspects of language--its "thingness"--prevented or hindered poetic clarity rather than aided it. Hence, they favored the use of a poetic diction devoid of the "clutter" which accrued to language by usage. The Platonists viewed language, for the most part, not so much as a tool, directly and consciously fashioned toward a given end, but more analogous to a plant or animal in that the control over language development occurred from within the organism rather than without. In this view, the poet was more free to respond to internal feelings rather than ordering his language for a specific end, a doctrine which had become widely held in the second half of the eighteenth century.⁵⁷

To buttress their argument that metaphor in poetry aided perspicuity, the Platonists emphasized the excellence of a

⁵⁶Thomas Leland, Dissertation on the Principles of Human Eloquence, (London, 1764), p. 9.

⁵⁷M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1958), p. 82; hereinafter cited as Abrams.

substantial body of poetry written before a normative, established diction had developed: the metaphoric vitality of Old Testament poetry, the Hellenic dramatists, and the pre-Augustan Latin writer, Lucretius. This poetry had been written without prior models save that of the poet's imagination. By analogy, they argued, contemporary poets could revitalize poetic language by restoring the metaphoric vitality of this earlier poetry. In summarizing the broad outlines of the Platonist position at the end of the eighteenth century, M. H. Abrams has noted that

The defining character of all these poets was that composed from nature, hence spontaneously, artlessly, and without forethought either of their design or their audience. Like the aborigines in whose outcries, extorted by passion, poetry had originated, these men were said to poetize under the stress of personal feeling; and their compositions were often characterized by various metaphors of the internal-made-external which were to become the key terms of much romantic commentary on poetry in general.⁵⁸

Thus, by the end of the century these two divergent views on the origins of language had spawned two different views as to the nature and function of poetry. Although both views agreed that perspicuity was the central issue in the debate, they disagreed to a remarkable degree as to how that perspicuity could be achieved. On the one hand, the rationalists urged that perspicuity in poetry could best be maintained by the use of a normative, established diction and the avoidance

⁵⁸Abrams, p. 83.

of metaphor and rhetorical adornment. On the other hand, the Platonist position maintained that perspicuity in poetry could be achieved through the renewed use of metaphor and the avoidance of poetic diction plagued by denotation or "algebraical representation"⁵⁹ as Shelley called it.

At the center of the rationalist position was an attachment to social construct of order that owed much, if not all, of its efficacy to Imperial Rome, an efficacy based on a rigidified and hierarchical social order. Without this order, society would deteriorate and a major cause of this social deterioration would be a medium of poetic discourse lacking a language and formal literary arrangement that itself was more than one or two removes from the pattern of objective reality, a language which Eliot said had a "dissociation of sensibility."

Contrary to the rationalist position was the Platonist argument that the medium of poetic discourse was moribund and the remedy for this condition was the restoration of metaphoric vitality which earlier poetry possessed. Invariably, this renovation of poetic language and its formal literary arrangement would also bring about a new flourishing of civilization just as the untrammelled development of poetry had in Hellenic Greece. However, the guardians of the Second Temple--the long line of Augustan literati from

⁵⁹Defence, p. 530.

Dryden through Johnson--viewed these implications of poetic reform with disdain as, indeed, their political counterparts viewed the social implications of social reform with horror. This struggle between order and reform came to the forefront of English life and letters during Shelley's lifetime and profoundly influenced the development of his lyrics and dramas.

CHAPTER III: THE TONE OF SHELLEY'S POETRY: REGENERATION AND REFORM

These two views of the function of metaphor in poetry illumine the central problem in this study of Shelley's language and its relationship to the reform of the world, because these two views of metaphor are, ultimately, directly related to the central problem of language itself, namely the way in which language is linked to the world.

There is no dearth of scholarship on this problem and the abundance of information on the nature of language and its link to the world far exceeds the purpose of this study. However, recent studies⁶⁰ suggest that Shelley may well have been sound in his judgment that language reforms the world. That in

⁶⁰Presently there seems to be no field theory of language which has the general acceptance among literary scholars that, for example, Einstein's Theory of Relativity has among physical scientists. The reasons for this seem to lie in the interdisciplinary nature of the problem as Morse Peckham has noted in his Triumph of Romanticism (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1970): "A theory of historical interpretation of literature depends upon a theory of interpretation. And a theory of interpretation depends upon a theory of meaning. A theory of meaning depends upon a theory of language, and a theory of language depends in turn upon a theory of mind. If we had these theories in reasonably satisfactory shape we could begin to grapple with the effect the attribute 'historical' has upon the term 'interpretation'" (p. 445). Because this study deals in large part with the way in which readers have perceived Shelley's poetry, I have therefore utilized those theories of language which include the dilemma of reader-auditor, such as Peckham's essay, "Order and Disorder in

effect, poetic language is linked to the world by its power to mold and organize human behavior. Hence, the poet as

Fiction," in his Triumph of Romanticism, pp. 290-317. An excellent and pragmatic approach to the writer-reader problem in language is S. I. Hayakawa's Language and Thought in Action, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), especially his discussion of "social control through language," pp. 89-98. Another helpful work which applies the findings of Ferdinand De Saussure, Roman Jakobson, and Claude Levi-Strauss to language and literary interpretation is James A. Boon's From Symbolism to Structuralism: Levi-Strauss in a Literary Tradition (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). Boon's "Poetic Everyman," pp. 62-107, is helpful for understanding the complexities which the reader faces in the literary interpretation of texts since 1800. More helpful in understanding the structuralist approaches to language, genre, and the reader's response is Tzvetan Todorov's The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), as is Robert Scholes' Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), which provides an illuminating discussion of Todorov's theory of reading and illustrates the connection between Romantic and structuralist theories of language. Recent essays which are helpful but somewhat repetitive of the above include College English (Oct., 1975), which is devoted to structuralism and literary interpretation, especially Peggy Rosenthal's "Deciphering S/Z," pp. 125-144 and Isaiah Smithson's "Structuralism as Method of Literary Criticism," pp. 145-159. A small, but impressive bibliography is also included in this number of College English by Dorothy Baisch Selz, pp. 160-166. For the rationalist-Cartesian views of language and the problem of universal grammar, an historical overview may be found in Sterling Leonard's "The Doctrine of Correctness in English Usage 1700-1800," University of Wisconsin Studies in Language and Literature (no. 25, 1929), with more recent investigations noted in Noam Chomsky's Cartesian Linguistics (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). The most lucid account of Chomsky's efforts to explain the rationalist perspective is his Language and Mind, enlarged ed., (New York: Harcourt, and Jonavich, Inc., 1972).

vates sacer⁶¹ has as his essential task and purpose the shaping of the human intellect, the well spring of man's aspirations and hopes. The most refined argument for this understanding of language comes, in large part, from Morse Peckham's essays in his Triumph of Romanticism.⁶²

⁶¹In Werner W. Jaeger's Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, 2nd ed. trans., Gilbert Highet, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), he notes that it was a widely held belief among the writers of the Golden Age (499-399 B.C.) that language had the power to shape the soul and mind of man with the intention of creating individuals who were attuned to the well springs of the community spirit, but who were allowed latitude of human action separate yet harmonious with the ideal form of the community as a whole. This process was called paideia, "the process of educating man to his true form, the real and genuine human nature" (I, xxii). Man's genuine human nature, the Hellenes believed, was a "universally valid model of humanity which all individuals are bound to imitate" (I, xxii). The essence of that model was the development of men into "the Greek trinity of poet, statesman, and sage (POIETIS, POLITIKOS, SOPHOS)" which "embodies the nation's ideal of leadership" (I, xxvi). Now the most important factor in the process of transmitting paideia was the literary artist, especially the poet who was legislator, educator, and orator, which Jaeger further defines: "but the true representatives of paideia were not, the Greeks believed, the voiceless artists--sculptors, painters, architects--but the poets and musicians and orators (which means statesmen) and philosophers. They felt that the legislator was in a certain respect more akin to the poet than the plastic artist; for both the poet and the legislator had an educational mission. The legislator alone could claim the title of sculptor, for he alone shaped living men. . . They considered that the only genuine forces which could shape the soul were words and sounds, and--so far as they work through words or sounds or both--rhythm and harmony; for the decisive factor in all paideia is active energy, which is even more in the culture of the mind than in the agon which exercises physical strength and agility" (I, xxvii). The "active energy" of Hellenic writers which Jaeger stresses as the vitalizing force of paideia corresponds to the rhythm and harmony and action which Shelley admired in writers whose periods (as in the case of Plato) he infused his language with.

⁶²Morse Peckham, "Order and Disorder in Fiction," The

In Morse Peckham's view of the nature of language, he suggests as his fundamental assumption about language that words "ascribe different attributes to different sets of ranges of perceptual configuration, or more simply, experience."⁶³ By implication Peckham means that no one set of instructions for interpreting language is possible because people differ by their experiences. This point is significant in that Peckham stakes his claim that language is not tied to the world by things, as the rationalists suggest, but to the speaker's experience of the world or those of the auditor, reader, interpreter, or literary critic. This fundamental assumption is crucial to a study of Shelley's poetry because it is vastly different from the uniformitarian view of the world and the rationalist view of language⁶⁴ which prevailed when Shelley composed his verse dramas. Peckham's point, simply stated, is that the "relationship of language to world is anamorphic, not

Triumph of Romanticism (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 290-317; hereinafter cited as Peckham followed by pagination.

⁶³Peckham, p. 292.

⁶⁴Earl R. Wasserman, in The Subtler Language: Critical Readings of Neoclassic and Romantic Poems (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959) makes the point that

"Until the end of the eighteenth century there was sufficient intellectual homogeneity for men to share certain assumptions, or universal principles, outside the structure of discursive language, that tended to order their universe for them. In varying degrees,

isomorphic."⁶⁵

Language, then, in this view is related to the world arbitrarily, not by the conscious role of the intellect, and the most determining factor in that relationship to the world is human behavior, a view that closely accords with Shelley's remark in A Defence that "all things exist as they are perceived; at least in relation to the percipient."⁶⁶ And again, as Peckham notes,

. . . all language is conventional. If I know those conventions I know how to link the discourse I've heard to the world. If the utterer of the discourse employs them as he would, then, he has controlled my behavior. Language functions then by controlling behavior.⁶⁷

ranging from conviction to faith and to passive submission, man accepted, to name but a few, the Christian interpretation of history, the sacramentalism of nature, the Great Chain of Being, the analogy of the various planes of creation, the conception of man as microcosm, and, in the literary area, the doctrine of the genres. These were the cosmic syntaxes in the public domain; and the poet could afford to think of his art as imitative of 'nature,' since these patterns were what he meant by 'nature.' He could expect his audience to recognize his employment of these cosmic syntaxes, could transform language by means of them, and could survey reality and experience in the presence of the world these syntaxes implied. Poetry was, in the sense in which the word has been employed, essentially lyric, the poet's task being to 'imitate nature' by giving poetic reality to nature's principles. When the uniformitarian premises of the universe declined, there arose in their place no single system such as the concordia discors rerum to take its place" (pp. 10-11); hereinafter cited as The Subtler Language, followed by pagination.

⁶⁵Peckham, p. 294.

⁶⁶A Defence, p. 535.

⁶⁷Peckham, p. 294.

The simplicity of these remarks has far-reaching implications. If applied to poetic discourse, then, the poet's intention in a poem is to form, shape, or gain control over the reader's behavior or to modify it in accords with his intentions in the poem. If applied to Shelley's poetic discourse, this view of language seems a plausible manner of coming to terms with his poetry, for Shelley's announced intention throughout his prefaces, letters, and verse dramas is⁶⁸ to reform the world by influencing the creation of a humanitarian ethic by the use of language.

Peckham's notion of how language works needs further elaboration, because it illustrates a major, yet unresolved problem on the nature of language, one which is crucial to an understanding of Shelley. Peckham notes that

an utterance amounts to a speaker's prediction that if the interpreter categorizes the world as the utterer recommends, he will encounter such-and-such a world; or the interpreter predicts that if he interprets the utterance as the conventions, as he uses them, recommends, he will encounter such-and-such a world.⁶⁹

⁶⁸The most significant instances of Shelley's views of the function of poetry may be found in A Defence of Poetry. Other illuminating sources are A Philosophical Review of Reform, the prefaces to Prometheus Unbound, The Cenci, Hellas, and his letters to Thomas Peacock and Leigh Hunt during 1819. Despite the plethora of interpretations on Shelley's views of poetry and the function of the poet, the most judicious and trustworthy are to be found in Kenneth Neill Cameron's Shelley: The Golden Years (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 188-218.

⁶⁹Peckham, p. 290.

Words, then, are not really referents to things, but rather they are categories of experiences to which the interpreter-auditor is directed. Clarity of expression, the main issue of the rationalist-Platonist debate, does not come from assumptions about one kind of diction being clearer than another, but rather from the "power of language to particularize ideas through interlocking categories,"⁷⁰ and not through language's supposed ontological nature. In fine, language is polysemous, and this polysemous nature of language provides the central problem for the reader of Shelley.

The interpreter (reader or auditor) of literary utterances must make choices between the two extreme poles of language, its exemplificatory and explanatory modes. In the former mode, language denotes "things," such as household items, while in the latter mode language possesses the power of affective connotation,⁷¹ creating such terms as democracy, love, and

⁷⁰Peckham, pp. 295-296.

⁷¹The terms, informative and affective connotations, are S. I. Hayakawa's in his Language In Thought and Action, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1972, pp. 63-68. Wasserman makes a similar point in The Subtler Language: "Language, then, flies simultaneously in two directions, centrifugally toward its references and centripetally toward its own organizational form as language. The first is its representative function, the second its constitutive. We can, then, set up a spectrum of language on the basis of these two functions. At one is customary discourse, in which the reference function of language predominates and the syntactical function is minimal: its purpose is to direct us as modestly as possible to something outside itself. At the other end is poetry, in which reference values are assimilated into the constitutive act of language; its primary purpose is to trap us in itself as an independent reality" (pp. 6-7). In speaking of Shelley's

justice. In determining which pole of language the writer uses, the reader must understand the writer's reading instructions; he must be made aware of the writer's intention through word-order, diction, syntax, mechanical arrangement on the page (stanzaic design and line-length) and if necessary prefaces, letters, drafts, and biographical data so as to avoid as much as possible the polysemy of language.

As a consequence of the reader's exposure to the polysemous nature of language, he experiences difficulty in interpretation and this "exposure to polysemy in language and the formal order imposed by syntax means confusion, uncertainty, hesitation in interpretation. It means perceptual, cognitive, interpretive disorientation."⁷²

To reduce the polysemy of language, the writer imposes a form on the language which separates the categorical nature of language in his literary work from other categories of literary forms. He does this in order to reconcile the tensions of the explanatory and exemplificatory modes of language created by the polysemous utterance in order to separate the

language, Wasserman, in his Shelley: A Critical Reading (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971) notes that "the function of language, whether spoken or tacit, is to give shape and sensory qualities to the unwilling 'phantasies' and thus to translate them to the conscious mind where they become irresistible motives" (p. 113); hereinafter cited as Shelley: A Critical Reading, followed by pagination.

⁷²Peckham, p. 302.

utterance from other similar utterances.⁷³

Peckham's point is that considered as behavior ordering discourse, language is ineffective if it doesn't reconcile tensions caused by polysemy. If language doesn't come to terms with sensory data and the paradigm common to most men of good sense, taste, and judgment, then "disorder categorizes those encounters with the world in which perceptual disorientation entails cognitive tension, the experience of a disparity between the cognitive model and the sensory data being scanned."⁷⁴

⁷³In the essay, for example, a traditional method of avoiding cognitive tension and reader disorientation is for the writer to utilize a three-fold pattern of development: thesis, exemplification, and conclusion. In a topic such as "Real Estate Taxes Should Be Reduced," the category, taxes, is an interlocking category particularized by real estate, itself an interlocking category. "Real Estate Taxes" becomes understandable only by further exemplification by which clarity of expression is achieved. With exemplification the reader's cognitive tension is diminished and his orientation clarified. In effect, what the writer does is to set up a problem for the reader (the explanatory statement--or statement which needs explanation), delay its solution (provide exemplification in the form of particulars) and then solve the problem (illustrate to the reader how the particulars create a pattern or solution.) In fiction, the writer creates his problem, say an unsolved murder, provides particulars through hints or clues, and illustrates how the clues lead to a solution. In an epic the writers tip off the reader to the cognitive model by such conventional beginnings as "I sing of Peleus' son," or "of arms and the man," or "of Man's first disobedience." In Shelley, the problem confronted by the reader is the same: to discern the problem and its solution; e.g., why is Prometheus on the rocks and how will he get down.

⁷⁴Peckham, p. 301.

In general, this is the problem faced by the reader when he approaches Shelley's language, because the reader must understand that after 1800 the poet no longer employed the language of poetic discourse which reflected the intellectual homogeneity of the previous century. What was required of the poet after 1800 was an additional formulative act.

He must simultaneously employ the syntactical features of poetry to shape an order that has no assumed prototype outside the creative act, and with this internally contained order create the poem.⁷⁵

Hence, the reader must acquaint himself with not only the materials of the poem or literary work to discern the cognitive model, a task that is often difficult in Shelley's work, but also he must then familiarize himself with the literary work's syntactic structure which may have no clear precedent, as is the case for Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.

The absence of a clear syntactic precedent in the modern lyric (after 1800) poses problems for the reader

because the modern lyric attempts the impossible: a monument to spontaneity, a poem that coincides with the act and passion of its utterance. It tries to overcome the secondary or elegiac aspect of language by making language coterminous with life. However, paradoxical this project may be, it has redeemed the short poem from the bondage of the pointed or witty style.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Wasserman, The Subtler Language, p. 11.

⁷⁶Geoffrey Hartman, Beyond Formalism, p. 228. Hartman further notes: "the attempt to absorb truth into the texture of the lyric has its own history. It tells of poets in search of the modern equivalent to that fusion of reality and idea which haunted artists and theoreticians from Winckelmann on and which seemed to them the very secret of Greek art" (p. 230).

But in coming to terms with poetry redeemed from the bondage of the pointed or witty style, the reader becomes involved with unfamiliar poetic syntax that is very different from say the Couplet or supracouplet of Pope with its "sustained exemplary dialectic and discourse, composed of fine-meshed, limited and interlocking categories."⁷⁷ In fact, the constituent elements of syntax must be perceived in an expanded sense to include the interactive capacities of any of the properties of words.

Among these properties are reference in all its forms--including connotation and the capacity of a word to carry more than one reference as symbol, metaphor, ambiguity, or pun; position and repetition; word order; sound rhyme; even orthography. Consequently rhyme and rhyme patterns, alliteration, symmetry and asymmetry of word order, and all other relations that arise from verbal properties may work syntactically, thickening and concretizing the tenuous language of discourse, transforming language from intermediate to actor, and so enmeshing attention in the intra-referential action.⁷⁸

Thus, the two problems of cognitive model (genre) and syntax in Shelley's poetry pose a dilemma. As Tzvetan Todorov has noted in his The Fantastic, "poetics, from Aristotle on, has concerned itself with codification of procedures and responses."⁷⁹ Assuming that there is continuity of development in a genre like drama, the Aristotelian notion appears functional, but the

⁷⁷Peckham, p. 302.

⁷⁸Wasserman, The Subtler Language, p. 7.

⁷⁹Tzvetan Todorov, p. viii.

reader who utilizes only the codifications of the dramatic genre before Shelley's era as an approach to understanding his drama is only somewhat prepared to fathom Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. Generic criticism rests on what has been done to which the literary work under consideration is compared. This is an inadequate approach to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, for example, because, as Shelley noted, "it is a kind of characterization and mechanism yet unattempted."⁸⁰

The materials⁸¹ for Shelley's "characterization and mechanism" come partly from the Prometheus narratives,⁸² and partly from Aeschylus's drama.⁸³ Shelley's drama is, in effect, a retelling of the Prometheus myth and this remains its basic

⁸⁰Quoted in Mary's note on Prometheus Unbound, Poetry, p. 274.

⁸¹For a complete listing of the sources of the Prometheus myth consult Robert Graves' The Greek Myths, 2 vols. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1955), I, 143-149.

⁸²In Claude Levi-Strauss's Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and B. G. Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1963) he defines myth as being equal to all its variants (p. 217). In this sense all variants of the Oedipus myth from Sophocles through Freud would constitute the total myth of Oedipus.

⁸³In Neville Rogers' Shelley At Work, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) he notes that there are 21 echoes of Aeschylean phrases in Act I, and four in Act II, but none in Acts III and IV. "As we read it we find that from the second act onwards the Aeschylean echoes in the language are becoming fewer and fewer, and that, correspondingly, the caves of the earlier part, mere details of Aeschylean scenery, change and pass into the symbolic cave of Plato" (p. 151); hereinafter cited as Rogers, followed by pagination.

mode of dramatic narration.⁸⁴ However, what initially (but not totally) guides the reader to an understanding of the drama (its characterization and mechanism) is his understanding of the interlocking categories which characterize the proper name, Prometheus, since there is no single Prometheus myth, but rather several forms of the myth which Shelley utilized from classical literature.

In Aeschylus's treatment of the myth, Prometheus is the wisest of the Titans, having gained his knowledge from Athena at whose birth from Zeus's head he had assisted. She taught him architecture, astronomy, mathematics, navigation, medicine, metallurgy, and other useful arts, which he passed on to mankind.⁸⁵ The view of Prometheus as the Titan who gave man fire stems from Virgil's treatment of the myth in the Eclogues (vi, 42). Thus, Prometheus not only gave man fire, but also he was the Titan who gave man all the arts of civilization and was, as a consequence, punished by Zeus.⁸⁶ In effect, there

⁸⁴"Mythic" in Northrop Frye's sense of the word; see his Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 33. A fuller discussion of Shelley's use of the mythic mode in Prometheus Unbound may be found in Earl R. Wasserman's Shelley, Chapter 9, "The Premises and the Mythic Mode," pp. 255-305, sections of which are utilized in this chapter.

⁸⁵Graves, I, 144.

⁸⁶Zeus, fearful that man was outstripping the gods in wisdom and technical knowledge, decided to punish Prometheus for his gifts to man by chaining him to a rack where a vulture gnawed on his liver. The punishment was eternal because Prometheus's liver grew again during the night. Zeus delivers a similar, eternal punishment to Amphiaraus who foretold the deaths of the brothers in Seven Against Thebes. Zeus spared

are metaphoric possibilities inherent in the paradigm of the myth for developing Prometheus into a dramatic character who became the founder of civilization. Hence, he becomes in Shelley's drama the source of man's release from the bondage of the barbarism of the past, his uncivilized state, and the source of man's release from the bondage of the present, the despotic tyranny which gripped Europe after the Congress of Vienna, 1815. The myth, then, provides the syntactic ligatures in Shelley's drama for "the characterization . . . yet unattempted."

But there are major difficulties which limit a precise analysis of these ligatures. As several editors of Shelley's texts have noted, Shelley under punctuates or punctuates capriciously, his intention being to underscore the rhythmical pause or declamatory effect.⁸⁷ His notebooks provide little aid to

him death, only to punish him by keeping him alive in the netherworld. Shelley's use of the Latin inscription from the myth, "do you not hear, Amphiaraus, beneath the earth?" suggests to the reader the ominous events ahead of him in the drama and the plight of those who foretell the future such as Prometheus.

⁸⁷G. M. Matthews notes in his Shelley: Poetical Works (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) that "inadequate and sometimes haphazard as it is, however, Shelley's punctuation, so far as it goes, is great value as an index to his metrical, or at times, it may be, to his rhetorical intention-for in Shelley's hands, punctuation serves rather to mark the rhythmical pause and onflow of the verse, or to secure the declamatory effect, than to indicate the structure or elucidate the sense" (preface, p. iii). The problems with Shelley's punctuation cannot be overestimated. In Rogers' Shelley at Work he quotes an unpublished letter from Robert Bridges to William Butler Yeats, 7 October 1915: "'Yesterday I had to repunctuate a piece of Shelley's Prometheus, 19 lines. It was nonsense in the received text or at least unintelligible . . . I consulted the MS. at the Bodleian Library, and found that Shelley's own

the fair copy editions as the punctuation in them is more often troublesome than an aid to clarity. Instead, his notebooks indicate that Shelley's chief problem was that his imagination seemed to exceed the boundaries of language itself.⁸⁸

Yet, his notebooks provide helpful keys to the syntax or "mechanism . . . yet unattempted." From an historical perspective, Shelley's syntax in Prometheus Unbound is markedly different from his poetic predecessors in the eighteenth century, despite his obvious debt to some of them in his odes.⁸⁹ As against the "balanced line"⁹⁰ of Dryden and Pope with its proportioning

punctuation was almost worse than nothing" (p. 135). See also Rogers' preface and introduction to The Esdaile Poems, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966) and his "Punctuating Shelley's Syntax," in Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin, ed. Dorothy Hewlett, no. xvii, 1966.

⁸⁸Neville Rogers has noted that "if Shelley's poetry is often difficult to read this is frequently for the reason, not least, that it was most difficult to write. How to bound imagination in language when his language itself had powers that resisted boundaries was, as his notebooks tell us again and again, the chief problem of his work" (Shelley At Work, p. 119).

⁸⁹For the development of the Romantic ode, see M. H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric," in From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle, eds. F. W. Hilles and Harold Bloom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 200-229.

⁹⁰For a fuller discussion, see Josephine Miles', Eras and Modes in English Poetry, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 1-19 and pp. 113-123, parts of which are used in this chapter; hereinafter cited as Miles, followed by pagination.

of language with one adjective to two nouns to one verb which Dryden praised in his preface to "On Translation,"⁹¹ Shelley's syntax in his lyrical narratives of dramatic confrontation (the dramas) employs "more verbs than adjectives, more subordinate than serial constructions, more actions and arguments than descriptions."⁹² The vocabulary of Shelley's poetry is

the basic human terms which prevail through all English poetry, and in part the terms of the surrounding century, and in at least one-half the terms which serve to characterize and identify it, the sensory epithets of bright, deep, sad, wild, the active natural forces of flower, light, moon, mountain, sea, star, sun, the human concepts of hope, spirit, father, tear, and woe and the sensitive receptive verbs of feeling, falling, lying, looking, praying, seeming.⁹³

In Shelley's poetry, this vocabulary tends to "blur the edges of all his images in the romantic fashion of implication and in layers of metaphor."⁹⁴ Yet his metaphors are "glancing and complex and his verbs are "stronger and more structurally determining than his adjectives."⁹⁵ The major terms of Shelley's periodic sentences (nouns, adjectives, verbs) are "sensory, concrete and thus, often symbolic, with the oblique

⁹¹Miles, p. 15.

⁹²Miles, p. 15.

⁹³Miles, p. 119.

⁹⁴Miles, p. 121.

⁹⁵Miles, p. 120.

metaphors taking the place of explicit similes".⁹⁶ The resulting sentence structure is "more complex than coordinate, using more verbs and sometimes only half as many adjectives as in the century before."⁹⁷ On the whole, this poetic syntax creates a narrative structure which "presents people in situations with much suggestion and implication of surroundings rather than surroundings as the eighteenth century did."⁹⁸

Thus, the reader who comes to Shelley's Prometheus Unbound with the achievement of the Augustan tradition as his standard of clarity for the "mechanism" of the drama is clearly in difficulty when he deals with Shelley's syntax. In addition to the obvious mechanical differences in style (stanzaic as against the linear), there is the additional underlying difference that the ontology behind Shelley's poetics is, at best, ambiguous, an ambiguity caused by Shelley's refusal to make the distinction between things and thought, which increases the primary difficulty in coming to terms with both the "characterization and mechanism yet unattempted."

⁹⁶Miles, p. 122.

⁹⁷Miles, p. 122.

⁹⁸Miles, p. 118. Miles views these changes as producing "one triumphant solution to the long Augustan search for a great heroic poem or a cosmical epic, one triumphant solution to the long Augustan search which reconciles the inheritances of classical culture and of contemporary science, in descriptive panorama of heroic proportions stressing scenes and sublimities and subordinating Sir Patrick Spence to Virgil and Milton" (p. 123).

The most helpful approach to resolving this apparent ambiguity of Shelley's language in Prometheus Unbound lies in his notebooks. By tracing the development of Shelley's symbols in his earlier works, we can best gain an understanding of how his symbolic processes function not only in Prometheus Unbound, but also his other verse dramas as well.

The resolution of the ontological ambiguity noted by scholars lies in an attempt to perceive the psychological basis of Shelley's language, that is the states of mind which gave rise to his poetry. But until the psychological basis of language is placed on a firmer footing,⁹⁹ literary interpretation

⁹⁹In Shelley: A Critical Reading Wasserman seems to have put his finger on the problem of Shelley's syntax. He notes that "if the essential criterion of a work of art is its organic wholeness, the evident facts are that systematic poetics cannot account for our desire to experience and create organic wholeness and that although we find one work of art greater than another, poetics alone cannot account for the difference. We may point to the internal interrelationships, but there can be no demonstrable formula for determining that a group of thoughts has been so arranged and combined that they constitute one thought containing its own integrative principle. Even if there were, we would still lack a yardstick for valuing one integral unity above another. The problem remains with us and continues to beset critics for whom organic unity is both the definition and criterion of poetry. How does one measure the complexity of interrelations? At what point of integrity does the claritas shine through? Or at what point is the full potential of the materials realized? Even if we find the answer on psychological grounds, we have to assume an intuitive and ineffable constant in man" (p. 213). Wasserman further states that "to demand that Shelley choose between a mimetic and an expressive theory of poetry is to misunderstand not only his poetics but also its supporting ontology, which refuses the distinction between things and thoughts and leaves ambiguous the immanence or transcendence of the poetic mind 'which feeds this verse/Peopling the lone universe'" (p. 218).

is necessarily limited. Nonetheless, the development of these states of mind, as evidenced by the notebooks, provides helpful clues to unravelling the source of his syntactic ligatures, namely the Prometheus myths and key passages from the Symposium and the Republic. The "allegory of the cave" in the latter is especially important as the source of the lightness-darkness pattern which formulates the correspondences of the evil-goodness symbolism in the dramatic poem.

As I have mentioned earlier in this chapter, the myth of Prometheus provides the syntactic ligature for the composition and understanding of Prometheus Unbound. On the whole, Prometheus is the heroic figure who, in the drama, liberates mankind from the tyranny and bondage of Jupiter through the agency of the virtue and power of love. In addition to pointing the way to the mythic mode of the poem, the subtitle also provides another premise of literary response which the reader must be aware of. "A lyrical drama in four acts" suggests the type of drama created by the Greeks during the Golden Age which contained lyrics sung by the actors to musical accompaniment and choreographic arrangement, all of which amplified dramatic action.¹⁰⁰ However, the Hellenic drama extant in Shelley's era had neither, and as Shelley notes in the preface to his drama he is employing a "certain arbitrary discretion"¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰The Orestes Plays of Aeschylus, trans. Paul Roche, New York: The New American Library, 1963), pp. 215-237.

¹⁰¹Poetry, p. 204.

in his use of materials as the Hellenic dramatists did.

Prometheus, then, is "the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the highest motives to the best and noblest ends."¹⁰²

Throughout the preface to Prometheus Unbound, Shelley continues to elaborate his reading instructions, setting forth the assumptions for his cognitive model so as to differentiate its form from other forms of discourse. In effect, Shelley informs his reader that his production is not in the genre of Addison's Cato or its type of drama in the 18th century. Instead, his aim is to select and utilize language that acts upon men's minds and so moves them to bring about "some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it."¹⁰³ His intention in choice of diction and form of design in the drama is to change men's minds, to order their behavior toward the values which Prometheus's possesses. As he states in the preface,

A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others: and of such external influences as excite and sustain this power; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness (*italics mine*); it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Poetry, p. 205.

¹⁰³Poetry, p. 206.

¹⁰⁴Poetry, p. 206.

But Shelley modifies this remark in the following sections of the preface to the drama lest his sole intention be regarded as a poetical tract "solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system of the theory of human life."¹⁰⁵ His purpose is not to propose specific legislative actions or programs, an effort which he made in his Philosophical Review of Reform and his other political tracts.¹⁰⁶ It is rather

to familiarise [sic] the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence: aware that until the mind can love, admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are a way of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness.¹⁰⁷

The problem, then of discerning the cognitive model in Prometheus Unbound may be summarized as follows: language molds men's minds toward specific social ends and guides their behavior. The poet's role in this process is to admit words to men's minds to shape their moral perspective--a necessary, preliminary act to any tangible political reform. The highest form of discourse in this process of shaping men's moral perspective is the drama, because "the connexion of poetry and social good is more observable in the drama than in whatever

¹⁰⁵Poetry, p. 207.

¹⁰⁶These would include A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote, A Letter in Defence of Richard Carlile, An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte, and An Address to the Irish People.

¹⁰⁷Poetry, p. 206

other form."¹⁰⁸ Finally, the drama's purpose is to prepare men's minds to apprehend the good and the beautiful in the world by removing the familiar film of language¹⁰⁹ through which man has perceived the universe. With a renovated language, man would then perceive the universe through the medium of a language which would be

Lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiantly, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality.¹¹⁰

Shelley's instructions, then, orient the reader toward an unfamiliar cognitive model, the "lyrical narrative of dramatic confrontation,"¹¹¹ a model unfamiliar in its vividly stanzaic lyrics and unbalanced syntax,¹¹² and yet a model appropriate for the development of his theme: the virtue and power of love to redeem a world in bondage to monarchic and clerical oppression.

¹⁰⁸A Defence, p. 546.

¹⁰⁹An echo from Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, Chapter XIV. The idea is similar to Wordsworth's in The Prelude where he notes that the "regular action of the world" deadens poetic language (II, 361), a point which he makes throughout The Prelude at II, 102-104; IV, 167-68; V, 516-22; VII, 722-30, XII, 211-14; XIV, 157-62; see also the "Intimations Ode," 126-28.

¹¹⁰The speaker is Prometheus, (III,iii, 49-53).

¹¹¹The phrase, I believe, is the most valid generic distinction for Prometheus Unbound and comes from Josephine Miles, Eras and Modes in English Poetry, p. 15.

¹¹²Miles, p. 15.

To effectively see how the ligatures of the myth work in the drama to create the theme of liberation by love, it is first necessary to view these ligatures in the development of Shelley's work before Prometheus Unbound in 1819.

Essentially these ligatures fashion a cycle which I have chosen to call the regenerative cycle, composed of four aspects or phases: birth-maturation-decay-death. The four phases or aspects correspond approximately to the seasonal cycle in the natural world: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. But the correspondences have multiple yet simultaneous symbolic values, including moral, political, and social ones, which must be viewed holistically.

The most important operational assumption in this regenerative cycle is its susceptibility to inevitable change as the seasonal cycle itself changes. Hence, the language comprising any one aspect of the cycle inevitably leads into the next aspect of the cycle and the inevitability of change accounts for the difficulty of interpretation for the reader. This difficulty of interpretation is that Shelley's explanatory statements often do not culminate in exemplificatory language in the sense that the explanatory statements of the essay lead to exemplification, or the explanatory statements of Pope's Essay On Man end in an exemplificatory language which is both pleasing and instructive to his audience. Instead, Shelley's

explanatory statements lead to "implicative clarity"¹¹³ rather than exemplificatory clarity. Implicative clarity means that the language constituting any one aspect of the regenerative cycle implies or indirectly leads to the next aspect of the cycle to achieve clarity of expression. Thus, the chief difficulty in assigning or prescribing a precise semantic center to Shelley's language is that the clarity of expression is implicative, rather than exemplificatory. That is up to a point, the language is exemplificatory, because it is Shelley's usual fashion to begin his imagery pattern with concrete and sensory details and then to imply, as a kind of final gesture, that these details in the pattern point to a meaning larger than the language is able to supply or create.¹¹⁴ The reader, presumably, supplies or creates the final clarity or understanding by his utilization of Shelley's conventions of language as Shelley

¹¹³Miles notes that Shelley "managed to blur the edges of his metaphor in the romantic fashion and in layers of metaphor" (p. 121). Implicative clarity means that clarity of expression occurs through implication in the layers of metaphor rather than by exemplification.

¹¹⁴In Fogle's The Imagery of Keats and Shelley he notes that "Shelley, then, is abstract in that his poetry continually climbs toward abstraction on steps of concrete imagery, but that Shelley's poetry strives continually to express by images an absolute truth or beauty beyond the scope of imagery. Face to face with this ultimate reality, he is unable to summon the words which will fix its identity; he falls back in defeat" (p. 222). Fogle's point is amply demonstrated in Demogorgon's reply to Asia that "the deep truth is imageless," meaning that up to a point Demogorgon can answer her questions as to the nature of things, but speaking the language of men, this language is limited and finite when it comes to answering questions of an infinite nature. Language can only hint at the truth.

would.¹¹⁵ If the reader does this, Shelley has controlled his behavior, or has in some degree influenced his behavior. That is to say, Shelley's symbols orient the reader to planes of ideal behavior or courses of action in the moral, political and social senses. The reader's response, for Shelley, then would be for the reader to provide exemplification by carrying out moral changes in himself or herself which would result in a change of social attitudes large enough to have political consequences,, even of a radical nature. However, given the smallness of Shelley's intended audience, Shelley was limiting the political effectiveness by virtue of numbers alone. Thus, he exaggerates the total possible effort of "reforming the world." ¹¹⁶

An example of the implicative clarity of Shelley's language occurs in the drama's beginning, a nocturnal wasteland before dawn, "A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus." The setting is concrete and sensory, but implicative as well in that the Caucasus Mountains were thought to be the ancestral home of homo sapiens in Shelley's era.¹¹⁷ By having the drama begin

¹¹⁵Cited in footnote #8.

¹¹⁶According to Cameron's Shelley: The Golden Years, Shelley was not widely known in the sense that Byron was until the publication of The Revolt of Islam (1818). The Quarterly and other journals released a series of ad hominem attacks, "tagging its author as an atheist, a dangerous radical, and a Godwinian dogmatist" (p. 483). Cameron notes that "in short, he is hoping by his poetry to influence uncommitted intellectuals, particularly those with potential creativity ('highly refined imaginations') to ally themselves with Byron, Hunt, Hazlitt, Bentham, and other dedicated liberals. Much of this would have been clear to the sophisticated reader of his time" (p. 484).

¹¹⁷Cameron notes in Shelley: The Golden Years that "Shelley's

in the Hindu Kush Mountains rather than Aeschylus's Scythia, Shelley's locale implies that the dramatic narrative is about the beginning of history or civilization.

The time, "night," is a seemingly vague reference, but this "night" becomes clearer by line 13 for Prometheus has been in the Ravine for "three-thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours" (I, 13). Thus, "night" is an explanatory statement (in Peckham's terms) which gains exemplification by "three-thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours." The metaphoric implications of "night" intensify and become more specific by its interaction with "Prometheus" who has been

Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape, sound of life. (I, 20-22)

where

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones. (I, 31-33)

and

. . . and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind:
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storms, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail. (I, 38-42)

The manifold in the drama in Act I is thus a bleak and lifeless, desiccated and frozen wasteland, which contains no

shift of scene (from Aeschylus's Scythia) is deliberate, for the Indian Caucasus of the Hindu Kush mountains were in his day, thought to be connected with the origins of mankind" (p. 478).

semblance of life. The absence of vegetative and sentient life, and the presence of the suffering figure in bondage to the tyranny of the seasons connect Prometheus to a crucial image in Shelley's poetry, the "woe-fertilized world,"¹¹⁸ which further enlarges the dimensions of "night."

Among Shelley's juvenilia¹¹⁹ is the poem, "The Voyage," (1811) which contains the genesis of his paradigm of regeneration and which is connected with "night" in Prometheus Unbound. In part it reads:

By other nurses than the battling storm,
 Friendship, Equality, and Sufferance,
 His manhood had been cradled,--
 Inheritor to all the vice and fear
 Which Kings and laws and priests and
 conquerors spread.
 On the woe-fertilized world (ll. 123-28).

The lines, "woe-fertilized world," symbolically image a world in misery and bondage, yet one capable of arising from its woes. However, Shelley at this point in his poetic

¹¹⁸In Neville Rogers' Shelley At Work, he admits that it is too much to attribute to one line the beginnings of Shelley's ideas on Love-Rebirth. He does find, however, (and I concur) that the imagery which signals Shelley's change from Necessitarianism (evil collapsing of its own accord) to the doctrine of the New Birth (man willing a social order founded on love) begins with this image. The year before Shelley had written to Elizabeth Hitchener of man's hidden capability for reform (his unseen seeds of virtue and power) that "You must not despair of human nature--Our conceptions are scarcely vivid enough to picture the degree of crime or degradation which sullies human society--but what words are equal to express their inadequacy to picture its hidden virtue" (Letters, I, 185).

¹¹⁹Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Esdaile Notebook, ed. Kenneth Neill Cameron, (London: Faber & Faber, 1964), pp. 98-107; hereinafter cited as Esdaile Notebook, followed by pagination.

development is not yet clear as to his course of action to eliminate woe from the world. Neville Rogers notes in his study of Shelley's MSS that "in its early manifestations the New Birth Concept is hardly distinguishable from the doctrine of Necessity"¹²⁰ as enunciated in Queen Mab:

Spirit of Nature? all sufficing Power
Necessity! thou mother of the world (VI, 197-198).

The "all sufficing Power," Necessity, is the germinal concept identified with the "Spirit of Nature" which is also the mother of the world. However, in the later passages of Queen Mab, this image evolves further. In Section VII, the Fairy Queen speaks of regeneration by noting that

All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives such
To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
Rewarding her with their pure perfectness: (VIII, 107-111).

The nexus between these lines and those of "The Voyage" is the emergent role which "love" plays, replacing Necessity. True, throughout Queen Mab Shelley has emphasized the decline of evil by its own accord, a concept present in the characterization of Jupiter in Prometheus Unbound. But these lines from

¹²⁰"It seems probable that this doctrine reached Shelley through the eighteenth-century philosophers many among whom, though opposed to Plato, may have had it from indirectly Platonic sources. In its Shelleyan form it was a fusion of two Platonic ingredients, Necessity and the World Soul, and, though the emphasis later shifted towards the second of these, it was identifiable originally chiefly with the first, that Necessity which in the Republic is the Mother of the Fates, on whose spindle turn the orbits of the world. It is, for Shelley, the spirit of Nature and of life, an impersonal, impartial power, unlimited and outlasting decay; all actions and thoughts in the universe are subject to it; actions are predestined and were always so" (Rogers, p. 27).

Queen Mab suggest that love is not only the catalyst of evil's decay, but also the source of the spiritual regeneration that will arise from evil's decay. Hence, the phrase, "All things will be recreated" becomes clearer by its parallel structure with "the flame/ Of consentaneous love inspires all life."

The nature of this consentaneous love was erotic, agapeic, and philial; further, it lacked self-love¹²¹ which leads to the isolation of the human heart, as Shelley would demonstrate three years later in Alastor (1815), where the poet's quest for a being like himself ends in self-destruction.¹²²

The crucial paradigm, "the flame of consentaneous love," matures further between 1815-1817. In A Proposal for Reform Shelley again noted the cyclical processes of nature which fill mankind's heart with love and replace woe:

What opinion should we form of that man who,
when he walked in the freshness of the spring,
beheld the fields enamelled with flowers, and

¹²¹Nor homosexual love as Shelley made clear in his On the Manners of the Ancients Relative to the Subject of Love in Roger Ingpen and W. E. Peck, eds., The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, (New York: Scribner's, 1926-30), VII, 223-29. Hereinafter cited as the Julian edition, followed by the volume number and pagination.

¹²²Peacock wrote Shelley that ALASTOR means "an evil genius, KADODAIMON. . . I mentioned the true meaning of the word because many have supposed Alastar to be the name of the hero of the poem" (Humbert Wolfe, ed. The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley as Comprised in the Life of Shelley by Thomas Jefferson Hogg, The Recollections of Shelley and Byron by Edward Trelawney, Memoirs of Shelley by Thomas Love Peacock, (New York: Dutton, 1933, II, 341).

the foliage bursting from the buds, should find
 fault with this beautiful order, and murmur his
 contemptible discontents because winter must come¹²³

In The Revolt of Islam, this idea becomes

The blasts of Autumn drive the winged seeds
 Over the earth,--next come the snows, and rain,
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;
 Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
 Shedding soft dews from her ethereal over the plain,
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless
 things (IX, 3649-57).¹²⁴

A more mature development of the regeneration motif occurs
 in the "Ode to the West Wind" in which the forces of nature
 become the source of the poet's spiritual rebirth.

In the succeeding stanzas of Queen Mab Cynthna calls
 "Virtue, and Hope, and Love" (IX, 3667) the "seeds" which "are
 sleeping in the soil" (IX, 3676). Viewed holistically, the
 evolving paradigm in these poems for a society organized on
 love displays two significant features. As Neville Rogers
 has noted,

the seasons in the material universe have
 become the symbol of immortality in the
 spiritual and moral universes: with the
 latter, since for Shelley the intellectual
 is a portion of the moral, they are a symbol

¹²³A Proposal for Reform, Jul. v, 226.

¹²⁴For brevity, The Revolt of Islam will be used throughout this study rather than Laon and Cynthna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century Poetry p. 127.

for immortality of thought and poetry: more than this they symbolize the cycles of good and evil which can be moved around by the power of thought and Mind.¹²⁵

Thus, when Love infuses the Mind, it is activated for reform. In his earlier efforts to illustrate the decline of evil in the Necessity of Atheism, Shelley viewed the fall of evil as an inevitable point in future time. But as I have sought to illustrate, Necessitarianism alters to the full paradigm of regeneration between 1812 and 1818. By this date good now had to constantly renew itself in order to conquer evil, just as Spring renews the Earth's seasonal despair of Winter in "Ode to the West Wind" and as Spring renews the poet's creative despair. Similarly Demogorgon issues a remedy against evil in his final speech in Prometheus Unbound: man must expect an unending struggle with evil, one that can only be won through the virtue and power of love.

The emergence of the paradigm of the New Birth needs further discussion with respect to its sources and evaluation, because of the implicative clarity this paradigm contains for a clearer perspective of Shelley's word, "night" in Prometheus Unbound. As early as 1810 Shelley had written three poems, entitled "To Mary,"¹²⁶ all bearing the Latin inscription "nondum amabam et amare amabam, quaerebus quid amarem, amans amare," which initiates his search for an Ariadne-figure to rescue

¹²⁵Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 32.

¹²⁶The Esdaile Notebook, pp. 115-20.

him from the labyrinth of despair in the "woe-fertilized world." Shelley's headnote, "of not yet loving and wanting something to love," appears five years later as the headnote to Alastor and points the way to major theme of Epipsychidion (1821), the idea of love as the fount of poetry.¹²⁷ But the intellectual support for this feeling of wanting to love, and not having something to love develops seven years later. According to Mary Shelley's Journal,¹²⁸ Shelley began reading and translating Plato's Symposium¹²⁹ on 13 August 1817.¹³⁰ In his notebooks, Shelley began an anthology of passages taken from Agathon's descriptions of love in The Symposium:

He is young, therefore, and being young is tender and soft. There were need of some poet like Homer to celebrate the delicacy and tenderness of Love. For Homer says, that the goddess Calamity is delicate, and that her feet are tender. 'Her feet are soft,' he says, 'for

¹²⁷Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 38.

¹²⁸Frederick L. Jones, ed. Mary Shelley's Journals, (Norman, Okla., University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), p. 38; hereinafter cited as Mary's Journal, followed by pagination.

¹²⁹PLATON, Platonis Philosophi/ Quae Extant/ Graece ad Editionem Henrici Stephani/ Accurate Expressa/ Cum Marsilii Ficini Interpretatione; Accedit Varietas Lectionis Studiis Societatis Bipontinae/ Biponti/ Ex Typographia Societatis, 12 vols. 1781-7; further cited as Bipont Plato, followed by pagination.

¹³⁰Shelley was first introduced to the study of Plato in 1810 by Dr. Lind, his Latin tutor at Eton. The study of Plato was regarded as politically seditious at Eton, which, if anything would have encouraged Shelley's study of his work. Cited in Richard Holmes' Shelley: The Pursuit, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1975), p. 26.

she treads not upon the ground, but makes her path upon the heads of men.' He gives as an evidence of her tenderness, that she walks not upon that which is hard, but that which is soft.¹³¹

The source of regeneration in individual men, which will correspond to the seasonal regeneration in Nature, has now become more apparent. From this section of the Symposium, Shelley had found a unifying principle in the Platonic eros which he had groping for in the early poems "To Mary" (1810). Additionally, Shelley marked in his notebooks for 1817 the following selections from the Symposium:

The same evidence is sufficient to make manifest the tenderness of Love. For Love walks not upon the earth, nor over the heads of men which are not indeed very soft: but he dwells within, and treads on the softest of existing things, having established his habitation within the souls and inmost natures of Gods and men; not indeed in all souls--for wherever he chances to find a hard and rugged disposition, there will he not inhabit but only where it is most soft and tender. Of needs must he be the most delicate of all things, who touches lightly with his feet, only the softest parts of those things which are the softest of all. He is then the youngest and the most delicate of all divinities; and in addition to this, he is, as it were, the most moist and liquid. . . .¹³²

¹³¹Jul. vii, 189-90; Oxford Symposium, 195e-196a; Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 48.

¹³²Jul. vii, 190; Oxford Symposium, 196b; Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 49

And also marked in the anthology is the following speech by Agathon:

. . . for the winged Love rests not in his flight
on any form, or within any soul the flower of
whose loveliness is faded, but there remains
more willingly where is the odour and radiance
of blossoms, yet unwithered.¹³³

Together, these two sections are the germinal concept for the Sixth's Spirit's speech in Prometheus Unbound

Ah, Sister! desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with
silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
gentlest bear (I, 772-5)

Rogers notes that "desolation is only a retranslation of ATE, 'The Goddess Clamity'¹³⁴ or to use a term from Shelley's Queen Mab, Necessity. Thus, Necessity and Calamity give way to this superior power of love--which Asia, an Ariadne-figure, catalyzes in Prometheus in Act II.¹³⁵

¹³³Jul. vii, 189; Oxford Symposium, 195d; Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 49.

¹³⁴Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 49.

¹³⁵Poetry, p. 437; another example of Shelley's utilization of Agathon's speech occurs in the poetic narrator's description of Urania in Adonais:

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human fears, which to her aery tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fall
(XXIV, 208-212).

Another key phrase in The Symposium is 'ARETIS EROTOS,' which Shelley translated as "the virtue and power of love,"¹³⁶ a translation in keeping with the context of the whole. The dimensions of the word, ARETE, are best illustrated by Gilbert Murray's comment that

It is one of the common burdens of early Greek poetry, of Pindar, Hesiod, Phokylides, Simonides, this thirst of men for Arete, the world we translate 'Virtue.' It is "goodness" in all the sense in which objects can be called good, the quality of a good sword, a good servant, or a good ruler.¹³⁷

ARETE, then, directs the reader and orients him toward socially favorable goals, such as the virtue and power of love. In its fullest sense Shelley's translation of the ARETIS EROTOS means the "goodness" which love causes to be brought about. In Prometheus Unbound, Prometheus ultimately comes to understand that the goodness of love is its virtue and power to displace evil. Hence, Jupiter's displacement will occur because the ARETIS EROTOS (virtue and power of love) will cultivate within Prometheus what Agathon terms as "sophrosyne," meekness and patience.¹³⁸ The virtue and power of love induce humility in

¹³⁶Jul. vii, 190; Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 52.

¹³⁷Gilbert Murray, The Rise of the Greek Epic, 4th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), p. 59.

¹³⁸Odysseus possesses this quality, one noticeably lacking in Achilles in the Iliad. For a fuller discussion on the qualities of sophron, see the introduction to Richard Lattimore's Iliad, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 50.

in those who fall under its spell, as the Song of the Spirits implores Asia before her meeting with Demogorgon

Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness (II, iii, 93-94).

The idea of meekness and gentleness caused by love as being superior to strength also occurs in "An Ode Written October, 1819, Before the Spaniards Recovered Their Liberty."¹³⁹ In the poem, Shelley urges meekness and forbearance as superior to retaliation:

Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown,
Ride yet, more victorious, over your own (26-29).

And in A Mask of Anarchy, Hope urges the men of England to avoid vengeance:

Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,
All that can adorn and bless
Art thou--let deeds, not words, express,
Thine exceeding loveliness. (LXIV, 257-61)

If love was to be the source of man's New Birth in the Shelleyan world view, then what role did the poet and his poetry play in the New Birth? The answer lies directly in Agathon's speech: the individual who possesses Love should celebrate him "excellently in song, and bearing each his part in that divinest harmony which Love sings to all things which live and are soothing the troubled minds of Gods and men."¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹Poetry, p. 575.

¹⁴⁰The quotation in full is "When the virtue and power of love surmount evil, this deity of love sprang forth from the desire which forever tends in the Universe towards that which is lovely, then all blessings descended upon all living

Thus, love is the qualitative source of the virtue and power which will regenerate man, and liberate him from the bondage of the "woe-fertilized world," the condition of the world as Prometheus perceives it. The significance of the above perspective to the word, "night," may be summarized briefly. The Promethean "night" in Shelley's drama achieves implicative clarity by the interaction of the sensory and concrete details which in turn form its exemplification. "Night" is not only the absence of the sun's light, but it is also the "three thousand years of unsheltered sleep" in an arctic purgatory which has been "black, wintry, dead, unmeasured, without herb,/ Insect, beast, or shape or sound of life."

things, human and divine. Love seems to me, O Phaëdrus, a divinity the most beautiful and the best of all, and the author to all others of the excellences with which his own nature is endowed. Nor can I restrain the poetic enthusiasm which takes possession of my discourse, and bids me declare that Love is the divinity who creates peace among men, and calm upon the sea, the windless silence of storms, repose and sleep in sadness. Love divests us of all alienation from each other, and fills out vacant hearts with overflowing sympathy; he gathers us together in such social meetings as we now delight to celebrate, our guardian and our guide in dances, and sacrifices, and feasts. Yes, Love who showers benignity upon the world, and before whose presence all harsh passions flee and perish; the author of all soft affections; the destroyer of all ungentle thoughts; merciful, mild; the object of the admiration of the wise, and the delight of gods; possessed by the fortunate, and desired by the unhappy, therefore unhappy because they possess him not; the father of grace, and delicacy, and gentleness, and delight, and persuasion, and desire; the cherisher of all that is good, the abolisher of all evil; our most excellent pilot, defence, savior and guardian in labour and in fear, in desire and in reason; the ornament and governor of all things human and divine; the best, the loveliest; in whose footsteps everyone ought to follow, celebrating him excellently in song, and bearing

The intra-referential action of these images forms the "world of woe" of Prometheus. By the end of Act I the dimensions of "night" become increasingly symbolic and less dependent on concrete and sensory details. The range of this symbolism includes night as amatory darkness and the absence of the Platonic eros, namely Asia, described as "child of light" (II, v, 40) who illumines heaven and earth (II, v, 27-29). The absence of Asia from Prometheus in the amatory or procreational sense is the absence of the "flame of consentaneous love" which leaves Prometheus in the state of "not yet loving, and wanting to love, "the state symbolized by the darkness which pervades Act I.

His heart not yet liberated from vengeance towards Jupiter is reminiscent of the "hard and rugged disposition of the heart" found in Agathon's speech in The Symposium, a heart untouched or out of touch with the Platonic eros and the agapeic and philial love which proceeds from it. A heart in which love will not abide, the "hard and rugged" disposition, further implies that the healing force of the AERTIS EROTOS cannot remedy the malaise of the spirit which Prometheus possesses, vengeance, unless he revokes his curse on Jupiter.

each his part in that divinest harmony which Love sings to all things which live and are, soothing the troubled minds of Gods and men. . . ." (Jul. vii, 191-192; Oxford Symposium, 197c).

The cause of Prometheus's plight and the universe which he perceives has been his refusal to perform servile obedience to Jupiter. Concomitant with his refusal was Prometheus's own lack of meekness and humility in defying Jupiter and cursing him to be undone by his own tyranny. The Phantasm of Jupiter repeats Prometheus's words:

Heap on thy soul by virtue of this Curse,
 Ill deeds, than be thou damned, beholding good;
 Both infinite as is the universe,
 And thou, and they self-torturing solitude.
 An awful image of calm power
 Though now thou sittest, let the hour
 Come, when thou must appear to be
 That which thou art internally;
 And after many a false and fruitless crime
 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space
 and time (I, 292-301).

The "self-torturing solitude" is the agency of Jupiter's fall and the essential component of his mind, namely the inability to love others. The inability to love others echoes Alastor, Shelley's first thematic treatment of the abuse of intellectual power by those who cannot love or lack the capacity to love their fellow man and is the cause of Count Cenci's demise as well. More to the point, the imperative and declamatory tone of the curse demonstrates an essential lack of humility and meekness in Prometheus, and the cause of his 3,000 year long night and the lack of the "Spirit of Patience and Gentleness" of A Mask of Anarchy.

But the darkness of despair is not total and complete. The tone and content of the speech indicate that although Prometheus had given Jupiter control over the material universe,

"things," he has omitted Jupiter control over the mind of man in which reside the intellect and heart, the well-springs of man's moral values and psychological perceptions. With Jupiter controlling the forces of nature which afflict man and having caused "the world of woe" (I, 283), Prometheus's and man's mind are still beyond his control. The implicative clarity in the curse, then, is that Prometheus and mankind retain control over the life of the mind (not a "thing"), even though they may exist in the metaphorical darkness of despair and of death where Prometheus suffers and is the world of life, where exist the

Dreams and the light imaginings of men
And all that faith creates or love desires
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes
(I, 200-202).

Hence, Prometheus and man retain the potential for their release from bondage, a potential that can only be activated by ridding the human heart of vengeance to the oppressor.

The activation of this potential for Prometheus's release becomes evident immediately after the Phantasm of Jupiter has repeated Prometheus's curse. Moved by the suffering his curse has inflicted on earth, Prometheus repents:

It doth repent me: words are quick and vain:
Grief for while is blind, and so was mine.
I wish no living things to suffer pain
(I, 303-353).

Having repented, Prometheus has now activated his potential to love by the humility of his act. And he has now prepared himself to accept the most quintessential of Shelleyan ideals,

love. The acceptance of love, as Agathon's speech in The Symposium indicated, is the organic fuse which will re-kindle the regenerative cycle and release Prometheus from the bondage of "refrigerated deathlessness"¹⁴¹ and the earth from its "world of woe" (I, 283).

But Prometheus's repentance, by implication, also activates yet another dimension of his rebirth. It releases him from the solitude of his suffering, the same "self-torturing solitude" which will finally end the reign of Jupiter. Repentance, the end to his solitude, now enables Prometheus to be quickened by the "flame of consentaneous love," and his eventual reunion with Asia in Act II. The change of heart in Prometheus is symbolically augmented by the shift in predominating imagery in Act I--from ice, frost, snow and darkness to fire, volcanic eruptions, conflagrations, and radiance, the predominating imagery of Act II.

But this repentance and the accompanying serenity of mind which Prometheus has, however, is challenged by the furies, who torture him further, hoping to break his will and therefore cause him to submit to Jupiter. As aspects of Jupiter's mind, the Furies are filled with Jupiter's same "self-torturing solitude" which prevents them from being quickened by the "flame of consentaneous love." Filled with the oppressive and tyrannous attitudes of Jupiter, they are unable to

¹⁴¹Northrop Frye's term for one of the essential attributes which the hero always possesses in the romance mythos (Anatomy of Criticism): p. 186.

perceive the conflagration on earth as the culmination of Jupiter's rule. Tauntingly, the Furies ask Prometheus

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for Man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him forever
(I, 539-542).

Believing the turmoil on earth to be the final achievement of Jupiter's rule, they continue their chant:

See how kindred murder kin:
Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
Til Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win
(I, 542-546).

By contrast Prometheus rejects their view of the destruction on earth as the end of man. Thus, the symbols of the fire vary with the nature of the mind perceiving it; fire is both preserver and destroyer as the West Wind is, signaling the decline of one era, age, or season and heralding another. Prometheus perceives the fire in his speech following the Furies' as foreshadowing the birth of a new world. In short, the disparity in the Furies' perception and Prometheus's creates an unresolved polysemy,¹⁴² one not yet resolved at this juncture

¹⁴²For an excellent discussion of the multi-dimensional fire symbolism within Prometheus Unbound, see G. M. Matthews, "A Volcano's Voice in Shelley," English Literary History, (XXIV, 1957), pp. 191-228.

in the drama. Since for Shelley the future contains the present,¹⁴³ the turmoil on earth represents the consequences of the French Revolution and the counteraction caused by the restoration of the absolutist monarchies following the Congress of Vienna. Hence, the conflagrations on earth augur the efforts which men are making to restore more representative governments in the period 1816-1819.¹⁴⁴

The fire is also the failure of eighteenth century rationalism and empiricism to build a social structure on the seemingly permanent grounds of reason and logic, on the one hand, and the statistically most frequent as the normal, on the other.¹⁴⁵ In part, it also is a rejection of enthusiasm

¹⁴³In discussing the function of the poet in A Defence of Poetry, Shelley remarked the poet "not only behold(s) intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things ought to be ordered, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flower and the fruit of latest time" (p. 533).

¹⁴⁴Kenneth Neill Cameron adduces from A Philosophical Review of Reform and the Preface to The Revolt of Islam that "the world on which Prometheus gazes, then, is Shelley's own age, from about 1789 to 1819" (Shelley: The Golden Years, p. 486). But the variant readings in the MSS of A Philosophical View of Reform suggest that Prometheus is not only gazing on the present of events in Europe, but also on the uprisings of republics throughout history, such as Hellenic Athens or republican Florence of Dante's era. For an intriguing array of past editorial folly on Shelley's uncompleted treatise, see Shelley and His Circle, ed. Donald H. Reiman, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), VI, 951-1065, but especially p. 963 for the point under discussion.

¹⁴⁵This interpretation rests on the historical implication of the fire imagery itself. As G. M Matthews noted in his "A Volcano's Voice in Shelley," (cited above) Shelley's symbols do not stand for anything "in the systematic manner

as a means of confirming value and order in the world in that the earthly conflagration may reflect Shelley's own disappointment of Napoleon's efforts to rid Europe of tyranny. The fire, then, if it means anything, suggests the end of the contemporary paradigms of social order, and the possibility of man's build-a new social order from these past experiences, but with man oriented toward the values of the AERTIS EROTOS in The Symposium. These Fires on earth, Prometheus replies to Jupiter, are but the "shadow of truth:"

This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
 The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives
 When they shall be no types of things which are
 (I, 642-645)

in which the cross, for example, stands for Christianity" (p. 192). The fire, of course, consumes the tyrannous past of man by man. In Regency England, tyranny had meant the unwillingness of successive Tory governments to adopt any legislative reform, change considered as irrational (no reasonable correspondence with God's rule in heaven) and non-empirical (the absence of norms of statistical frequency in the world of nature). The destruction of dystopia on earth, however, does not mean the advent of utopia in Prometheus Unbound. Morse Peckham in his Beyond the Tragic Vision, (New York: George Braziller, 1962) notes the dilemma of late Enlightenment metaphysics which Shelley faced as an artist: "The logical possibilities had been exhausted. Value is not to be found in a divine world into which we shall enter in the future, or into which we can now penetrate by pure thought or mystic rapture; nor is value structured into the world we know. The universe is a chaos, a meaningless chaos; nor is society any different. But if order is lost, and value is lost then identity is lost. And man--or man as few men see him--truly enters the wasteland. This had happened before, that a man had lost his orientation, but before, he could always find his way back to what he had left. Now a few men saw clearly that return was impossible. Culture was in an unparalleled historical crisis; and the man who felt this became a wanderer on the face of the earth, rooted out of his social context, and lost in meaningless cosmic chaos" (p. 81).

The "types of things which are" are "shadows of truth" which are words, "like a cloud of snakes," representing falsehood. The worm imagery used here to describe falsehood appears again in The Cenci to describe the Count who is imaged as a "serpent" (IV, ii, 27). Hence, even though desolation reigns on earth, it too will pass and the spirit of hope in the future given to man by Prometheus will return, inspired by the vates sacer, who will foster in man the ideas of forgiveness and love,¹⁴⁶ as noted in Agathon's speech in The Symposium.

It would appear, then, that the spirit of good ideas does not disappear,¹⁴⁷ though flames may consume their material parts, because man is reminded of them by the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."¹⁴⁸ The fires on earth signify change, presaging a new era for men, rather than the end of his hopes for the future. The Third Spirit reinforces the beneficence that the conflagration will bring by chanting that

¹⁴⁶The idea of love as the fount of poetry is further elaborated in Epipsychidion, 190-344, (Poetry, pp. 412-418).

¹⁴⁷The idea is that the humanitarian ethic (the myth of freedom) does not die with the destruction of books, monuments, or paintings which contain or evoke it, because these ideas are fostered in the human heart by love which cannot be destroyed--any more than Keats was destroyed by death: "The One remains, the many pass and change;/ Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly," (Adonais, LII, 460-461).

¹⁴⁸A Defence of Poetry, p. 568.

I sat beside a sage's bed,
 And the lamp was burning red
 Near the book where had fed,
 When a Dream with plumes of flame,
 To his pillow hovering came
 (I,723-726)

suggesting that the fires augur a return to the wisdom, learning, and paideia which come from the vates sacer.

Panthea reinforces and amplifies Prometheus's view of the earthly conflagration by telling him that Asia awaits him,

. . . in that far Indian vale,
 The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
 And desolate and frozen, like this ravine:
 (I,825-827).

But now this manifold has changed, exhibiting Spring-like features. It is

. . . now invested with fair flowers and herbs
 And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
 Among the woods and waters, from the aether
 Of her transforming presence, which would face
 If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!
 (I,828-833)

The significant point is that in addition to foreshadowing change in the symbolic landscape of Act II, the lines, "which would fade/ If it were mingled not with thine," point the way for Prometheus's necessary sexual reunion with Asia to celebrate the Platonic eros, which will terminate his "night" of despair. This regeneration, the sexual and spiritual reunion with Asia completed in Act III, is analogous to the cycle of nature, where sexual union is the obvious prelude to birth.

The conflagration on earth, which intervenes between Prometheus's state of refrigerated deathlessness and his state

of rejuvenation, is necessary symbolic thaw. The conflagration illustrates the fiery turmoil which precedes the individual's acceptance of love as the organizing principle of the "world of life," Hence, in the political sense, before individuals can open themselves to ARETIS EROTOS, they must, in Blake's terms, throw off the "mind forg'd manacles" of the Enlightenment--rationalism and empiricism--both of which are preliminary, yet necessary stages in the individual's rebirth.

Thus, the flame imagery which breaks through the darkness of Act I metonymically portrays the liberation of Prometheus by displacing his darkness and bondage and, synedochically, the liberation of mankind as well. Yet from the perspective of Jupiter and the Furies, the flames image the consummation of Jupiter's reign on earth, the vanishing of man's hopes in the flames, a point resolved in Act II.

The second act opens sharply, dramatically counterpointed to the first. The nocturnal ravine of Act I shifts to a lovely vale bathed in the light of dawn. Asia's initial apostrophe clearly details the season, "Spring/ O child of many winds," as the harbinger of Prometheus's return. As in Act I where the intra-referentiality of night permeates the action, so in Act II "day" becomes increasingly symbolic and permates Act II.

Shelley's concrete and sensory details develop slowly, providing an implied exemplification of "light" as he did with "night" in Act I. "Day" becomes in Asia's opening speech, not only the time following night, but also the advent of seasonal change. Asia chants that Spring has "descended/ Cradled in tempest" (II,i,6-7) which clothes "with golden clouds/ The desert of our life" (II,i,11-12). The concept, day, then, is the corresponding analogy for Spring, which with its warm winds, suggests the beginning of a new life in the vegetative and animal kingdoms. In turn, the rekindling of Spring leads to the implicative clarity of Act II, the narration of a new and reborn sense of knowing and understanding caused by the virtue and power of love for Asia and Prometheus. But part of the significance of this light in Act II is dependent for its meaning from Act I.

Following his retraction of the curse and his repentance for it, Prometheus describes his state as one "within whose mind sits peace serene/ As light in the sun, throned" (I,430-31). This light is metaphorical of the love he gave to man when he released man from the bondage of barbarism which the Fifth Spirit in Act I describes as the instant when "His footsteps paved the world with light" (I, 767). The return of light, then, in Act II implies the return of love to the world of which Asia and Panthea are a part. The impact of light as love effects changes Asia's power of cognition and perception.

At the dawn of day in Act II, Panthea unfolds her dream to Asia of Prometheus's heart-felt change. Asia perceives Prometheus's in this as "arrayed/ In the soft light of his own smiles" (II,i,121) and at the end of the dream she queries:

Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
 Within that bright pavilion which their beams
 Shall build o'er the waste world? The dream is told
 (II,i,124-126).

The metaphor of light as love becomes more explicit and dramatically effective by its impact on Asia's ability to perceive meaning in the universe. When Panthea's other dream disappears into her mind, Asia is now able to discern its message of "Follow, follow," whereas before she could not remember its meaning. The light of Prometheus's love recounted in the dream, enables Asia to understand Panthea's dream, which leads them through a "Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns"¹⁴⁹ to "a pinnacle of Rocks among the Mountains"¹⁵⁰ to the realm of Demogorgon, "the Master of the Fates."¹⁵¹ In the cave of Demogorgon, Asia's perception and understanding of the universe,

¹⁴⁹Poetry, p. 231.

¹⁵⁰Poetry, p. 234.

¹⁵¹In Rogers' Shelley At Work, he argues that Demogorgon derives his dramatic character and function from ANAGE or the Necessity of Zeus in Hercules Furens. He cites Carl Grabo's The Magic Plant, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936) to the effect that "by casting out hate Prometheus has identified himself with the ruling power of the universe which is Love, and Love commands Destiny, or Fate, which is Demogorgon" (p. 280).

enhanced by Prometheus's love, enables her to perceive what Panthea only dimly sees as she is not inspired by the flame of consentaneous love:

Panthea: What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

Asia: The veil has fallen.

Panthea: I see a night darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.
--Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outlines; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.

(II, iv, 1-7)

The cave of Demogorgon is absent of natural light except that which surrounds his throne, the "rays of gloom" (II, iv 4). But still Asia's powers of cognition and perception increase over their former capacity, for the incipient power of Prometheus's love now enables her to see more deeply into the nature of the material universe. In this cave, Asia undergoes the Education of the Beloved, which Shelley adapted from the PAIDERASTIA of The Symposium, the process of enlightenment or growth of knowledge, the details of which are adopted from Plato's The Republic.¹⁵²

¹⁵²Rogers documents Shelley's use of Plato's periods from The Republic to create the colloquy between Asia and Demogorgon in the cave, pp. 151-153; darkness-lightness as analogies for ignorance and knowledge are readily discernible even in the English translation of The Republic of Plato, trans. Francis M. Cornford, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 227-235, the "allegory of the cave." The specific passage which applies to Asia's progress or ascent to knowledge is "Heaven knows whether it is true; but this, at any rate, is how it appears to me. In the world of knowledge, the last thing to be perceived and only with great difficulty is the essential Form of Goodness. Once it is perceived, the

And again it is the notebooks and MSS which are most helpful in understanding this difficult crux of Act II, iv.¹⁵³

The light which Asia receives in this cave is yet another instance of Shelley's language having multiple, yet simultaneous meanings. Understanding the metaphoric implications of the language in scene iv is crucial for understanding the ultimate interpretation of the problem of evil as conceived in the poem. ¹⁵⁴

The world which Asia understood before her entrance to Demogorgon's cave is the world described by Prometheus as the "shadow of truth" where exists the "types of things" which are. Shelley often uses the terms, shadow and veil, as symbols of the mutable, changeable world which obscure ultimate reality.¹⁵⁵

conclusion must follow that for all things, this is the cause of whatever is right and good; in the visible world it gives birth to light and to the lord of light, which it is itself sovereign in the intelligible world and the parent of intelligence and truth. Without having had a vision of this Form no one can act with wisdom, either in his own life or in matters of state" (p. 231). In Wasserman's Shelley: A Critical Reading, he states that the source for the colloquy is the descensus ad inferno from the Aeneid, VI, (p. 320). However, the notebooks provide no evidence for this contention.

¹⁵³Rogers details the development of Shelley's veil and cave symbolism in Shelley At Work, pp. 120-168; specific citations follow below.

¹⁵⁴Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 155.

¹⁵⁵Rogers notes that the "Veil and the Cave are closely related expressions for closely related conceptions of reality, and the synthesis, generally speaking, corresponds to a fusion of what Shelley the poet was adducing from the Symposium and the Phaedrus with what Shelley the reformer was bringing in from the Republic. The correspondence, however, is only a

Thus, the significance of Asia's remark that the "veil has fallen" (II, iv, 1-2) is that now she is able to see behind the images and shadows of the world and its seeming virtues (EIDOLA ARETIS) and is about to enter the unveiled world, the world as it is perceived under the "virtue and power of that best worship, Love" (ARETE TON EROTOS). Under the influence of Prometheus's love, imaged as light, Asia enters into the Platonic Cave of Enlightenment to undergo the four-fold regimen to gain paideia.¹⁵⁶ This progress will intellectually prepare her for the reunion with Prometheus in the second cave of Act III, iv and Act IV, where, the influences

somewhat rough one, for within the poetical crucible the two symbols become almost indistinguishably blended into the prevailing Platonic imagery of darkness and light" (Shelley At Work, p. 147).

¹⁵⁶The Platonic sources for Act II, iv seem to be helpful here. In the Republic, Plato outlines the four states of mind or educational processes which the candidate should undergo in order to apprehend the Form of the Good. The first two stages involve understanding the World of Appearances in which the candidate begins to comprehend representations, likenesses, or imaginings of the world (EIKASIA) and advances to an understanding of "common-sense beliefs in the reality of the visible and tangible things commonly called substantial" (PISTIS), (Cornford, The Republic of Plato, p. 222). PISTIS includes in the moral sphere "correct beliefs without knowledge." This knowledge, EPISTEME, is achieved in the fourth stage of the PAIDERASTIA, but only after the candidate has undergone the third stage (DIANOIA). Asia would appear to have completed her progress or education through the World of Appearances and is now ready to begin her education of the Intelligible World, Thinking (DIANOIA) and Knowledge (EPISTEME) which concludes with Intelligence (NOESIS), the apprehension of the Good. Shelley, however, seems to give short shrift to DIANOIA and hurry on to NOESIS, the second cave of Prometheus Unbound in Act III, iv. There NOESIS gives way to TO POIEIS which in A Defence (p. 530) apprehends the Form of the Good.

Demogorgon's answer to Asia's questions about the nature of evil are oblique and indirect. He implies that the genesis of evil lies with those who are enslaved to evil purposes. Jove, therefore, is evil because he is enslaved to the concept of evil itself. But Asia presses the point further. Demogorgon replies that if the abyss (the Platonic Cave of Enlightenment) could speak, it would tell her the ultimate truth (the "deep truth"), but this ultimate truth cannot be rendered in images which she can perceive. In the sense that Shelley uses deep¹⁵⁸ in this passage he means that the "deep truth" is perfect and complete, not subject to change--hence immutable. Though Asia has been inspired by the light of Prometheus's love, she is limited in her perception of the "deep truth," as she still exists in the mutable World of Appearances. Her understanding of the limitations of knowledge to be gained from the World of Appearances, and her acceptance of Love

At Work, p. 153). The point in the drama at which the union of Goodness (Prometheus) and Beauty (Asia) occurs is the second cave, where "such virtue has the cave and place around" (III, iii, 63).

¹⁵⁸Ellis has compiled nineteen figurative senses in which Shelley utilizes deep. Deep in the sense of "perfect, complete" occurs eight times in his texts (Concordance, p. 154). "With that deep music is in unison:" (Epipsychidion, 454); "that in that stillness deep and solemn," (Matilda, 7); "Wraps all in its own deep eternity" (Mont Blanc, 29); "The deep truth is imageless" (Prometheus Unbound, II, iv, 116); "Whose changeless paths thro' Heaven's deep silence lie" (Queen Mab, III, 229); "All in deep silence like the fearful calm" (Queen Mab, IV, 53); "The heaped waves behold the deep calm" (A Vision of the Sea, 129).

as the eternal, immutable power which can conquer the desolation of life, provides her with enough knowledge of paideia to meet Prometheus who is at that moment freed from the powers of Jupiter, but not released as he is in Act III,iii.

It would appear that Asia's PAIDERASTIA is not yet complete, and by implication, she must undergo further enlightenment, which, in fact, she does in Act III,iv. Demogorgon implies, then, that when her PAIDERASTIA or progress advances to a sufficient degree, she will come to know the "deep truth."

The metaphoric implications of light as the dramatic nexus for rebirth become clearer in the Cave of Demogorgon (II,iv) by their correspondence with the Platonic elements from which they are drawn. Since Asia has been intellectually enlightened by her dialectic with Demogorgon, a corresponding transformation now occurs in the dramatic composition of her character. In the following scene, when Panthea and Asia journey in a car to the inside of a cloud, Panthea exclaims that she can scarcely endure Asia's radiance, which is "like the atmosphere/ Of the sun's fire filling the living world" (II, v 26-27) now surrounding her. Panthea recalls that this same radiance filled the universe at Asia's birth; thus, the reappearance of this natal light is the nexus between her rebirth in the regenerative cycle and her ascent of progress toward the World of Intelligence. She is the effect and cause of love: both the mirror reflecting the virtue and power of Prometheus's love (the flame of consentaneous love) and the lamp whose

beacon signals the impending change which love will bring love to the world.

She herself proclaims that "common as light is love," after which a Spirit heralds her as a "Child of Light," youthful genetrix of earth's rebirth:

Lamp of Earth! wher'er thou movest
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
And the souls of whom thou lovest
Walk upon the winds with lightness,
Till they fail . . .

(II, v, 66-70)

Thus, Asia's radiance dispels the gloom and darkness of Desolation, which the Sixth Spirit lamented in Act I, 772-779, and foreshadows the impending release of Prometheus, the lord of light.¹⁵⁹ Her increasing radiance portends the next inevitable phase of the regenerative cycle, the displacement of Winter by Spring. Dramatically, Shelley renders this inevitable and inexorable change of seasons through Demogorgon's casting out of Jupiter.

¹⁵⁹In the Republic, Plato states that once the Form of Goodness is perceived in the visible world, the World of Appearances comprising the first two steps of eikasia and pistis, "gives birth to light and to the lord of light" (Cornford, The Republic of Plato, p. 231). Prometheus has perceived this Form of Goodness, and thus repents. The impact of the Form of Goodness slowly becomes apparent in the characterization of Asia. I would surmise Shelley's purpose as delaying the effects of the Form on Asia because it delays or postpones the conclusion of Prometheus's unbinding. Secondly, Asia's apprehension of the Form occurs as Shelley conceives it would in a person whose characterization more nearly approximates that of ordinary humans. Asia seems closer to the romantic mode of characterization than the mythic mode of characterization of Prometheus.

The casting out of Jupiter is crucial here for understanding Shelley's view of the problem of evil, for Demogorgon's release of Prometheus foreshadows the Titan's triumph over Jupiter in Act III. If good replaces evil as inevitably as Spring follows Winter, then what will prevent the inevitable return of evil? Spring mellows into Summer, and Summer fades into Fall and thence into Winter. The answer lies in Acts III and IV of Prometheus Unbound, where the interlocking categories composing the word, light, becomes more developed by implicative clarity.

It seems appropriate before proceeding further to summarize the ontological enhancement of light in Acts I and II from its sense of "radiation from the central celestial luminary" to an analogue for the redemptive power of love. In these sections of the drama Shelley's artistic concerns are essentially two fold. On the one hand, he must loosen the semantic finitude of light, allowing the accretion of the metaphoric sense which it has in Act IV. Progressively, this occurs by the dramatic interplay between Asia and Prometheus which demonstrates the changes in Asia's characterization caused by the emanation of love from Prometheus. In turn, Asia's response to Prometheus's love fleshes out his characterization, enlarging Shelley's appropriated ligatures from the Prometheus myths and the drama of Aeschylus. From these appropriations, Shelley invests his

persona with the ability to love his former tormentors. By fusing these two concerns, Shelley festers the accretion of metaphor to light with the growth of Prometheus's persona.

In my discussion of Acts I and II of Prometheus Unbound I attempted to illustrate the ways in which Shelley used darkness-lightness analogies from the Prometheus myths and Plato's Republic and the Symposium to develop his drama, which he described as a "mechanism and characterization yet unattempted." From the myth of Prometheus-the-Torch-Bearer, Shelley took the germinal concept of Prometheus's characterization, and fused to it elements from Plato's cave-allegory in his poetic crucible. In the poetic-alchemic process, the characterization of Prometheus and the mechanism of the drama evolve.

In Acts III and IV the full implications of these analogies from The Republic become increasingly clearer for Shelley's interpretation of the problem of evil. In short, Shelley's intention is to demonstrate that poetic language may function as a kind of lyric exorcism by acting on the mind of the percipient, so as to cast out the forces of evil, and replace them with the virtue and power of love. But the recurring problem of evil in the history of the human condition remained a difficult one for Shelley to cope with as his later dramas, The Cenci and Hellas, indicate.

Shelley's answer to this perplexing problem of the displacement of evil by good occurs at two significant junctures in Acts

III and IV: Demogorgon's vanquishing of Jupiter at III,i and Demogorgon's final speech at the conclusion of Act IV. In the first instance, Shelley makes it clear that evil will fall of its own accord. Thus, Jupiter's fall from power occurs through the inevitable consequences of evil operating through time. As the embodiment of evil, Jupiter holds the view that his reign of tyranny will last forever. In the figure of Demogorgon, his son, Jupiter believes that he is "mightier" than either himself or Thetis and that Demogorgon is the "incarnation" of his reign. But Jupiter becomes cognizant of his self-wrought irony only when he asks Demogorgon his identity:

Jupiter: Awful Shape, What art thou? Speak!

Demogorgon: Eternity. Demand no direr name (III,i,51-52).

The significance of Demogorgon's reply lies in the fact that the forces of evil have come full circle. Because Jupiter came to power by usurping Saturn's throne as Saturn has usurped Cronos's throne, he will now be replaced by the inevitable consequences of evil of which he was a part. Demogorgon symbolizes the inevitable culmination of these forces,¹⁶⁰ and consequently the inevitable triumph of love, meekness, and gentleness. Thus, Jupiter's reign over all living things in the universe ends, and he is consigned to live in darkness with

¹⁶⁰As a symbol of Eternity, Demogorgon symbolizes the principle of evil warring with good, as does the amphibaesnic snake of Canto I, The Revolt of Islam, the DRAGON OURBOBOROS; see also Rogers, Shelley At Work, p. 69.

Eternity (Demogorgon). His fall prepares the way for the release of Prometheus by Hercules in III,iii, but it leaves unanswered the question of whether or not Jupiter will return once banished. Even though the dialogue in III,iii between Apollo and Ocean indicates that Jupiter has "sunk to the abyss" and the "dark void," both these expressions lack spatio-temporal specificity. The question of Jupiter's return is thus left unanswered.

The second instance where Shelley attempts to formulate an answer to the problem of evil also lacks specificity, but it provides a better answer than the former one. In the penultimate speech of the drama, Demogorgon states that if Eternity should ever free "the serpent that would clasp her with his length" (IV, iv 507), then man must again revert to Hope,

till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates
(IV,iv, 573-575).

Thus, in light of the above, it would seem that Shelley's probable answer to the recurring problem of evil is that it cannot be eliminated from the human experience, as this confrontation with evil has been historically noted. Man's only recourse in the event of evil's return is to recall the "idealisms of moral excellence" which Prometheus fosters, namely hope and love. These idealisms constitute the implicative clarity of Acts III and IV and are made largely clear through the flame, light, and radiance imagery which pervades these acts. The increased use of specific example and

illustration in Acts III and IV reduces the symbolic allusiveness of Shelley's poetry and increases reader orientation and perception of Shelley's meaning in the drama.

In Act I, the controlling imagery shifts from a dark, bleak, and lifeless manifold to landscape created by the imagery of sunlight and fruitful fields by the end of Act II. The light imagery, however, functions in multiple, yet simultaneous senses in Shelley's poetry. For example, Shelley employs light as a substantive in its normative sense of "daylight as opposed to darkness or ordinary light."¹⁶¹ Prometheus describes his serenity following his revocation of the curse in this manner; he is as "light in the sun, throned" (I,143).

The second sense of light, "other than ordinary daylight, bright or dull, brilliancy, glowing or sparkling light,"¹⁶² Shelley typically employs as in Panthea's response to Asia's transformation in Demogorgon's cave:

Oh Spirit! pause and tell whence is this light
Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen
(II, v, 8-9)

But Shelley also enlarges light to the figurative sense of "mental light, knowledge, or genius"¹⁶³ as in the Fifth's

¹⁶¹Ellis, Concordance, p. 397.

¹⁶²Ellis, Concordance, p. 398.

¹⁶³Ellis, Concordance, p. 399; Shelley also utilized this sense of the word to describe Keats in Adonais whose "fate and fame shall be/ An echo and a light unto eternity" (I, 8-9); see also Adonais, (LIII, 473); The Cenci, (III,ii, 44); Epipsychidion, 63; The Revolt of Islam, (I,xxxii, 8), (V,xviii,6), and (V,xxxiv, 8).

Spirit's description of Prometheus:

His footsteps paved the world with light:
 But as I passed t'was facing
 And Hollow Ruin yawned behind: (I,767-768).

In Shelley's poetry, the full range and amplitude of light thus suggests and implies that it is not only the opposite of darkness, but also that light is a metonym for darkness, darkness representing the absence of love, humility, and gentleness.

In the development of his poetry, the metaphoric amplitude of light begins with the line, "the flame of consentaneous love" in Queen Mab and Daemon of the World.¹⁶⁴ In this phrase the radiance of the flame becomes an analogue for the radiance of love, which creates "sympathy with nature and one's fellow men, tenderness of heart, benevolence."¹⁶⁵ As Ellis's Concordance

¹⁶⁴Poetry, p. 8, (II, 53) and Queen Mab (VIII, 107-108), Poetry, p. 794.

¹⁶⁵The action in this scene occurs in Prometheus's cave, the Platonic Cave of Reality, which represents the second stage of Asia's paidierastia, in which she goes from thinking (dianoia) to intelligence (noesis). The events described by the Spirit of the Earth are a dramatic preliminary to Asia's apprehension of the Good. What the Spirit of the Earth comes to understand is that the material universe, regenerated under the Promethean light-love analogy, is transformed from images and shadows of virtue (eidola aretis) to the virtue and power of that best worship, love (arete ton erotos). In turn, the earth as part of the material universe under the virtue and power of love is now in a state of readiness for creation of the humanitarian ideal, which is akin to the Christian agape. This ideal is the natural progeny from the sexual union of Asia and Prometheus who are Beauty and Mind respectively. And for Shelley this union seems cognate with Plato's Form of the Good. In the regenerative cycle, the creation of the humanitarian ideal inevitably follows the seasonal cycle: in Spring the ideal is reborn as the earth is, and as Prometheus and Asia are. In Summer the ideal reaches fruition

demonstrates, this symbolic relationship between light and love runs throughout Shelley's poetry. By the third act of Prometheus Unbound, this symbolic relationship deepens intensely and controls to a considerable degree the lyrical texture of the drama.

In Acts III and IV the metaphoric synonymity of light and love becomes more apparent. For example, after the fall of Jupiter, Earth speaks to Asia and Prometheus as they journey to the second cave. Earth describes Prometheus to Asia as one

Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, . . . (III,iii,148-151).

In the next scene Prometheus's rekindled lamp glows upon the earth and causes the material universe to be perceived in a different light. The Spirit of the Earth notes the "ugly human shapes and visages," (III,iv, 65) which she observed beforehand, are now

mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen and all
Were somewhat changed, . . . (III,iv,69-71)

Prometheus's love has caused the disguises and veils¹⁶⁶ of the material universe to disappear and its inner beauty and form to be revealed. By an act of his mind, his love regenerates the somnolent earth, changing evil to good.

The Spirit of the Earth reports that the regeneration and transformation of the earth are accompanied by even more

¹⁶⁶For a further discussion of this technique, see Earl R. Wasserman's "Adonais: Progressive Revelation as a Poetic Mode," in English Literary History (XXI, 1954), pp. 274-326.

noticeable and significant changes:

The impalable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world
(III,iv, 100-103).

The semantic amplitude of light, then, is best understood as a metaphor for love which educates the percipient by stages to a knowledge and understanding of the universe which was lacking beforehand. Thus, in Shelley's poetry, the metaphoric aspects of light displace the metonymy of darkness, veils, and mist which obscures the inner reality, goodness, and beauty of the material universe and the mind which perceives it.

This metaphoric amplitude of light reaches fulness of dramatic exposition in the second cave in scene iv, but its impact is foreshadowed by the Spirit of the Earth. She remarks to Asia that

My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe
(III,iv, 105-106).

These mysteries are, in part, the forms of social institutions which formerly controlled man for evil purposes. The Spirit describes these social institutions as a "painted veil" (III,iv, 193) which has vanished under the influences of Prometheus's love and has now revealed man as in charge of his destiny. Man is

Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless:--no, yet free from guilt or pain
(III,iv, 197-198).

This setting of the second cave continues into Act IV where the Spirit of the Earth further elaborates Shelley's vision of the "final things" in store for man after his regeneration. In this setting, the principal personae prophesy the social and political conditions under which man will live once he is fully regenerated by the light of Prometheus's love. Considered as a whole, Act IV illumines the apocalyptic nature of Shelley's language¹⁶⁷ and the final limits of his metaphor.

The choric songs which introduce Act IV prophesy the future condition of man. In them, Shelley attempts to illustrate the power of love to draw back the "figured curtain of sleep" (IV, i, 58) which is yet another instance of removing of veils, films, and other obstructions which have prevented man from perceiving the world in all its majesty and beauty.

In their songs, the chorus chants that "human love makes all it gazes on paradise" (IV, 128). The dazzling array of lyrics celebrates Love's victory over man's misery and bondage and prophesies rhapsodic vistas whose organizational principle is the power of love to surmount the power of evil in the human heart.

¹⁶⁷Several editors have noted the apocalyptic imagery in this act, such as Lionel Trilling's and Harold Bloom's Romantic Poetry and Prose (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 443-445. For a more throughgoing discussion see M. H. Abrams' Natural Supernaturalism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971, pp. 37-46.

In Act IV the metaphoric amplitude of love as light achieves its most concrete examples. The effects of this love are first noted by the dramatic changes in the Moon, Earth, and then finally Panthea and Ione. The Moon's "lifeless fountains" (IV, 356) become the source of "living fountains" (IV, 357) whose reflected light fructifies the earth. Panthea, bathed in the reflected light of the moon, feels as though she has risen from a "bath of sparkling water" (IV, 553) which provides her with a new perception of reality. Concomitant with her rebirth is the removal of obstructions which increase her epistemological clarity. In fact, throughout Shelley's poetry, the removal of veils, the emergence from caves and sparkling fountains, and the waking from the dream of life are interrelated symbols in his poetry. In the drama, this symbolic triad¹⁶⁸ constitutes a dramatic rendering of the power of Mind, once it is freed from the images and shadows of virtue (eidola aretis) to liberate man from tyranny and despotism of every variety: moral, political, and social. But to reiterate, these symbolic dimensions of the metaphors of light and radiance cannot be divorced and isolated from one another, for they are interinvolved and fused into an organic whole. As the action of the drama makes clear, the individual heart is first reformed, then the mind of man, and finally the interaction of many men so reformed recreates the

¹⁶⁸Rogers notes that in this section of the drama "the symbols are imprecise but their general meaning is clear: Earth is welcoming back the radiance of Beauty and Goodness which can exist only, as Shelley always held, when tyranny has been banished" (Shelley At Work, p. 166). See for example, the sonnet, "Lift Not the Painted Veil," (Poetry, p. 569).

social structure of the world.

Love is the only power and agency which can accomplish this social regeneration because it is the only force not diminished by the power of evil. It is the one immutable force in the universe, the only power which can activate Mind and the well-spring from which the vates fuses and forges his lyrics.

As it does in Acts I-III, Shelley's light imagery in Act IV suggests by implications that as Prometheus's light reaches the Moon and Earth and finally Man himself, these bodies respond favorably to the power of Love with a rhapsodic celebration of their rebirth in the form of a reverdie¹⁶⁹ or song celebrating the regreening of the Earth. The restoration of fecundity to the animal, vegetative, and human domains of Earth illustrates the rapturous effects of love on the individual who receives it and the power of this love to return the Earth to a paradisaical state suggested by Revelations. Thus, these choric songs may be best understood as a secularized version of the Apocalypse. Their purpose is to depict the world which man might create if he avoids the hate, oppression, and tyranny such as the reformers exhibited during the French Revolution.

Written after the Congress of Vienna during the period when reaction had set into the Napoleonic reforms, Prometheus Unbound in the first three acts lyricizes the power of love to make the millenium of Christianity a secular reality or polity. Act IV

¹⁶⁹Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 437.

depicts the state of form of this projected millenium. What Shelley has attempted to do throughout the poem is to substitute the efficacy of love for the efficacy of church and state. In effect, Shelley sought to secularize Christian millennial concepts and "final things"--or as M. H. Abrams has noted--"to make the supernatural natural."¹⁷⁰ Thus, in the main, Prometheus Unbound is a dramatic poem whose theme is the efficacy of love as the cosmic political principle which should replace the efficacy of order, the cardinal concern of reactionary post-Napoleonic Europe. Act IV, then, is Shelley's Book of Revelations and the Coda to his opus magnus.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 68; the quotation is from Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, ed. Charles F. Harrold (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1937), pp. 194, 254.

¹⁷¹George F. Woodberry appears to have been the first editor to describe the structure of Act IV in musical terms in his The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901), p. 625.

CHAPTER IV: THE ANALOGUES OF PERCEPTION

My discussion of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound illustrates a pervasive problem in dealing with all of his poetry. In coming to terms with Shelley's language, we must face the inevitable problem of claritas.

In this seminal problem there are subsidiary and inter-related problems as well, all of which directly bear on the nature of language itself.

From classical times throughout the 18th century, the nature of language and the coordinates of clarity seemed fairly well established in the minds of critics and writers alike. But at the advent of the 19th century, perspectives on the nature of language began to change.¹⁷² The nature of this shift in attitude about language is best illustrated, perhaps, in the form of an analogy. If language is like a window pane through which the reader views the world, then the best language is like the best glass: the fewer obstructions, the better the view. As long as viewers agree on the coordinates of clarity in the glass, this analogy for the perception of the universe holds up.

¹⁷²In Michel Foucault's Order of Things (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970) he argues that the underlying assumption about the nature of language underwent a drastic re-evaluation at the close of the 18th century in response to changing views about the nature of the universe itself. See especially pp. 304-344; hereinafter cited as Foucault, followed by pagination.

But Shelley's attitude toward the view through the glass is that it fluctuates and is never the same from moment to moment. Views through the glass are therefore relative, not absolute and finite. However, if viewers concur that the view is the same, there is little hope of convincing them otherwise unless monotony and dullness set in and no one really watches. To compensate for this difficulty, Shelley attempts to create another, different view of the world so as to avoid the familiar one. By avoiding the familiar and using a glass which creates a sensation-heightened view of the world, Shelley aspires to fashion a better view--better because it creates an access to a sense of amazement and wonder which has been lost by the familiar view and recovers for the viewer a sense of "the discovery of being."¹⁷³

The access to this new view through the glass is the glass itself, an access now modified by the alterations in the texture, color, and form of the glass itself. The more arbitrary the change in the glass pane, the more beguiling and enchanting the view¹⁷⁴ and, hence, the sense of discovery. Shelley, of course, maintains that this access to and recovery of the world through the amazement and enchantment of the altered view is an improvement, because this new view keeps

¹⁷³Walker Percy, The Message in the Bottle (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1975), especially Chapter II, pp. 46-63; hereinafter cited as Percy, followed by pagination.

¹⁷⁴Richard Wilbur, Responses, Prose Pieces: 1953-76 (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich), pp. 39-66; hereinafter cited as Wilbur, followed by pagination.

the audience interested and delighted and restores to them a sense of awe at the "new" world they now view.

Familiar and traditional poetic language functions in the same way for the reader. Custom and usage attribute meaning and sense to language used as a medium for public discourse and thus concretize meaning. But the concretization of meaning, this familiar view through the smoothly worn glass surface, retards the imaginative use of language, because the audience is used to the familiar and commonplace uses of language. Only reluctantly will the audience agree to suspend its judgement that the familiar is the real pane of glass with the "real" view.

Thus, the creative issue facing Shelley is to use language in what appears to be a familiar manner, but which simultaneously alludes to other meanings and configurations. Shelley attempts to resolve this artistic dilemma by the use of language which is ostensibly similar to his audiences, but which is intrinsically different. This language will facilitate the recovery of the mind's sovereignty over the universe through its sense of wonder and amazement. By freeing language from its traditional significations and empiricities and by loosening it from its moorings, the artist will be better able to fashion his own prism--his own pane of glass--through which the audience will come to understand the artist's own view of the world. However, problems then result.

The initial problem for the artist's audience is the loss of certitude in perception and intellection as they gaze through the glass. Consequently, the audience will refuse to suspend its sense of verisimilitude, preferring instead the certitude of the familiar prism, the view fashioned by the 18th century glass. In order to get his audience to willingly suspend its sense of disbelief at the value of the new glass, Shelley relies on older and less familiar literary conventions to charm, enthrall, and bewilder his viewers: dramatic blank verse, Spenserian stanzas, and Italianate literary models such as ottava rima and terza rima. His intention is to fashion his glass pane from the charming endearments of older or lesser used conventions and thus restore the sovereignty of the artist and reader in the act of knowing the world.

To recover this sovereignty of knowing the world directly, the world without the preformulated Augustan symbolic complex, Shelley fashioned a new "access to being,"¹⁷⁵ a cosmos untouched by Newtonian theory. Yet, it also posed new problems.

If this pre-Copernican cosmos appeared to Shelley as an unfettered symbolic matrix capable of restoring men's sovereignty over the world and providing him with the "recovery of being,"¹⁷⁶ then it also lacked the finitude, certitude, and

¹⁷⁵Percy, pp. 51-55.

¹⁷⁶Percy, p. 51.

claritas which the classical view of language demanded of writer and audience alike. The dilemma posed by this technique is clear. In attempting to enhance traditional poetic language by adding unfamiliar moral and psychological dimensions to it, Shelley clearly risked crippling the conventional intelligibility requirements of language which his audience expected.

By attributing to language an enhanced ontological status and by extending its assertory power, the poet was free to fashion a new mode of perception, intellection, and creation through a different symbolic matrix. However, with this increased freedom of creativity came the ancillary problem of interpretation and judgment. If the critical, judgmental, and interpretational matrix of classical culture which formed the basis of claritas no longer applied, then the reader and poet found themselves enmeshed in a different kind of dialectic about the meaning of poetic language.

But to return to my analogy: if the problem for the artist is the use of materials to fashion a new glass in order to get a new view, then the problem for the audience is to understand the view produced by these materials. What first becomes apparent to the audience from the new view is that to the visible causes of the different view are in the surface of the glass itself. Disconcerted at first, the viewer must learn to "see" anew; he must learn to look through the glass, and not at the glass. He must accept, a priori, that the

glass may change its lucidity from time to time, and that these changes may correspond with changes in the outer view. In any event, the reader must accept that the altered view is a direct consequence of the metaphoric relationships which Shelley alters to create his new view of the world. Metaphor, then, in Shelley's poetry becomes the discoverer of being and hence meaning.

In a traditional metaphor, the tenor and vehicle function in relationship whereby the person, object, or concept are the things intended to be portrayed, and the vehicle is the agency or transmitter and the means of carrying the relationship. But in Shelley's poetry, this distinction is often blurred or fused. The object, person, or concept of perception through the glass may lack the positivities of a static finitude. Because the universe is organic and active, the means of transmission itself becomes organic also.

In Shelley's poetry, the agency of transmission, the vehicle, is better named the agency of translation. Most often this vehicle in the metaphor is an aspect of the manifold, such as the wind, river, or sun and it participates in the metaphor in the germinal sense. The vehicle itself is but a part of the ultimate meaning, the whole derived from the process implied from the vehicle itself. As Shelley stated in A Defence, traditional metaphor "regards the relations of things, simply as relations." But the principle of synthesis, the imagination, sees relations as "mind acting

upon these thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity."¹⁷⁷

Although there have been numerous studies that have sought to answer this complicated question about the nature of Shelley's language, the most germane to this study has been Donald Reiman's embryonic proposal in his introduction to Shelley's "Triumph of Life."¹⁷⁸ In his discussion of Shelley's language, Reiman views Shelley's cosmos as essentially a pre-Copernican universe. The broad landscape of this universe is divided into two realms: the celestial and terrestrial worlds, each corresponding to the immutable world of ideals and the mutable one of temporal things. The immutable realm comprises the luminaries beyond the moon--the sun, stars, and planets--which consist of the element, fire. By contrast,

¹⁷⁷Defence, pp. 529-30.

¹⁷⁸Donald H. Reiman, Shelley's "The Triumph of Life": A Critical Study, Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 55 (University of Illinois Press, 1965), pp. 3-18; hereinafter cited as Reiman, followed by pagination. Reiman's caveat to Shelleyan symbol hunters is still quite cogent. "Because such study of his symbolism is still in its infancy, readers of his poetry have often been unable to grasp the significance of a reoccurring word or phrase that seems to symbolize something beyond itself.

Shelley's symbolic universe will be fully elucidated only after scholars have examined dozens of key words in various contexts in his poetry (and prose) and have them studied the association of these words in the philosophical, religious, and literary writings that are known to have impressed Shelley" (p. 11).

the realm below the celestial, consisting of the lunar and terrestrial worlds, is mutable.¹⁷⁹

The terrestrial or sublunar world consists of four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. In it, the element, earth, is "inert matter, water symbolized purely mortal or terrestrial regeneration, fire symbolizes spiritual energy, and air, the space between earth and sun, was the realm of those ideas and abstractions that raise men above the merely mortal perspective but which are limited and distorted by the imperfections of the human condition."¹⁸⁰

Within the terrestrial world, there are further subdivisions. There are "elemental natural forms of the earth, such as mountains, ocean, sea, and wind and the slighter phenomena of cloud, wave, leaf, dew, mist, rainbow, flower, and moth."¹⁸¹ The sea and ocean symbolize "the realm of temporal existence upon which men pursue their voyage of life, in addition to these more literal functions of providing a sense of place in the poetic narratives and lyrics."¹⁸²

The lesser waterways, such as rivers and streams, also possess an enhanced ontological status. Small streams represent the course of life of some particular individual as in

¹⁷⁹Reiman, p. 12.

¹⁸⁰Reiman, p. 12.

¹⁸¹Reiman, p. 13.

¹⁸²Reiman, p. 13.

"Euganean Hills" and "Time." Rivers represent the history of some particular community such as Pisa in "Evening: Ponte al Mare, Pisa." The slighter terrestrial phenomena frequently image a particular aspect of man, or man in a specific condition, such as "The Pine Forest of the Cascine Near Pisa" where the advent of Spring quells the poet's longing for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

An examination of the principal features of Shelley's landscape will further illustrate the complex, often contradictory nature of his language which at times seems "polymorphously perverse."¹⁸³ This contradictory nature of Shelley's language, however, provides him with the opportunity to provide the "before unapprehended relationships of things."¹⁸⁴

Among the key words which form Shelley's manifold is sun, used figuratively as the permanent source of truth. Although sun occurs only eight times in Shelley's poetical lexicon,¹⁸⁵ its congeners light, lamp, fire, lightening are used extensively throughout the corpus of his lyrics. In them Shelley utilizes the basic figurative sense of sun in three basic ways: to portray a persona as embodying this quality, to flesh out an abstraction, and to point up a

¹⁸³John Barth, Chimera (Greenwich, Con.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1973), p. 32.

¹⁸⁴Defence, p. 532.

¹⁸⁵Ellis, p. 681.

contrast or comparsion.

In "Lines written Among the Euganean Hills," Shelley reflects on Padua's political dominance by Austria and the consequent decline of her civilizing influence since the Renaissance. In the poem, Austrian tyranny, imaged as clouds obscuring the sun, has obstructed Padua's brilliance. However, this darkness will be burned away by the sun of freedom:

But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold
All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime;
If not, perish thou and they!--
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away--

(150-62).

This concept also occurs in Prometheus Unbound where Asia characterizes the Titan to Demogorgon as "the sun of this rejoicing world" (II, iv, 127), assigning to him the qualities of the spiritual source of created things.

The second major use of sun is Shelley's investiture of a character with the qualities of the central luminary, the spiritual source of created things. However, when Shelly utilizes sun in the sense of reflected or refracted sunlight, he often means to invest the abstraction, characterization, or point of comparison with the sense of "bright,

glowing as the sun," but not in the permanent sense, Hence, he implies by such a comparison the general idea of transitoriness and impermanence.¹⁸⁶ In "Letter to Maria Gisborne," sun depicts the commonplace, transitory aspects of nature. Memory, the "quaint witch," recalls to the poet

how we spun
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun
Of this familiar life, which seems to be
But is not:--or is but quaint mockery
Of all we would believe

(154-58)

This sense of sun also occurs in "Fragment: I Would Not Be a King" to describe the transitory vanities of monarchs:

¹⁸⁶In Queen Mab, religion is a "glare that fades before the sun/ Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night; That long has lowered above the ruined world" (IV, 143-45). In addition to these senses of light, Shelley also employs it to portray Padua and Athens as centers of intellectual brilliance in "Euganean Hills" and Hellas. During the Italian Renaissance, Padua was a center of learning; however,

Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might
But their spark lies dead in thee,
trampled out by Tyranny (265-68).

Inevitably, this tyranny will be consumed by the very flame it sought to obliterate:

O, Tyranny, beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The flame ascend, and fearest (280-82).

And in Hellas Athens itself seems to have been created by light. Recalling this fact, Semichorus I remarks

Let there be light! said Liberty,
And like sunrise from the sea
Athens arose!--Around her born,
Shone like mountains in the morn
Glorious states: (681-86)

I would not climb the imperial throne
 'Tis built on ice which fortune's sun
 Thaws in the height of noon

(5-7)

The dilemma posed by these examples is that sun has two distinct senses. On the one hand, it symbolizes Permanent Truth--the source of the spiritual nature of created things. On the other hand, sun suggests an ephemeral quality in the sense of reflected light. Other synonyms of sun, such as flame and lamp, also display this multivalent characteristic. Generally, Shelley endows a city or person of outstanding cultural or poetic significance whose standard of excellence he regards as permanent rather than transitory. But flame also occurs in 13 other distinct figurative senses,¹⁸⁷ some rather remote from those mentioned above.

In "Mont Blanc" the Arve River is a symbol for the flow of perceptions through the mind. These perceptions are as quick as the swift brook which bursts "Through these dark mountains like the flame/ Of lightening through the tempest" (19-20). In the sense of "intellectual light," flame also occurs in "Euganean Hills" where it characterizes Padua as the "lamp of learning" where "Once remotest nations came/ To adore that sacred flame" (261-62) and again in Hellas the revival of Athenian liberty and intellectual distinction is "A second sun arrayed in flame/ To burn, to kindle, to illume" (67-68).

¹⁸⁷Ellis, p. 245.

Another illustration of the diverse valences which flame possesses is its use to designate the effect of erotic love. In "Epipsychidion" the Poet refers to the erotic impact which the Spirit of Harmony of Truth inflicts on him. He states that

flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came,
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
 Into the core of my green heart
 (259-63)

However, Shelley's most frequent use of flame is to suggest "enthusiasm and ardour"¹⁸⁸ in the sense of an all-consuming effort. In Daemon of the World, the Spirit muses over the inevitable regeneration of nature. He notes that

Space, matter, time and mind--let the sight
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope
 All things are recreated, and the flame
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life
 (II, 341-44)

There are also several instances ¹⁸⁹ in Laon and Cynthna where language itself seems to be charged with a flame-like quality. For example, Cynthna reviles her abductor who rapes her. Laon recounts that

She tore
 Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
 And mightier looks availed not
 (VII, v, 2870-72).

¹⁸⁸Ellis, p. 245.

¹⁸⁹Also in Laon and Cynthna are "Words which the love of truth in hues of flame/ Arrayed" (IX, xii, 9), "many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame" (IX, xii, 9), "hope's newly kindled flame" (IX, xvii, 9), and "With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame" (X, xxxii, 3).

But counterposed to this example is the sense of flame as "destructive force, destruction."¹⁹⁰ In "Euganean Hills" the narrator inveighs against tyranny:

O Tyranny, beholdest now
 Light around thee, and thou hearest
 The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
 (280-82)

As becomes apparent from a cursory examination of Shelley's use of flame, the word has no fixed metaphoric sense, but rather several, each of which is appropriated for a variety of reasons. Thus, the literal sense, "blaze, clear fire,"¹⁹¹ is expanded beyond its mere empiric sense and becomes enhanced to an assertory one. The enhancement is a stratagem designed to "deprive the reader of the world he knows."¹⁹² By depriving the reader of the world he knows, Shelley then opens the possibility of providing his audience with a cosmos of feelings and sensations that it didn't know beforehand.

Other instances of the enhanced ontological status of Shelley's lexicon may be found in the words, lamp, light, and fire. In their figurative sense, they function as congeners closely allied to sun, the source of Permanent Truth.

In sharp contrast to these examples, Shelley utilizes flame to pejoratively characterize Peter's verses in Peter

¹⁹⁰Ellis, p. 245.

¹⁹¹Ellis, p. 245

¹⁹²Wilbur, p. 65.

Bell the Third as mental activity devoid of lasting value.

His verse was

clear and came
Announcing from the frozen hearth
Of a cold age, that not might tame
The soul of that diviner flame
It augured to the Earth
(V, xii, 434-37)

and

After these ghastly rides, he came
Home to his heart, and found from thence
Much stolen of its accustomed flame;
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame
Of their intelligence.
(VI, xxi, 59-63)

In addition to characterizing Wordsworth in Peter Bell the III, Shelley uses flame in two other senses which are contradictory to each other. In "There Is No Work" flame occurs in the sense of "vital power."¹⁹³ In the poem the narrator asks "Is the flame of life so fickle and wan?" (5) and in Daemon of the World, the narrator charges the spiritus mundi:

Majestic spirit, be it thine
The flame to seize, the veil to rend
Where the vast snake Eternity
In charmed sleep doth ever lie
(I, 98-101)

But counterposed to this example is the sense of flame as "destructive force, destruction."¹⁹⁴ In "Euganean Hills" the narrator inveighs against tyranny:

¹⁹³Ellis, p. 245.

¹⁹⁴Ellis, p. 245.

O Tyranny, beholdest now
 Light around thee, and thou hearest
 The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
 Grovel on the earth

(280-83).

Other instances of the enhanced ontological status of Shelley's lexicon may be found in the words lamp, light, and fire. In their figurative senses, they function as congeners closely allied to sun, the Source of Permanent Truth. In general, lamp is an analogue to characterize a person as a source of vatic poetry, one of the "unacknowledged legislators of the world." In the "Euganean Hills" Petrarch's verse is one such permanent source of truth.

As the love from Petrarch's urn
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
 A quenchless lamp by which the heart
 Sees things unearthly

(220-23)

And in Adonais Keats is one whose

Godlike mind soared forth, in its delight
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
 Leave its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night

(XXIX, 259-61)

A third example of light as an analogue for vaticinatory verse may be found in Shelley's "Ode to Liberty." Among the great poets of the past are those whose

bright minds who would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
 (emphasis his:XVI, 226-28)

As distinct from abstractions and characterization, Shelley uses lamp to address "a person as affording

light"¹⁹⁵ such as the invocation to Emilia in "Epipsychidion." He cries out to her: "Sweet Lamp! my mothlike/ Muse has burnt its wings" (53-54). An additional significant use of lamp may be found in Prometheus Unbound, where it is used emblematically of Asia and Prometheus. The Voice in the Air states that Asia is a "Lamp of Earth" (II, v, 66) and the Spirit of the Earth refers to her as "my sister" who "trims her lamp" (III, iv, 95). Further, Earth describes Prometheus as "my torch-bearer:/ Who let his lamp out in old time" (III, iii, 148-49) and "the lamp which was thine emblem" (III, iii, 170).

Another word, light, also possesses a variety of functions and is one of the key features in Shelley's manifold. Its most common metaphoric sense is to suggest "mental light, knowledge, or genius" or a "source of mental light."¹⁹⁶ By extension of this basic sense light may characterize a poet of remarkable artistic power, point up the intellectual qualities of a city, or mark off vaticinatory verse.

The first sense occurs in Adonais. Shelley views Keats as an "echo and light unto eternity" (I, 9) and the third ranking poet of England, "third among the sons of light" (IV, 9). At his death other poets of his era will become insignificant; they are the "swarms that dimmed or shared its "light" (XXIX, 261). Furthermore, in death Keats has

¹⁹⁵Ellis, p. 380.

¹⁹⁶Ellis, p. 398.

become "Heaven's light" (XLII, 261) whose poetic genius will "sate the void circumference" (XLVII, 6). In contrast to the transitoriness of this world, Keats's poetry will permanently endure, "Heaven's light forever shines" (LII, 462). Even though he has "passed from the the revolving year" (LIII, 472), Keats is "that light whose smile kindles the Universe" (LIV, 478) which "Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are" (LV, 495).¹⁹⁷

A similar use of light occurs in Alastor to characterize the Poet. Seeking to find the Truth in the mutable world world, the Poet is "Obedient to light/ That shone within his soul" (491-92), and in death, the Poet becomes a "surpassing Spirit/ Whose light adorned the world around it" (714-15)/ Yet another example may be found in "Euganean Hills." In his poem Shelley characterizes Shakespeare's genius as a divine might which "Fills Avon and the world with light/ Like Omniscient power which be imaged mid mortality" (196-99).

But contrastively, in Peter Bell the Third, Shelley employs light to satirize Wordsworth, especially his wealth and the men whom it attracted:

¹⁹⁷These uses also occur in Laon and Cynthna: "a lamp of vestal fire burning internally" (Dedication, xi, 9), "bearing the lamp aloft which thou hast kindled" (II, xliv, 2), and "his spirit thus became a lamp/ Of splendour" (IV, viii, 5).

It was his fancy to invite
 Man of science, wit, and learning
 Who came to lend each other light;
 He proudly thought his gold's might
 Had set those spirits burning

(IV, xix, 353-357)

and later in the poem Shelley depicts Wordsworth's madness:

A power which comes and goes like a dream,
 Had which none can ever trace
 Heaven's light on earth--Truth's brightest dream
 And when he ceased there lay the gleam
 Of those words upon his face

(V, v, 393-97).

And finally, as these examples illustrate, Shelley endows the abstractions Liberty, Intellectual Beauty, and Poetry with light. In the "Ode to Liberty," Liberty rises from its thousand year decline in the ancient world and is reborn during the Renaissance,

Bred from the slime of deep Oppressions's den
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away

(XII, 168-70)

In "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," the Spirit of Beauty persists because

Thy light alone--like mists o'er mountains driven
 . . .
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream

(III, 32-36)

And in "To a Skylark" light analogizes the bird's unpremediated art with poetic thought. The bird's melody

Like a Poet hidden
 In the light of thought
 Singing hymns unbidden

(36-38)

But complicating a precise understanding of light's ontological and epistemological range is its usage in two other major senses: "joy, delight, pleasure and happiness" and "expression and animation."¹⁹⁸ In Adonais "a light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread" (XLIX, 9) and in "Epipsychidion" this same sense of the word is used preeminently to delineate the character of Emilia Viviani. She is a "seraph of Heaven" (121) who veils beneath her radiant form "light, love, and immortality;" Shelley is lured toward her inevitably,

as Night by Day
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led in to light, life, peace
(73-75)

Her joy and happiness are aspects of Truth, and this Truth, her beauty, is a "deep well, whence stages draw/ The unenvied light of hope" (184-85). In her presence, Shelley feels overcome by his longings for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful:

in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my night
Was penetrating me with living light
(340-42)

The final sense of light, "expression, animation of the eyes or smile," occurs in several notable poems. In Alastor the Poet's wild eyes emit a "strange light" (265), and as he begins to trace the stream to its source, "His

¹⁹⁸Ellis, p. 399.

eyes heheld/ Their own wan light" (469-70). And in his "Homer's Hymn to Venus" Shelley describes Hesperus as "The laughter-loving Venus from eyes/ Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile" (47-48). And again in Prometheus Unbound Asia describes the Titan as "arrayed/ In the soft light of his own simles" (II, i, 120-21).¹⁹⁹

The general metaphoric senses of sun, lamp and light in Shelley's poetry do not readily lend themselves to an easy definition, although their metaphoric latitude is fairly clear. Most often these words are metaphoric techniques for developing in sensory terms the idea of permanent truths or values. They comprise the color, form, and texture of the glass through which the reader the views the world.

Another word, fire, which appears to be metaphorically allied with sun, light, and lamp, functions somewhat differently. In no instance does Shelley use it to imply mental genius, or an intellect of an extraordinary nature. And only in the sense of immortality or permanence does it occur once, namely in Adonais where Shelley refers to immortality as "the fire for which all thirst" (LV, 485). Its most

¹⁹⁹ Other illustrations in this sense include "that love is light sent/ From Heaven" ("Fragment: A Gentle Story of Two Young Lovers," 9), "If Liberty/ Lent not life its soul of light" (Hellas, 42), and "Asia, thou light of life" (Prometheus Unbound, III, iii, 6).

common figurative senses are "ardour" (eight times), "enthusiam" (seven times), and "life, spirit" (four times) and "lightening."²⁰⁰

Fire's most frequent symbolic use is in the sense of "sunlight, the appearance of fire."²⁰¹ In "Apollo" Shelley characterizes the sungod as one whose "footsteps pave the clouds with fire" (II, 4). In a more elaborate metaphor, Shelley uses this word in Prometheus. Panthea recalls the birth of Asia, noting that

love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumed earth and heaven
(II, v, 26-29)

This example illustrates its key relationship with sun, "the vivifying creative imagination, burning fountain of warmth and light from which flow the spiritual natures of created things."²⁰² Not only does Shelley use fire to characterize Asia, but even inanimate objects, such as a comet. Hence in "Epipsychidion" the spirit of the comet appears to stem from the sun itself, rather within itself:

The living sun will feed thee from the urn
Of golden fire.
(375-76)

This sense of the word in the above examples extends to another sense, "ardour, passion,"²⁰³ and further in the poem

²⁰⁰Ellis, p. 242.

²⁰¹Ellis, p. 247.

²⁰²Reiman, p. 15.

²⁰³Ellis, p. 242.

fire depicts the ardour of the soul's flight to the
zenith of love:

Woe is me!
The winged words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.
(587-90)

Shelley also uses fire to portray man's enthusiasm for freedom and liberty. Among the men who have created and recreated these ideals are the poets of the English Renaissance who wrote when those virtues were jeopardized by the tyrants of Spain and Italy. In his "Letter to Maria Gisborne" Shelley noted that England owed a debt to

. . . Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and the rest
Who made our land an idol of the blest
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire
(31-34).

To reiterate, in Shelley's scheme of things, the element, fire, is indestructible. Hence, while it may appear to have vanished from a place, locale, city, or culture, it inevitably ignites again. This sense of indestructibility which fire possesses also aids an understanding of his "Ode to the West Wind." If freedom is an analogue of fire, then the line, "Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth" (V, 66) means that the poet hopes that his words, invested with indestructible qualities, will never die and will continue to illuminate men's minds. A similar strategy occurs in his "Ode to Naples" where Shelley praises the revolutionary movement in Naples, believing that this impetus for freedom

had its origins in the Florentine Republic. Thus, Florentine liberty is a "lamp" which "feeds every twilight wave with fire" which will "be man's high hope and unextinct desire" (167-68).

But to equate all of Shelley's uses of fire as symbolic of revolutionary fervor is to miss the complexity of the word and to dismiss his practical understanding of European politics in the Napoleonic Era. Shelley was fully cognizant that when the multitude of men,²⁰⁴ untutored in the complexities of parliamentary government, were denied the fundamental social experiences that could prepare them for the responsibilities of freedom and self-government, their pent-up desire for freedom could lead to violence. In Laon and Cynthna, Laon notes that men's desire for freedom will become "like a sulphurous hill" which will "burst and fill/ The world with cleansing fire" (II, xiv, 5). Ideally, Shelley hoped that the ideals of freedom would open men's hearts and avoid violence. In his "Ode to Liberty," commemorating the revolutionary uprising in Spain, 1820, Shelley hoped that liberty and freedom would effect men contagiously. He wrote that

Liberty,
From to heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain
Scattering contagious fire into the sky
Gleamed
(I, 2-5)

²⁰⁴Shelley's prose indicates that he meant men of property and does not include the unpropertied classes or women. See, for example, his essay, A Proposal For Reform.

Further, in the poem, the Spirit of Liberty would infuse men as a Pentecostal flame, inspiring them to peaceful means and ends.

The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung
(I-11-13)

Man, so infused with the flame of life, liberty, and freedom, would react as Shelley believed men did in the Italian Renaissance:

Men started, staggering with a glad surprise
Under the lightnings of thine Liberty's
unfamiliar eyes
(XI, 14-15)

Broadly related to sun and its congeners are fire and lamp in Shelley's poetry. The range and amplitude are enormous, and include 13 figurative senses. For example, flame ranges from the sense of "flash, light, lightening" to "fever of thirst."²⁰⁵ In the former sense Shelley utilizes flame in "Mont Blanc" to endow the power of the Arve flowing through the Vale of Charmouni as "Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame/ Of lightening through the tempest" (18-19). The interplay of aural and visual imagery produces a synesthetic effect and thus enhances the impact on the reader's mind.

Another figurative sense of flame, "light, brilliancy,"²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵The other 11 senses are beams of sunlight, light or brilliancy, destructive fire arms, colour of flame, power like flame, passion, enthusiasm, or ardour, excitement, intellectual light, the vital power, and vigour of thought (Ellis, p. 245).

²⁰⁶Ellis, p. 245.

illustrates Shelley's skill at oxymoronic imagery. In

"Epipsychidion" the moon is that

Wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
Which is ever transformed, yet still the same,
And warms but does not illumine

(283-85)

Still, a more common figurative sense of flame occurs in the sense of "passion." Describing his encounter with the Spirit of Truth and Harmony in "Epipsychidion," the poet-quester remembers that

Her touch was as electric poison,-flame
Out of her looks into my vitals came

(259-60)

Thus, even within the same poem, the symbolic correspondences differ, though both senses of flame allude to transitory entities--the moon and earthly beauty.

Other senses of flame illustrate a similar difficulty in narrowing the metaphoric range. For example, Shelley's most frequent symbolic usage of flame is to connote enthusiasm or ardour. In Alastor, the Poet's arduous quest for earthly Truth and Beauty leads him fruitlessly to his death which Shelley images as an expiring flame.

His destination is

the grave, where, when the flame
Of his frail exultations shall be spent,
He must descend

(520-22).

This sense of consummate, earnest desire, which flame often symbolizes, also occurs in Queen Mab where Shelley images the earth's self-regeneration in Spring:

All things are recreated, and the flame
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care.

(107-110)

The line, "flame/ Of consentaneous love" attributes to all of Nature a passionate procreational urge and implies that Nature's enduring spirit is flame-like, permanent, and immutable. Flame is metaphorically allied with the enduring spirit of the universe, the sun, and its implicative clarity means that Nature's regenerative urge is a timeless and permanent aspect of the landscape though its forms, the seasons, change.

Another example of flame is this sense of enduring spirit may be found in The Triumph of Life. In this visionary poem, Shelley characterizes the enduring spirit of those who refused to heed the transitory vanities of Imperial Rome. Their concern, "the sacred few," was for the "living flame":

All but the sacred few who could not tame
 Their spirits to the conquerors--but as soon
 As they had touched the world with living flame
 Fled back like eagles to their native noon
 Or those who put aside the diadem
 Of earthly thrones or gems
 Were there

(128-34)

In contrast to the "sacred few" who "touched the world with living flame" are those men such as Wordsworth whose words lack the enduring spirit of immutable values. In his characterization of Wordsworth in Peter Bell the Third, Shelley utilizes flame to emphasize the diminution of

Wordsworth's poetry :

But Peter's verse was clear and came
Announcing from the frozen hearth
Of a cold age, that none might tame
The soul of that diviner flame
It augured to the Earth:

(V, xiii, 433-37)

The "diviner flame" is the power of the word to remain imperishable and to create lasting values for men's minds. This pejorative use of flame also occurs later in the poem. In this example, the idea of poetry without enduring power and spirit becomes more clear. After riding aimlessly through the countryside in search of new ideas, Peter returns home,

Home to his heart, and found from thence
Much stolen of its accustomed flame;
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame
Of their intelligence

(VI, xxi, 651-64)

Hence, there is no specific referrent which flame has in Shelley's poetry and these illustrations again point up the difficulty of attempting to rigidly define his symbolism. However a broad symbolic purpose is discernible.

Central to these congeners of sun are the concepts of permanence and immutability which the central luminary represents. The qualities of the central celestial luminary, the source of universal life and the enduring spirit of the universe, become the embryonic sense from which several metaphors may be generated. Abstractions, such as Liberty and Freedom are symbolically endowed with these similar qualities when analogized with sun and its congeners. When

Freedom and Liberty prevail, civilization flourishes. Like the sun and its congeners lamp, light, and flame, they are the sources of psychological fertility and fecundity. Athens (Hellenic Greece) and Florence (the Italian Renaissance) have, at one time or another, been the fruitful results of which the "flame" or "light" have been the seminal idea. The fruitful results, in turn, have been the bloom of the plant whose seeds will be disseminated ever the terrestrial realm--only to further bloom (inspire civilization) again.

However, the essential point in Shelley's solar and radiance imagery is that though these abstractions are invested with the immutable essence of fire, their vitality is subject to the vagaries of the mutable world as other plants are. Blight, frost, and destruction all will take their toll. But when the conditions for regeneration are again optimal, these ideals will blossom or flourish again.

But the concomitant problem of this analysis remains. At which point does a particular sense of fire apply and at which point do other senses not apply? No precise answer is apparent. If language functions only in a referential manner, then Shelley's language falls short of this ideal. But if the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness"²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷Alfred N. Whitehead's Science and the Modern World (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 51.

is removed as the sole arbiter of aesthetic value, then the function of Shelley's language may be more clearly discerned. This function, it appears, is that language is the discoverer of "being" and not merely the transmitter of "being." And with the discovery of being in a new and novel manner, the reader is led into the "before unapprehended relationships of things."²⁰⁸

What is true of Shelley's language in the supralunary world is also true of his lexicon in the sublunary one as well. In its figurative sense, it displays a variety of valences, some of which function metaphorically and others synecdochically. In the sublunary world, two key words are air and wind. Their primary function in this intermediary space between the celestial and terrestrial worlds is to symbolize impending change, usually of a psychological nature, or to symbolize the relationship between different psychological states or historical events.

Both air and wind lack a specific sense of finitude, yet this aspect of the words is used to great advantage in Shelley's poetry. To reduce polysemy, air is often preceded by an attributive of color, form, or aspect of motion, as "through the blue air," "the blue dome of air," and the "undulating air." However, other words which more dynamically illustrate the underlying symbolic function--an

²⁰⁸Defence, p. 532

impending change with momentous consequences--are storm, tempest, wind, whirlwind, and blast. Shelley uses wind, with its basic sense of air in motion, to analogize changes in the psychological state of his personae in lyrics, dramas, and narratives.²⁰⁹ Since motion and change are the central attributes of wind, this word is ideally suited to depict such ideas as the mutability of earthly life and the vanity of human aspirations. In Adonais, for example, Shelley emphasizes the ephemerality of earthly life, "the winds of light," by contrasting it with the immutability of Keats's poetry:

When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air
(XLIV, 392-96)

In this example, the insubstantiality of life is likened to "winds of light" compared to "lofty thought," poetry which inspires idealisms of moral excellence. A similar sense of wind occurs in a later section of the poem. In this instance, Shelley invests wind with a sense of the transitory and acrimonious nature of public opinion, The

²⁰⁹Shelley held that the causes for both sensory impressions and psychic ideas were unknown and unknowable. He used the wind which "blows where it wills," though nobody knows "whence it comes or whither it goes," to explain the relations between a series of physical, historical, or psychological events. "Because air is the element symbolizing human concept and ideas, the wind, a connected movement of this element, proves an effective sceptical symbol of the concept of Necessity that had played so large a part in eighteenth-century thought." (Reiman, p. 14).

Quarterly Review, and points up the preference for change--death.

From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of a tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become

(LI, 457-59)

The changes which the wind presages may also be beneficial, such as those which vaticinatory verse foreshadows. In Laon and Cythna, Cythna describes Laon's words to her as songs which

were winds whereon I fled at will
As in a winged chariot, o'er the plain
Of crystal youth

(VII, xxxiii, 1-3)

To intensify the sense of impending change in a psychological state, Shelley sometimes employs congeners of wind that appear to create a crescendo effect or that play the idea an octave higher, that is language which may be perceived an octave higher than would be normal. This gradation appears to be a three-fold one. Wind suggests a normative metaphor for change in the piano range of tonal quality, storm comprises the mezzo-forte tonal quality and is a more intense form than wind, and finally tempest, whirlwind, and blast create the loudest tonal quality, fortissimo, and carry meanings two octaves above the normative range.

In the middle range, storm may correspond to a state of joy and gladness or mental turmoil. In Prometheus the impending change in Asia in Act II, her coming knowledge

of the "deep Truth," is presaged by "enchanted eddies,"
which are

. . . still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along
Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
(II, ii, 58-62).

The image, "storm of sound," also occurs in "The Woodman and the Nightingale" to describe the melodious song of the bird which foreshadows change.

Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm
Of sound, shook the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams
(35-38)

Conversely, storm may depict mental pain or death. In Alastor the Poet's tranquility gives way to his recognition that death is imminent. He opines that "O storm of death!/
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night" (609-10). And in Shelley's translation of Calderon's Magico Prodigioso, Justina informs the Daemon of her anguish. She cries out that

This agony
Of Passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm
(III, 109-111)

And finally in Adonais, the narrator feels relief, as he comes to accept the death of Keats and the eventual passing of temporal life: "The broken lily lies--the storm is overpast" (VI, 9).

In the third and uppermost range of meaning, wind and its congeners, tempest, whirlwind, and blast suggest the the most intense or superlative form of mental turmoil and aggravation on the one hand, and joy and rhapsody on the other hand. In The Triumph of Life, the processional which opens the poem portrays the sound of savage, frenzied music and its effects on the listeners:

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
Of that fierce Spirit /music/
(143-145)

And Laon describes his mental anguish on hearing Cynthna's feeble shriek:

That voice among the crowd--it was Cynthna's cry!
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
Its whirlwind rage
(III, vii, 8)

And in Queen Mab, Ahasuerus informs the Fairy that "Thus have I stood,--through a wild waste of years/ Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony" (VII, 254-55).

Tempest, whirlwind, and blast are also used as superlative forms of rhapsody, tranquility, or gladness. In "To Constantia Singing" the enraptured narrator notes that

Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in trance up borne
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep
(IV, 35-37)

And in an omitted stanza of "Ode Written October, 1819," peace and tranquility following battle are likened to the end of a storm:

Gather, O gather,
 Foeman and friend in love and peace!
 Waves sleep together
 When the blasts that called them to battle, cease
 (1-4)

In addition to wind and its congeners symbolizing the impending change of a psychological state, these words also symbolize changes in historical relationships as well. In Shelley's view of history, mankind has progressed inevitably, but cyclically, toward liberty and freedom. In turn, these two indestructible virtues of human conduct have caused many men so inclined to create flourishing civilizations, such as the Athenian Golden Age and the Florentine Quattrocento.²¹⁰ But just as inevitably as these civilizations have risen, so also have they declined. This cycle of human history is most often represented by the corresponding cycle of the wind in Shelley's poetry and finds its fullest development in his "Ode To The West Wind."

The guiding force behind this cycle of human history is the Spirit of the World, anima mundi, whose qualities Shelley enumerates in Queen Mab:

Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light,
 Of which yon earth is one, is wide diffused
 A Spirit of activity and life,
 That knows no term, cessation, or decay:

.

But, active, steadfast, and eternal, still
 Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
 Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
 Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease

²¹⁰ Discussed throughout Chapters I and II, A Philosophical View of Reform.

And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes
Its undecaying battlement

(VI, 146-61)

In the general sense, wind foreshadows the change in historical circumstances in which men find themselves and signals the advent of a new awareness of liberty and freedom in their minds, or its presages the sudden coming of a social change, usually with revolutionary fervor. When favorable political change looms on the horizon, Shelley characterizes the wind as delightful, such as in Hellas where Ahasuerus predicts a happy future for man, preceded by a wind that

Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest
And with the wind a storm of harmony
Unutterably sweet

(175-77)

or in Laon and Cynthna, where gladness replaces fear among the populace:

The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear

(XII, i, 1-3)

The intensity of this coming historical change may be imaged an octave higher by using the words, tempest and blast. In Hellas, Hassan foresees the inevitable triumph of the Greek cause as

A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom

(448-450)

and in Shelley's progress piece, "Ode to Liberty," he images

the power of vaticinatory verse to awaken men's minds to
impending change:

The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
with an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past
(VI, 80-83)

And finally in Prometheus Unbound, the Earth describes the
joy of the celebrants in the idyllic Fourth Act as
"gathered and driven/ By the storm of delight, by the panic
of glee!" (43-45).

Yet, the valences associated with wind in the historical
context also correspond to the concepts commotion, turmoil,
and the furtiveness of thought. Thus in Hellas Mahmud
replies to Ahasuerus that "thy words stream like a tempest/
Of dazzling mist within my brain" (786-87). Because Mahmud
cannot understand the necessity of good replacing evil, his
ratiocinations become clouded over and he is unable to cope
with the new dimensions of liberty mentioned by Ahasuerus.

Mental commotion and turmoil may also be aspects of
dreams and visions of the future. In "Epipsychidion"²¹¹
the Poet describes his mental confusion before his Vision
(l.322) as "storms" which

²¹¹Shelley also wrote "There is a Power, a Love, a
Joy, a God/ Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,/ /
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires/Love, only love--
a wind which o'er the wires/ Of the soul's giant harp
(Lacuna)/ There is a mood which language faints beneath"
("Cancelled Stanza of Epipsychidion," l34-39)

shook the ocean of my sleep
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
 Then shrank as in the sickness of an eclipse.
 (308-10)

As I have indicated earlier, Shelley primarily endows the wind with the power to bring about changes in psychological states of individuals or to foreshadow historical changes in the terrestrial realm. In "Ode To The West Wind" the wind symbolizes several senses of change, both psychological and historical. The Ode is easily the most complex matrix of metaphors among Shelley's shorter lyrics and has received voluminous critical comment. But it illustrates in a single poem, the major critical problems concerning his language. At its fundamental level of meaning, the poem is a celebration of the awesome powers of the wind, and an invocation to the wind that these powers be invested in him and hence return him to his sovereignty over the world.

As I have sought to illustrate in my previous discussions, the wind is more an agency and a process for personal redemption--in fine, is an organic metaphor rather than a static symbol with finite limits of meaning. The function of this agency and process in Shelley's ode is to illustrate by analogy that biological, psychological, and historical changes are inevitable, and inevitably these changes are beneficial to man; however, these changes are temporal and mutable nonetheless. In the "West Wind" the poet seeks to

to invest himself with the power of the wind, strives sovereignty over the process of change, invests himself in a maieutic role²¹² and becomes the mediator for change in his pre-Copernican universe. In this role as ruling spirit of the intermediate space between the terrestrial and lunar worlds, he is the sovereign force, superseded only by the sun, whose indestructible power activates the wind's seasonal alterations.

As the sovereign force or anima mundi, the poet will then have "access to being," or access to the inscape of the manifold controlled by the wind. As the sovereign force of the inscape, he becomes the mediator of "being," and possesses the power to bring about changes in the socially created world of man in the terrestrial realm. It appears, then, that the power of the wind, its ultimate paradigmatic value, is its symbolization of the "recovery of being," the process by which the poet recovers his vatic powers. With the recovery of his vatic powers via the wind's power, the poet in his quickened psychological state has the means to aid other men as well and to hasten the process of their recovery of being also.

The poet's means of the recovering of being, or the nature of things, for men is the power of language.

²¹²Percy notes that "The highest role of the educator is the maieutic role of Socrates: to help the student come to himself not as a consumer of experience but as a sovereign individual" (p. 63)

This verse, as an aspect of the wind itself, will enable men to recover their "being" or essence by activating their imaginations. With an activated imagination, men will raise their consciousness over the world and gain access to the intervolvement of the moral and material universe as aspects of the One. In general terms, Shelley implies that in this sensation-heightened state, men will seek tranquility, peace, love, and liberty and avoid war, hate, animosity, and tyranny. Shelley's perception stems from his belief in the superiority of the imagination as against reason, a cardinal principle of his Defence.

There are other marked features of the Shelleyean manifold which exhibit similar, multiple valences to those already discussed. These are features of the terrestrial manifold: rivers and streams, and oceans and sea. They provide, as do the aspects of the celestial and lunar realms, the "access to being" by which the "recovery of being" may occur for Shelley's audience.

River in its literal sense is "a stream of flowing water," but in Shelley's poetry may figuratively refer to such diverse notions as "light, poetry, time, sound, futurity and life."²¹³ River as an analogue for time occurs in "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" where Shelley refers to the historical community of English poets and poetry as

²¹³Ellis, p. 567.

as timeless. This community is

Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred Poet's grave

(184-87)

He may also use river to refer to a specific community, such as Pisa, whose intellectual life has been unique in the annals of liberty, freedom, or artistic accomplishment. In "Evening: Ponte al Mare, Pisa" these values of the past seem to have faded, yet like the endless flow of the river, they remain:

Within the surface of the fleeting river
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immovably unquiet, and forever
It trembles, but never fades away;

(III, 13-16).

The permanence-in-transition image, "fleeting river" reoccurs in his "Ode to Liberty" where it immemorializes the cultural achievement of another community, Athens:

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and forever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away

(76-80)

As these two examples illustrate, the ostensible attributes of river are those of change and mutability, but this very transitoriness suggests another configuration of meaning--permanence-in-change. In "Mont Blanc" Shelley enlarges this relationship, endowing river with psychological attributes, analogizing the flow of perceptions through the human mind to the course of the Arve River

through the Vale of Chamouni.

The mind's perception of the transitory world changes because the river is but a transitory aspect of an immutable cycle: evaporation in the form of clouds, condensation in the form of rain, streams in the form of run-off from the rains. However, from the Shelleyan perspective the interaction of mind and river creates thought, and thought, causes an "access to being" through the synthesizing principle of the imagination. Because though is inert, it is, hence, immutable and even though the manifold changes, the

race

Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
 Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
 Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
 Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
 The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
 Rolls its loud water to the ocean-waves
 Breathes its swift vapors to the circling air
 (117-127)

The nature of this "one majestic river" is

The secret Strength of things
 Which governs though, and to the infinite dome
 Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee
 (139-41)

These metaphors and analogies are new ways of discovering "being"--by formulating new analogic relationships, and

thus of recovering the world from its old analogies -- by liberating it from the pre-formulated symbolic complex of the Augustans, the "algebraical representation" of the world fashioned by reason alone, and from the mere "distinctions of lexicography" which Shelley attacked in his Defence²¹⁴ as a means of knowing the world.

Another figurative sense of river, sound, which illustrates the recovery of being, occurs in Prometheus Unbound. In this piece, Shelley invests river with the sense of vatic poetry which enchants and enthralls the psychological state of the auditor and profoundly raises his consciousness to new levels of understanding. In the poem Asia responds to the lyrics of the Voice in the Air by describing her soul as an "enchanted boat," which floats along with the Spirit's song, "that many winding river" (II, v, 78-79).

The last significant sense of river, futurity, occurs in Rosalind and Helen and "To William Shelley." Utilizing the same passage in both poems, Shelley analogizes the necessary and inevitable decline of tyranny with the endless flow of the river:

Fear not the tyrants shall rule forever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith:
They stand on the brink of that mighty river
Whose waves they have tainted with death

(894 -97)

²¹⁴Defence. p. 563.

Shelley repeats this idea in "To William Shelley."

Fear not the tyrants will rule forever
Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river
Whose waves they have tainted with death

(IV, 25-28)

These illustrations suggest a wide range of valences similar in metaphorical function to wind in that the total limits of the metaphor are implied, imaginatively, from the explicit symbol of the text to an implicit meaning larger than the tenor-vehicle relationship. The creative problem is, however, troublesome because the vehicles of Shelley's metaphors are not inert or static but refer to a mutable, organic universe whose empirical positivities constantly change. Consequently, symbolic reference, then, to the manifold in Shelley's poetry is to an organically conceived one, a universe without the empirical finitude commonly associated with the Augustan literary perspective.

Thus, the ontological distinctions between aspects of the manifold, so widely celebrated by the Augustans, appear obscure because the "thingness" is only a part of the cycle and its entirety. Shelley's words, then, do not have a specific lexis, a diachronic one with verifiable antecedents such as the writers of the previous century had. His words refer not to an entity, but rather refer to a phase of the entity as Shelley perceives it in one moment of time. Thus, his words lack the referential modality of

the eighteenth century.

Another illustration of this process may be found in a synonym of river, stream, but with a broader range of meaning. In its figurative range, stream has eight senses, including aspects of human emotion, intellect, or passion.²¹⁵ Furthermore, its sense may symbolize the course of an individual's life, such as Keats.

Shelley's most frequent use of stream is to create analogues for winds, storms, and tempests which illustrate the necessity of impending political change, or the progression of events which culminate in dramatic change, such as the Poet's death in Alastor. In this poem, the Poet's course of life and quest for Truth is depicted by his travels along a stream. In the Poet's dream, a "veiled maiden" speaks to him in a voice "like woven sounds of streams and breezes" (55). His boat journeys to a cavern where there is an "unfathomable stream" (373) and from this point in the narrative, stream becomes progressively metaphorical of the poet's search for the "deep Truth" similar to Asia's in Act II of Prometheus Unbound.

Disembarking from his boat, the Poet views the inaccessible profound mysteries of the stream's source as the image of his own life's quest for the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. And following the stream to its source,

²¹⁵Ellis, pp. 670-71.

he realizes that the flow of perceptions through the human mind is a fruitless guide to ultimate reality without the synthesizing principle of the imagination. Aware of his approaching death at the brink of the stream's plunge into the valley, the Poet acknowledges the futility of his quest for the "deep Truth." The narrator notes that

The influxes of sense
And his own being, unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling

(641-45)

Stream, then, illustrates a progression of events, the culmination of which leads to significant change, such as the Poet's death in Alastor. However, "stream of thought" may point to a different "meaning." The image also occurs in Daemon of the World²¹⁶ where it illustrates the progression of thought which the World Spirit unfolds as it admires the "renovated world." This progression of the "stream of thought" culminates in the Spirit's apostrophe to Earth, but is preceded by this dramatic ligature:

Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea
And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits
Was the sweet stream of thought that with wild motion
Flowed o'er the Spirit's human sympathies.
The mighty tide of thought has paused awhile,
Which from the Daemon now like Ocean's stream
Again began to pour.

(II, 331-39)

²¹⁶See also in Laon and Cynthna "Thro' the shadowy stream/
of her loose hair" (II, xxix, 1).

Progression of thought, analogized by the flow of water in a stream, occurs in other poems as well.²¹⁷ In "Euganean Hills" the narrator's outpouring of verse is a "swift stream of song" (312) and in "Ode To A Skylark" the bird's song is a series of notes which "flow in such crystal sound" (85). But perhaps the most striking analogic use of stream may be found in Adonais where it forms a pastoral image representing the intellectual development of Keats's thoughts in his youth:

The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living stream
Of his young spirit he fed
(73-76)

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all water imagery in Shelley's poetry illustrates the same principle as river and stream. Two other examples of water imagery, ocean and sea, display very different metaphoric functions from fire, wind, stream and their congeners.

In general, sea and ocean are two very significant features in Shelley's terrestrial realm, and are used to depict the realm of temporal existence upon which man pursues his voyage of life. But in their figurative senses,

²¹⁷In Laon and Cynthna, Laon's thoughts are the "vision of a dream / Which hid in one divine gulf the troubled stream / Of mind" (I, 111-13). In the Ninth Canto, Cynthna describes her perception of mutability as "our thoughts flow on with the stream whose waters / Return not to their fountain" (IX, xxxv, 1-2).

Shelley most often utilizes these words to describe the magnitude and intensity of human passions and thought of the individual's journey through life.²¹⁸ In "Fiordispina" Cosimo's "brain and bosom" are glowing with

The ardours of a vision which obscure
The very idol of its portraiture.
He faints, dissolved in a sea of love
(22-24).

The analogy, "sea of love," occurs again in "The Sunset." Isabel dejectedly reflects on the enormity of her lost love; she wonders

Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love
(47-49)

Again, Shelley's intention to enthrall and enrapture seems apparent here. Although sea lacks a well-defined finitude, its sense of vastness creates an enlarged dimension of erotic love. By enlarging the figurative sense of love and associating it with sea, the image becomes, perhaps too large for the mind to easily grasp. Yet, this technique prevails in many of Shelley's analogies of sea and ocean. For example, in a fragment connected with "Epipsychidion," Shelley describes friendship as

²¹⁸Ellis lists the following figurative senses for sea: 1) used to express the "wide extent of the light, air, mist, fire, etc.," 2) "large numbers of people," and 3) "time" (p. 589). For ocean, he lists one sense, "great or immeasurable quantity" (p. 485).

a dear balm,
 A happy and auspicious bird of calm
 Which rides o'er life's tumultuous Ocean
(62-64)

And in "With a Guitar, To Jane" Shelley endows an individual's life span with the magnitude of the sea's vastness. In this lyric Ariel advises Miranda that in a future life he will again be her guide:

When you live again on earth
 Like an unseen star of birth
 Ariel guides you o'er the sea
 Of life from your nativity
(27-30)

or Shelley may utilize sea to fashion a metaphor for the tranquility of youthful days. In the "enchanted boat lyric" in Prometheus Unbound, Asia sings that

We have passed Age's icy caves,
 And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
 And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray
(II, v, 98-100)

Shelley also employs ocean and sea as vehicles in his metaphors to depict other intense feelings and emotions, such as woe, misery, and agony. In "Time" Shelley depicts woe as a concomitant of man's journey through life.

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years,
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
(1-3)

And in "Euganean Hills" the sea becomes an expanse of human misery through which the individual must journey and whose struggle is relieved by an occasional and necessary island of joy:

Many a green isle needs must be
 In the deep wide sea of Misery,
 Or the mariner worn and wan,
 Never thus could voyage on--

(1-4)

This concept of life as a difficult journey over a vast ocean, relieved by an occasional island of respite, is echoed in other parts of the poem as well. As his bark approaches Venice, one of these green "flowering isles" the mariner repeats this gloomy forecast, but includes the hopeful note that "many flowering islands lie/ In the water of wide Agony" (66-67). And at the conclusion of the poem, he states the necessity for other such islands: "Other flowering isles must be/ In the sea of Life and Agony" (335-36).

And finally in his commemorative poem on the Peterloo Massacre, "The Mask of Anarchy," Shelley symbolically invests the intensity of the slaughter with the vastness of a sea.

the horsemen's scimitars
 Wheel and flash, life's sphereless stars
 Thirsting to eclipse their burning
 In a sea of death and mourning

(L, xxvii, 315-18)

However, sea and ocean may be applied to other concepts besides human woe and misery. A final category, thought, illustrates the wide range of Shelley's use of sea and ocean to analogize diverse concepts and ideals. In this category these two words depict the intensity and magnitude of the mind's aspirations for the Good, the True, and the

Beautiful. In Laon and Cynthna the pent-up desires for reform of the masses in the French Revolution suggest the intensity of their aspirations.²¹⁹ Their desire is that

Hope's deep source in fullest flow
Like an earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean
Of human thoughts

(XXX, viii, 466-68)

And in Hellas, Shelley images the durability of Intellectual Beauty. Semichorus I remarks that "temples and towers" must decay,

But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war.
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity

(696-99)

And finally in "Fragment: Great Spirit" the Spirit which prevades human thought is a

Great Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought
Nurtures within its unimaged caves,
In which thou sittest, sole, as in my mind,
Giving a voice to its mysterious waves--

(1-4)

These past examples have dealt with the major aspects of Shelley's manifold. But what holds true for them is also true for the lesser phenomena of his varied and rich manifold. Such words as plants (including flowers), clouds, dew and mist, as well as shadow and veil exhibit multiple valences which change from poem to poem.

²¹⁹In Prometheus Unbound, Jupiter invokes volcanoes to destroy the world: "Let hell unlock/ Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire" (III, i, 74-75).

Cloud is often figuratively used to describe the human mind or soul in transition from one mood to another. More specifically, Shelley uses cloud to describe an aspect or mood of the human soul, especially as it applies to the mind emerging from feelings of oppression, coming into a happier state of the human mind, collectively considered.²²⁰ In The Cenci, Beatrice describes her mental anxiety just before her execution as a mind "Wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame" (Cenci, V, iv, 148). In a similar fashion Shelley employs cloud in his translation of Faust. In the drama, the Lord describes Faust's mental predicament to Mephistopheles as existing in "cloud of error" (I, 69). And in "Ginevra" Shelley uses cloud to depict the collective minds of the wedding guests. When the guests are informed of Ginevra's death, the atmosphere in the vaulted room is like a "cloud of sorrow" (172). And finally in Hellas Hassan describes the principals in battle moments before the Greek victory as wrapped in a "cloud of desolation" (495).

Shelley also uses cloud to describe the future state of man. In Oedipus the Tyrant, Purganax depicts the ominous future of mankind, stating that the "future looks black as death, a cloud/ Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it" (I, 96-97).

In addition to creating analogues for an aspect of the mind, Shelley uses cloud to depict the sympathy of nature

²²⁰Ellis, p. 111.

for the human condition, either of joy or sadness. In "The Dirge" (1822) Shelley describes the cloud which laments the woes and ills of the world as a "sudden cloud" which "Knells all the night long" (3). In the eclogue, Rosalind and Helen the passing of Lionel's spirit is like a "frail cloud wandering o'er the moon" (1041). And in "Ginevra" when the heroine dies, the lamps in the room become "A cloud of sorrow handing, as if gloom/ Had passed out of men's minds into the air" (172-73).

But again, Shelley may shift the valences associated with cloud and utilize cloud to depict joy as well as sadness. In Prometheus Unbound, Asia's apostrophe to Spring begins with

Thou comest as the memory of a dream
Which not is sad because it hath been sweet;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life

(II, i, 8-12)

In another context, Shelley endows cloud with the sense of joy associated with the creation of poetry or its effect on an auditor. In Queen Mab he describes the state of the poet's mind when dreaming as "Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,/ When silvery clouds float through the "wildered brain" (I, 68-69), and in his "Ode To a Skylark" the beauty of the bird's song is as

From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody

(33-35).

In the final category, Shelley invests the abstractions, Freedom and Tyranny, with the sense of cloud. In his "Ode to Liberty" Shelley depicts a visionary achievement of human mind, Athens, as

. . . a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented clouds, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry

(V, 61-64)

And in "Euganean Hills" tyranny and oppression are "clouds which stain truth's rising day" (161); and finally, in The Mask of Anarchy the death of Anarchy will be followed by Freedom, "a rushing light of clouds and splendour" (XXXIV,1).

Another common aspect of Shelley's manifold is the word, mists. In its most common figurative usage, mists suggests mental obscuration and confusion, including fear and horror.²²¹ The most striking use of this sense occurs in Adonais where the transitoriness of Keats's death is "a low mist which cannot blot/ The brightness it may veil" (XLIV, 4-5).²²² In Peter Bell, Shelley characterizes Peter's mental state as one that reveals "his own mind--was a mist" (V, ii, 5). But this pejorative use is not consistent in other poems. In "Fragment: Love's Tender Atmosphere" love is "the tender mist our spirits are/ Wrapped in" (3-4) and in "Poems From St. Irvyne, Or The Rosicrucian" Shelley uses mist to fashion the struggle of the human mind to foresee the future.

²²¹Ellis, p. 453.

²²²Used also in The Cenci and Hellas. Cenci presages

In this juvenile poem, the narrator queries "Why may not human minds unveil/ The firm mists of futurity" (IV, v, 21-22).

Another intriguing word in Shelley's lexicon, which possesses multiple valences, is shadow.²²³ As in the case with mists above, Shelley employs shadow, as well as veils, to depict the mind's struggle to fashion order in the face of the transitory phenomenal world. In the case of veils, its general figurative senses function to analogize the delight of the mind's quest for The Good, The True, and The Beautiful, or to indicate the contrariety of experience that this search involves.²²⁴

In Alastor, veil conceals the sexual beauty of the "veiled maid," whose limbs "glow beneath the sinuous veil/ Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare" (176-66).

But a more common use of veil is to conceal aesthetic beauty as in "Epipsychidion" and "Mont Blanc." In the former, the enchanted isle is surrounded by gentle clouds, which are

Beatrice's mental decline: "'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist/ Of horrors" (II, i, 183-84); Mahmud in Hellas states: "We gaze on danger through the mist of fear" (641).

²²³Ellis lists no figurative senses for shadow, but the sense of the word is clearly metaphorical. Its range includes "unrealities and mysteries," "moral or intellectual gloom," "dimness and obscurity," and "adumbrations and clouds" (p. 604).

²²⁴Its figurative senses include the notion of concealment, darkness, light, futurity, and intellectual or immaterial things (Ellis, pp. 755-56).

"clear exhalations, soft and bright,/ Veil after veil,
each hiding some delight" (471-72), while in the latter
the rainbows in the ravine of the Arve River stretch "across
the swamp/ Of the Aethereal waterfall, whose veil Robes/
some unsculptured image" (26-28).

This sense of the word, applied to the concealment of
intellectual and immaterial things, achieves its most
significant use in Adonais where it describes the immortality
of art. Though dead, Keats's spirit dwells in the immaterial
realm of space, "burning through the inmost veil of Heaven"
(LV, 7), and other poems illustrate this sense as well.
In "Ginerva" the heroine's impending death reveals to her
the immaterial world: "But life's familar veil was now
withdrawn/ As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn"
(122-23). And in Prince Athanase, the Prince's secret grief
is

an adamantine veil
Between his heart and mind,--both unrelieved
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife
(I, 87-89)

Shelley's "veils" may obscure more pleasant concepts as well
as grief and death. In Laon and Cynthna Cynthna's perception
of man's future becomes remarkably acute when the "veils"
to her thoughts are removed. Then she perceives "Nature,
and Truth, and Liberty and Love" (IX, vii, 1). Two other
poems illustrate this point as well. Ever the defender of
man's liberty, Shelley celebrated this cherished virtue

in his "Ode to Naples." In this political lyric, he rhapsodizes that the Neapolitan revolt against Austrian tyranny will

Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil
O'er Ruin desolate
O'er falsehoods' fallen state

(93-95)

and in his progress piece, "Ode to Liberty," he notes the power of vatic poetry to nurture his virtue. The "voices of bards and sages" have kept freedom alive by "rendering the veil of space and time asunder" (VI, 87).²²⁵

Of special importance in Shelley's manifold are the lesser phenomena, plants and flowers.²²⁶ In general Shelley utilizes these two words in their nominal sense, but in the figurative senses they create a remarkable array of analogies. For example, they may be employed to point up a comparison, depict a person asleep, or to fashion a comic remark. In The Cenci, as Bernardo awakens the sleeping Beatrice, he remarks that "I must shake the dew of rest/ From this sweet folded flower" (V, iii, 7-8). In the "Magnetic Lady to Her Patient" flower characterizes a person in need of nourishment, spiritual and romantic in nature. The Lady states that

²²⁵Note a similar use in Queen Mab: "Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil,/ Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear" (VIII, 13-14).

²²⁶Ellis lists no figurative senses for plant, but nonetheless, as the "Sensitive Plant" illustrates, Shelley's use of the word again is clearly beyond the merely referential sense. However, Ellis lists three figurative senses for flower and three for its plural. In the singular, flower may be applied to human

Like a cloud big with a May shower,
 My soul seeps healing rain
 On thee, thou withered flower
 (IV, 1-3)

In two other poems, flower characterizes the tender nature of young children. In Queen Mab Shelley illustrates the debilitating effect of religious institutions on children:

Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower
 Even in its tender bud; their influence darts
 Like subtle poison through bloodless veins
 of desolate society.
 (IV, 104-107)

And in Rosalind and Helen Rosalind refuses to inform her children about the nature of death because

It is unmeet
 To shed on the brief flower of youth
 The withering knowledge of the grave
 (443-45)

Among Shelley's Juvenilia are two poems which use flower in sharply contrasting manners to the above senses. In "The Solitary" he characterizes an anchorite as a person who is "A flower that scarce breathes in the desert rude/
 To Zephyr's passing wing (4-6), and in "Love's Rose" Shelley images love as a flower that only deception can destroy:

Age cannot Love destroy
 But perfidy can blast the flower
 Even when in most unwary hour
 It blooms in Fancy's bower
 (III, 15-18)

beings, , love and fulfillment (p. 252). In the plural, flowers may be applied to anything sweet, exquisite or choice, or beauties, charms, pleasure, or to stars.

Another example of the metaphoric range of flower is Shelley's use of it to point up a comparison about love. In The Triumph of Life Shelley argues for the superiority of love in contrast to the transitory values of money and ease, stressing the organic as against the inorganic:

And life where long that flower of Heaven grew not
 Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain
 Of age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not
 (257-59)

Another remarkable use of flower is Shelley's use of it to imply verse or thought of a profound nature. In "Epipsychidion" he urges Emilia Viviani not to take lightly his amoristic verse:

Lady mine,

Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
 Will be as of the trees of paradise
 (383-87)

A second instance of flower in this sense may be found in Rosalind and Helen. At the conclusion of the poem the narrator notes that "Helen's boy grew with her and they fed/ From the same flowers of thought" (1286-87).

The last two senses of flower are sharply different from the examples above and from each other. In Adonais and "Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Bion" Shelley uses flower to portray the sympathy of Nature for Keats and Bion. In the former Urania wounds her feet, hastening to the bier of the dead poet. Her blood, "like the young tears of May/ Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way
 (XXIV, 215-16),

while in the latter, the narrator urges nature to display its affection for Bion:

Let every tender herb and plant and flower
From each dejected bud and drooping bloom
Shed dews of liquid sorrow

(4-6)

In the last category, the creation of a comic utterance, Shelley attributes sapience to the vine from which grew the vine that Ulysses serves Cyclops. In his translation, Shelley has Cyclops comment that "Papai! the must vine be a sapient plant" (581).

Although Shelley knew that plants lacked the consciousness of the world that humans possess, nonetheless his "Sensitive Plant" is his most extensive treatment of this theme. In the poem the mimosa possesses attributes that make it a nearly intelligent organism. It "desires what it has not, the Beautiful" (77) and at the death of Eve, it "felt the sound of the funeral chant." But left untended by the absence of human care, and exposed to the rigors of repeated winters, the plant will probably expire. In contrast to the changes which time has wrought in the plant, the concepts, "Love, and beauty, and delight," are immutable-- "There is no death nor change" (II, 134-35).

It becomes apparent that any measure of Shelley's effectiveness as a poet forces the reader back to the essential problem that this chapter began with: the nature of language. Language, Peckham has informed us, is not so

much a way knowing the world as it is a set of instructions for coming to know it.²²⁷ If this proposition is valid, then Shelley's metaphors function as encoded instructions which direct our knowing the world by enchanting and enthralling our act of knowing and thus altering our perspective and the meaning of the world.

An example may suffice here. In the century preceding Shelley's birth, mountain scenery was thought of as an unfit poetic topic. Yet in his meditative lyric, "Mont Blanc," Shelley urges his reader to consider the Arve River coursing through the Vale of Chaumouni as an appropriate topic of poetic discourse. He instructs his reader to consider a primary analogy which he may not have thought of beforehand, a "before unapprehended relationship," that the river rushing through the vale is a similitude for the progression of thought through the human mind.

The results of this consideration are problematical, of course. But the instructions are clear. Consider the view, Shelley urges, reflect on its enchantment without the preformulated notion that it is a worthless mental effort. Detached from its familiar intellectual package, the universe should attain a splendor which it lacked before, a splendor which may lead to a deepened understanding of the mind and the river.

²²⁷Morse Peckham, Romanticism and Behavior (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1976), p. 332.

In short, Shelley's metaphors are instructions which attempt to restore a youthful glee to the act of knowing the world. Complicating these instructions is the fact that the instructions are directed toward mature intellects, who, stiffened by the pedestrian discourse with language, resist the instructions, fearing a loss of certitude in perception. The instructions, after all, require the reader to loosen his ties with language, to cast loose from the traditional moorings of language, and to set himself adrift on a unfamiliar journey.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The key issue in coming to terms with Shelley's language and its literary arrangement is the nature of language itself. While the nature of language continues to be explained and explored, Peckham's remark that "language is best understood as linked to the world by behavior, not by reference"²²⁸ appears to be the best operational construct for coming to terms with this onerous problem and its application to Shelley.

Perhaps the configuration of meaning in Peckham's remark is best illustrated by an Eskimo poem which emphasizes the affinity between words and human behavior:

In the very earliest time,
when both people and animals lived on earth,
a person could become an animal if he wanted to
and an animal could become a human being.
Sometimes they were people
and sometimes animals
and there was no difference.
All spoke the same language.
That was the time when words were like magic.
The human mind had mysterious powers.
A word spoken by chance
might have strange consequences.
It would suddenly come alive
and what people wanted to happen could happen--
all you had to do was say it.

²²⁸Peckham, The Triumph of Romanticism, p. 374.

Nobody could explain this:
That's the way it was.²²⁹

This conception of language as the primary mode for the creation of the world is an ancient one, and remnants of it even exist in Genesis, where Adam names the animals: ". . . and what the man called each living creature, that was its name."²³⁰ Adam creates these ontologies from non-existent models; thus, he creates language ex nihilo, and as in the Netsilik poem, "what people wanted to happen could happen--/ all you had to do was say it."

A more difficult task is to reform or renew language once a normative lexis has set in, because without these efforts at reforming and recreating language, language becomes moribund. The conventions of clarity become dulled by repetition and usage, the audience's observation of the world becomes uninteresting, and the world seems stale and flat.

This critical loss of language's power of definition is the dilemma that Hamlet faces up to in his injunction to the players, as I noted in Chapter I. Hamlet urges a reform of dramatic conventions, an improvement in The Mouse Trap's

²²⁹"Magic Words & More More More Magic Words" in Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry of the Indian North America, ed. Jerome Rothenberg (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1972), p. 45.

²³⁰The quotation in full reads: "So God formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name" (Genesis 2: 19-21). The New English Bible (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

claritas, because he wants to restore order to his kingdom. This restoration of order necessitates altering his kingdom's response to the untimely death of his beloved father and Gertrude's hasty marriage to Cladius. Hence by improving the drama's claritas, he will alter his audience's response to this predicament. In effect, Hamlet's reform of the drama catalyzes the discovery of disorder and hastens the recovery of order in the kingdom.

Shelley's purpose in the reform of dramatic and literary conventions has a similar goal, but it is also more complicated than Hamlet's. These complications are Shelley's insistence that the traditional moorings of language be altered or abandoned, and that as a consequence, this altered language will create a superior understanding of the universe. However, the chief difficulty with this credo is that Shelley's injunction for claritas creates a loss of certitude for the audience, because the abandonment of the traditional positivities of language requires that the audience relinquish its normal behavior--its fondness for familiar language--and adopt a new one. In short, Shelley's request seems unreasonable.

To overcome the audience's reluctance to accept this unfamiliar aesthetic of poetry, Shelley's strategy is to charm, beguile, and enchant his audience with an array of lyrics which dazzles and provokes it to suspend its sense of disbelief at this new poetic faith. In Shelley's aesthetic,

lyrical enchantment creates and sustains the suspension of disbelief and progressively fashions a new plane of certitude and perception, which nurtures a new and favorable behavioral response in the audience.

This new plane of certitude, fashioned from analogues of the pre-Copernican universe, consists of new semantic valences for commonplace aspects of the landscape such as wind, river, or bird. In turn, these analogies function as window panes through which the audience perceives moral, psychological, and epistemological truths which imaginatively discover the universe in a novel manner. Finally, these truths lead to fuller explanatory statements about the nature of the universe and the recovery of meaning.

This process of discovery and recovery abounds in his lyrics. In "Mont Blanc," for example, Shelley fancifully explores an Alpine vista, the Arve coursing through the Bale of Chamouni, to illustrate that an enhanced ontological perception of the Arve creates a more profound understanding of it than a merely empirical judgment. At the outset of the poem, river designates the stream itself, but in the progressive meditation and mood of reverie in the poem, it symbolically images the flow of perceptions through the human mind. This accretion of metaphoric intensity to river leads the audience to a deepened understanding of the "before unapprehended relationships" between river and the mind which perceives it.

This ontological enhancement of river from a static feature of the manifold to an organic "discoverer of being" points the way to an enriched and fuller explanation of river's epistemological significance. Thus, the audience will come to "discover" the Arve in a new way, and consequently will recover for itself a truth of the universe.

Shelley seems to require a similar mode conception of light in his treatment of the Prometheus myth. In the poem, light has multiple semantic valences, ranging from "radiation from the central luminary" to an analogue for the redemptive power of love. In the progressive development of the lyrical drama, the senses of light thicken, accretizing its metaphoric sense so that by Acts III-IV, light becomes synonymous with the redemptive power of love to free men from the bondage of hatred.

This intra-referential fusion of the multiple senses of light occurs in the character of Prometheus whose actions exemplify the power of love to fill the void of hate in the human heart. The effects of his love on Asia create explanatory statements about the power of love to reform the heart and to fashion new models of human conduct, the ultimate end of which is the establishment of a secular millenium.

What is true of these two poems applies to his other lyrics as well. The "distinctions of lexicography," as Shelley called the dictionary sense of words, are loosened from their traditional finitudes an additional lexis is

fused to the old one. Thus Wind in "Ode to the West Wind" becomes not just "air in motion," but the harbinger of psychological change, renewing the poet's vaticinatory powers as it does the earth itself.

As a final note, Shelley's poetry intends to fashion truths of perception beyond mere sense analysis. The purpose of these metaphysical insights is to catalyze human behavior, to found a new rerum natura. In this respect, Shelley may be called an idealist. Perhaps a more realistic consideration of his poetry is that it enables his audience to see in wind, river, and bird, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

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