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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

How Effectual Was Shelley?
A Study in Shelley Criticism

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty
Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Of Master of Arts

Department of English

By

Harriet B. Salin

Year

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A STUDY IN SHELLEY CRITICISM

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HOW EFFECTUAL WAS SHELLEY?
A STUDY IN SHELLEY CRITICISM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PART I: THE BACKGROUND PAGE

OVERVIEW I 1

CHAPTER

I SHELLEY CRITICISM, 1816-1839

The period as background for early Shelley
criticism 8

Three types of contemporaneous
criticism 11

Shelley's reaction to the critics 17

Criticism at the time of Shelley's
death 18

Early publications of Shelley's works 19

Admirers and detractors of the 1830's 20

OVERVIEW II 25

CHAPTER

II THE RISE TO FAME, 1839-1920

Publications of early memoirs by those
who knew Shelley 34

Important publication of works 36

The formation of the Shelley Society 36

Interest felt in the personality of
Shelley 37

Discussions as to the man and the
poet 41

Greater appreciation of Shelley's
ideas 46

PART II: SHELLEY CRITICISM SINCE 1920	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	49
CHAPTER	
I THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S PERSONALITY	
Important modern contributions to this	
phase of Shelley	53
Shelley, the "eternal child"	54
Shelley, "the madman"	58
Shelley, the man of practical ideas	66
Shelley, the Christian	72
II THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S IDEAS	
Important modern contributions	78
Shelley as a religious teacher	79
Shelley as a scientist	84
Shelley as a modern thinker	86
The development of Shelley's mind	88
Evaluations	96
III THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S ART	
Important modern contributions	99
General evaluations	100
Shelley's limitations	102
Shelley's best qualities	104
His great ability as a lyrical poet	104
His powerful imagery	107
His mastery of words and verse forms	111
SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS	114
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	116

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The course of Shelley criticism is a long and interesting one. The poet died before the greatness of his works was widely recognized, and only in the present generation has there been general acknowledgment of his essential greatness. During Shelley's lifetime he was considered by many a "bad man and a bad poet," he was ignored by others, and he was appreciated by a few. For many years after the publication of Shelley's works by his wife in 1839-41, the tendency of biographical and critical works concerning him was to praise him as angelic or denounce him as ineffectual. In comparatively recent days there has arisen a new school of scholarly criticism marked by a juster appreciation of the life and the art of the great poet.

Shelley criticism thus falls into three phases; first, from 1816 to 1839, a period of contemporaneous criticism influenced by political bias and warped by fears and antagonisms of the time; secondly, from 1839 through 1920, a period of biography and critical essays, beginning with the first published edition of Shelley's poems, and including essays in honor of the poet's birth--a period unhampered by the political fears of the early nineteenth century and marking a definite rise in Shelley's fame; thirdly, criticism

since 1920, a time marked by close scholarship and an attempt to make a careful analysis of the great romantic thinkers.

The first two periods have been traced by several writers. In 1929, G. L. Marsh made a study of the criticism of Shelley by his contemporaries.¹ In 1935, Willis Pratt gave a chronological account of Shelley criticism in England from 1810-1890.² In 1938, early Shelley criticism was extensively traced by N. I. White.³ The early material being largely inaccessible to the average student, Mr. White reprints practically all reviews concerning Shelley written from 1810-1822.

There remain, then, several areas of Shelley criticism which invite investigation: American criticism;⁴ the period from 1890 through 1920; and the period from 1920 to the present. The period from 1920 appealed to me because of the richness of the material and its accessibility.

¹ G. L. Marsh, "The Early Reviews of Shelley," Modern Philology, XXVII (August, 1929), 73-95. In 1925, Walter Graham had studied "Shelley's Debt to Leigh Hunt and the Examiner," P. M. L. A., XL (March, 1925), 185-92.

² Willis Pratt, Shelley Criticism in England, 1810-1890 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1935. Unpublished doctoral dissertation)

³ N. I. White, The Unextinguished Hearth, Shelley and His Contemporary Critics (Duke University Press, 1938)

⁴ There is forthcoming in the spring of 1940 a doctoral dissertation by Miss Pulia Powers on Shelley in America in the Nineteenth Century, His Relation to American Critical Thought and His Influence (University of Nebraska, University Series)

Shelley bibliography from 1920 to 1938 has been assembled in chronological order in The Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature.¹ I have checked this bibliography with the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and the Cumulative Book Index.² Some of the articles, including a number written in foreign languages, were inaccessible to me; the rest, the British and the American documents, with a few exceptions, I have analyzed.

The purpose of the study is to give an interpretation of Shelley criticism which would include: the present state of Shelley scholarship; the main attitudes of the modern critics toward Shelley; the relation of these modern conceptions to attitudes of the past. This objective called for: first, a review of the older Shelley criticism; and secondly, the main problem of analyzing Shelley scholarship since 1920. It seemed logical, therefore, to divide the thesis into two parts, one on the background of Shelley criticism, in two chapters: contemporaneous criticism from 1816 to 1839; and Shelley's rise to fame from 1839 through 1920. The overviews which precede chapters one and two will,

¹Edited for The Modern Humanities Research Association by Mary S. Serjeantson, assisted by Leslie N. Broughton, Cambridge.

²I have of course checked, in addition, the sources listed in recent studies: Wise, Weaver, Pratt. (See my bibliography.)

I trust, be useful in the study of those periods where the necessity for brevity forces me to neglect the strict chronological order of the various criticisms concerning Shelley. The second part is organized on the three major problems of modern Shelley scholarship--his personality, his philosophy, and his art.

In 1881, Mathew Arnold said of Shelley: "He is a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."¹ This statement has raised a question which continues to dominate modern Shelley scholarship. The later Shelley criticism is in effect an attempt to answer the question: How effectual was Shelley the man, Shelley the philosopher, and Shelley the poet?

¹ Poetry of Byron, Chosen and Arranged by Mathew Arnold,
(London; New York: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1890. First
edition in 1881.)

PART I

OVERVIEW I

OVERVIEW

IMPORTANT HISTORICAL
FACTS THAT HAD SOME
INFLUENCE UPON THE
LITERARY CRITICISM
OF THE TIMES

IMPORTANT SHELLEY
PUBLICATIONS FROM
1816-1822

INTERPRETATION
FROM
1816-1822

1789

The French Revolution
At first this movement,
the new watchwords of
which were "Liberty,
Fraternity, Equality,"
was applauded by liber-
al minded Englishmen.

1793-1794

The Reign of Terror
caused Englishmen to
recoil from the Rev-
olution.

1793-1815

War with France (broken
by a short intermission
1802-1803.)

The social contest in
England caused by the
French Revolution be-
came submerged in this
war. No social dis-
turbances troubled
England save occasional
riots by the poor. The
reaction against all
reform lasted for years.
For nearly twenty-five
years, there was in
England a decided reac-
tion against change.

1812

War with America marked
a further cessation of
social reform in England.

HISTORICAL FACTS

SHELLEY PUBLICATIONS

INTERPRETATION

1815-1832

Early years of "Social Revolution"

New problems confronting the Tory aristocracy. Creation of a middle class and a working class. Fight for universal suffrage, the ballot, reform of Parliament, freedom of press, just and equal laws. Rise of many well-known reformers. Great misery among the English poor. Old aristocracy found themselves confronted by the middle classes and by the workers with an ardent questioning of the old traditions.

After 1800, the political influence of periodical literature became more powerful.

1802--Founding of The Edinburgh Review--with Whiggish sympathies

1808--The Examiner
"radical"

1809--Quarterly Review
a Tory organ

1817--Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine--
a Tory organ to give some opposition to the Edinburgh Review

From 1816-1822, Shelley criticism falls into three groups: he was considered a "bad man and a bad poet"; he was spoken of as a gifted but wayward young man; he was defended with praise. Examples of each type of criticism are to be found in leading periodicals of the time.

1816

Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude

1816

The Monthly Review
The British Critic
The Eclectic Review
a poor poet

The Examiner
an original thinker

1817

A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote throughout the Kingdom

1817

Leigh Hunt--a good poet

HISTORICAL FACTS

SHELLEY PUBLICATIONS

INTERPRETATION

	<p>1817 <u>History of a Six Week's Tour through a part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; with descriptive letters of a sail round the Lake of Geneva and of the Glaciers of Chamouni (This is mainly by Mary Shelley with certain contributions from the pen of Shelley.)</u></p>	<p>In 1817, the Chauncery proceedings of Westbrook vs. Shelley, in which Shelley claimed his children, from the Westbrooks, caused unfavorable comment in regard to Shelley.</p>
<p>1818 <u>Hunger Riots</u> in which fifteen hundred famishing men marched under a banner "Bread Or Blood," demanding that the price of bread be fixed; twenty-four were condemned to death, and five hanged at Elby.</p>	<p>1818 <u>Laon and Cythna; or the Revolution of the Golden City: a Vision of the Nineteenth Century</u> (This was altered into <u>The Revolt of Islam; a Poem in Twelve Cantos</u>. Some copies are dated 1817.</p>	<p>1818 Leigh Hunt--a good poet</p>
<p>1819 <u>"Peterloo Massacre"</u> Fifty thousand people gathered at St. Peter's Field's, Manchester, to hear "Orator Hunt," a popular speaker. In a charge of yeomanry on the unarmed crowd, a man was killed and forty injured. The days following were marked by legislation to suppress meetings and freedom of speech or writing. This event caused great agitation among the radicals. Shelley shows his indignation in <u>The Masque of Anarchy</u> which was not published until 1832.</p>	<p>1819 <u>Rosalind and Helen; a Modern Eclogue; with Other Poems</u> <u>The Cenci; a Tragedy in Five Acts</u></p>	<p>1819 <u>The Quarterly Review</u> a bad man; a bad poet <u>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</u>-- a bad man; a good poet <u>Monthly Review</u> a bad man; a good poet <u>The Examiner</u>--a man of talent <u>The London Chronicle</u> a bad man <u>Gentleman's Magazine</u> a bad man</p>

HISTORICAL FACTS

SHELLEY PUBLICATIONS

INTERPRETATION

1820-21

The Struggle over the Divorce of Queen Caroline. The queen had been living apart from King George since 1796. In 1818, the King sent over to Italy (where the Queen had been spending some time) to secure evidence for a divorce. The Queen came to England in 1820 to plead her cause in person. She was received with enthusiasm. Whig politicians rallied to her support as a means of striking at both the King and the present Ministry. Queen Caroline alienated the people by an undignified act of trying to force an entrance into Westminster Abbey on Coronation Day. She died on August 7, 1821. This enlisted the sympathy of many liberals, including Shelley. Its influence upon Shelley is seen in the play OEdipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant

1820

Prometheus Unbound, a Lyrical Drama in Four Acts, with Other Poems

OEdipus Tyrannus, or Swellfoot the Tyrant, a Tragedy in Two Acts (Published anonymously and over seven copies sold before it was suppressed)

1820

The Examiner--a fine poet

Monthly Magazine or British Register—a fine poet

Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres a bad man; a man of genius

Theatrical Inquirer and Monthly Mirror--a fine poet

The London Magazine a bad man; a good poet

The Lonsdale Magazine and Provincial Repository--a bad man; a good poet

Literary and Scientific Repository and Critical Review (New York) favorable to Shelley

HISTORICAL FACTS

SHELLEY PUBLICATIONS

INTERPRETATION

	<p style="text-align: center;">1821</p> <p><u>Epipsychidion</u></p> <p><u>The Cenci</u> (second edition)</p> <p><u>Queen Mab</u> (<u>Queen Mab</u> had previously been published by Shelley in 1813)</p> <p><u>Adonais, An Elegy on the Death of John Keats</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1821</p> <p><u>Quarterly Review</u> (by W.S.Walker) a poor poet)</p> <p><u>Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review</u> a good poet</p> <p><u>Literary Gazette and Belles Lettres</u> a poor poet</p> <p><u>Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine</u> a poor poet</p> <p>Hazlitt--a poor poet</p> <p>Southey--a poor poet</p> <p><u>Literary and Scientific Repository and Critical Review</u> favorable to Shelley</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1820-1822</p> <p><u>The Rise of the Conservatives.</u> Terror of progress no longer ruled among the younger men who had forgotten the French Revolution. The Tories drifted toward a change. A group formed out of both Tories and Whigs were ready to move toward reform.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1822</p> <p><u>Hellas, a Lyrical Drama</u> (Last work issued during Shelley's life)</p>	<p>In 1822 apprehension was caused in England by the association of Hunt, Byron, and Shelley to publish the <u>Liberal</u>.</p> <p>After Shelley's death, opinion concerning him continued to be divided.</p> <p><u>John Bull</u>--a bad man</p> <p><u>The Examiner</u>--a good poet</p>

HISTORICAL FACTS

SHELLEY PUBLICATIONS

INTERPRETATION

1830
Fraser's Magazine for
 Town and Country--a
 liberal

1832
The Reform Bill
 Many reforms in business, education, religious matters, and law were brought about by the Reform Parliament. The "principle of utility" had replaced the divine right of the ruling classes. Although the new idealism of the workers met with opposition by both Whigs and Tories, this period may be called the starting point of a "new age."

1823
Poetical Pieces--
 Prometheus Unmasked,
 with other poems
 (Hellas, The Cenci,
 Rosaline and Helen

1824
Posthumous Poems of
 Percy Bysshe Shelley
 (Edited by Mary Shelley)

1829
Adonais (second edition)

1832
The Masque of Anarchy (with a preface by Leigh Hunt)

1833
The Shelley Papers:
 Memoir of Percy
 Bysshe Shelley
 (Medwin)

1824
 Hazlitt--a good poet;
 a man of ungovernable temper

1830
 "Cambridge Apostles"
 a good man; a prophet

Fraser's Magazine
 a thinker; a prophet

Carlyle--a poor poet

1832
 Leigh Hunt--a fine poet

Hogg--a good man

Macaulay--a good poet

1833
 Browning--a good poet

John Stuart Mill
 a good poet; lacks culture

1836
Westminster Review
 a thinker; a prophet

CHAPTER I

SHELLEY CRITICISM, 1816-1839

CHAPTER 1

SHELLEY CRITICISM, 1816-1839

The purpose of this chapter is to present the attitudes toward Shelley in contemporaneous criticism and after his death, up to the publication of his works in 1839, and to attempt to account for these attitudes. This calls for a sketch of the background of the period and an outline of Shelley criticism. We shall examine briefly the political and literary tendencies of the times.¹

¹ The sketch and the chart are based on standard theories and specialized studies. I have found the following works to be particularly useful:

N. I. White, The Unextinguished Hearth, Shelley and His Contemporary Critics (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1938)

Crane Brinton, The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists (Oxford: University Press, 1926)

Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1930)

Nelson Sherwin Bushnell, The Historical Background of English Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1930)

John Richard Green, A Short History of the English People (New York; Cincinnati; Chicago: American Book Co., 1916)

Thomas B. Wise, A Shelley Library (London: Printed for private circulation only, 1924)

Although the spirit of the French Revolution with its principles of liberty, equality, opposition to established institutions, and hostility to class privileges ultimately proved a powerful factor in helping to create the modern English democratic State, its immediate effect was to check the progress of reform for more than a generation. After the "Reign of Terror," which lasted for a year and a half, many of the English apologists lost faith in the ideals of the French people. The years from 1814 to 1816 witnessed the downfall of Napoleon and the focusing of new and powerful influences on the imagination of England. From 1815 to 1822 the reactionary wing of the Tory party remained in power, under men who had no sympathy with the liberals and whose method of coping with the spirit of reform was that of trampling upon it. This dominant party, primarily concerned with preserving its class privileges, had little sympathy with the acute social problems that were pressing for solution. The Whig opposition were torn by internal divisions between the conservatives and the "Radicals" -- a group that got its name from its advocacy of "radical reform." The Tories lumped the Radicals without discrimination as revolutionists; many of the Whigs violently denounced those who held more advanced views than they. During the years when Shelley's works were receiving their first reviews, 1816--1822, there was a strong fear of political revolution. Anything that resembled radical utterance was too dangerous for the times.

Hand in hand with this political fear was a religious antipathy to immorality and irreligion. The Society for the Suppression of Vice, founded in 1802 to protect the youth of the land from filthy publications, and active even as late as 1879,¹ had the support of the respectable middle classes. These people were determined to keep England free from atheism and immorality.

The vehicles for the expression of literary opinion were the various reviews and periodicals of the times. Even these were closely connected with politics. The Edinburgh Review, founded in 1802 by a little group of whom Jeffrey, Brougham, and Sidney Smith were the chief, was an organ of the New Whigs and only partly biased by party considerations. Leigh Hunt's Examiner, founded in 1808, was in its day regarded as decidedly radical. It is important in the literary criticism of the times because it championed men like Hazlitt, Keats, and Shelley. It was not, however, so largely devoted to literature as were the other periodicals, and at the same time had no particular influence upon literary criticism. The Quarterly Review, founded in 1809, had the weight of the Tory government and the Church of England behind it, and it played up to the popular fears and prejudices of the times.

¹ See Education Magazine, III (September, 1882),76.

The founding of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in 1817 marked the beginnings of the modern magazine. This publication was meant to provide for more original imaginative work than could be found in the bounds of a book review, but even here the reader could not escape politics. The young men of Blackwood's, who did not propose to let the Tory cause languish, attached the label "Cockney" to Hunt, Keats, Hazlitt, and others. The London Magazine, founded in 1820, is less saturated with political prejudice than Blackwood's, but Blackwood's soon associated it with the Cockney school. In 1824 the Westminster Review, established by James Mill, and supported by "philosophical radicals," was first published. In 1830 Fraser's Magazine was founded by the Scotch printer, John Fraser. This was decidedly liberal. There were, in addition, a number of periodicals, mostly monthlies. The various weeklies, semi-weeklies, and semi-monthlies followed the general trend.

Three dangers were almost universally feared by many of the reviewers: the change to a new poetic expression, political radicalism, and moral and theological radicalism. Because of the special fears of the times, literature was considered largely from an unliterary point of view. The political and moral obsession increased the tendency to purely personal attacks in criticism. Shelley represented all three of the dangers feared by many of the reviewers.

His published opinions and the rumors regarding his conduct interfered with general approval of his work as a poet. A summary of Shelley criticism from 1816 through 1822 reveals the consequence of his early indiscretions.

According to White, Shelley's contemporaneous critics were not blind to his genius, but merely afraid of it. Far from being unknown and neglected, Shelley was known and feared. During 1816-1822, Shelley's public life as an author of definite name and personality, there were about two hundred and forty items concerned with Shelley, appearing in seventy-three periodicals and eleven books and pamphlets, three of which were devoted to Shelley exclusively.¹

Early criticism of Shelley falls into three groups: those who gave a decidedly "Won't do" verdict; those who deplored his conduct but acknowledged his genius, and those few who seemed determined to keep the fire of Shelley's genius alive with praise.

In the first group belong those reviewers who branded Shelley's work as abominable and perverted, and who refused to acknowledge the man or the poet. The attitude of the Quarterly, which in general through Shelley's life and for years after, was one of hostility and suspicion, represents this type of criticism. In April, 1819, the Quarterly

¹ White, op. cit., p.9.

published its first notice of Shelley by name, in an intensely hostile review of "The Revolt of Islam." Here Shelley's character is denounced and his poetry condemned as dull and obscure. In reviewing "Rosalind and Helen" in its June, 1819, issue, the London Chronicle remarks:

The poets of this school have the original merit of conceiving that the higher emotions of the heart are to be roused in their highest degree of deformity, physical and mental. They have found a new source of the sublime--disgust: . . . Mr. Shelley is understood to be the person, who, after gazing on Mount Blanc, registered himself in the Album as Percy Bysshe Shelley, Atheist; which gross and cheap bravado, he with the natural tact of the new school took for a display of philosophic courage; and his obscure muse has been since spreading all her foulness on these doctrines which a decent infidel would treat with respect, and in which the wise and honourable have in all ages found the perfection of wisdom and virtue.¹

An unknown reviewer in the London Literary Gazette of April, 1820, brands Shelley's "Cenci" as the most abominable of all the abominations which intellectual perversion and poetical atheism has produced in his time. He declares that he cannot acknowledge Mr. Shelley's genius, because he can think only of the disgusting topic, the vile theme, and the abhorrent descriptions to be found in the poem.² In Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for December, 1821, William Maginn declared that Shelley's "Adonais" contains only about five readable lines. He compared the poem to a burlesque elegy on

¹ G. L. Marsh, "The Early Reviews of Shelley" Modern Philology, XXVII (August, 1929), p.78.

² Oscar Campbell, J. F. A. Pyre, and Bennett Weaver, Poetry and Criticism of the Romantic Movement (New York: Croft, 1932), p.828.

"My Tomcat." In examining Mr. W. S. Walker's article in the Quarterly for October, 1822, we find in this discussion of the "Prometheus Unbound," such scathing lines as the following: "In Mr. Shelley's article all is brilliance, vacuity, and confusion."¹

A second group of critics seemed to consider Shelley a gifted but wayward young man. John Taylor Coleridge in the Quarterly for April, 1819, reviews "Laon and Cythna." He comes to the conclusion that let the goodness of his cause be what it may, Shelley's manner of advocating it was false and unsound. He ends the review, however, with the hope that the poet, being young, would abandon the task of reforming any world but that within his own breast. John Wilson is the probable author of an article on "Alastor" appearing in the November, 1819, issue of Blackwood's in which he speaks of Shelley as a "gifted but wayward" young man, and in which he mentions the "splendour of Mr. Shelley's poetry."² The January, 1819, issue of Blackwood's contained a notice of "The Revolt of Islam" which gave a worthy recognition of Shelley's genius. Placing Shelley among the Cockneys, the reviewer mentions Shelley's poetic imagery and feeling, but suggests that the poet might select better companions. In

¹ Ibid., p.830.

² Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, VI (November, 1819), p.153.

the same article for June, 1819, is a review of "Rosalind and Helen" in which the writer declares that he sees in this highly gifted young man much to desire--nay much to love--but much also to move to pity and sorrow.¹ An article on the "Cenci" in the May, 1820, number of The Edinburgh Review goes so far as to say that Shelley, if he would only choose and manage his themes with some decent measure of regard for the "just opinion of the world," might easily overtop all that had been written during the last century for the English stage.² In November, 1820, the Lonsdale Magazine and Provincial Repository calls Shelley a man of such poetic powers as, if he had employed them in the cause of honor, virtue, and truth, would have entitled him to a distinguished niche in the temple of fame.³ Blackwood's for January, 1821, quotes ten stanzas from Shelley's "Sensitive Plant" and wishes that all of the writings of Shelley were as exquisite and innocent as the quoted lines. The Monthly Review in February, 1821, in notices of "The Cenci" and "Prometheus Unbound" mentions Shelley's misapplied power.

A third type of contemporaneous critic acknowledged the genius of the poet Shelley and came to his defense with sympathy and praise. An unknown reviewer signed "B" wrote

¹ Ibid., p.274.

² March, op. cit., p.30.

³ Ibid., p. 82.

an article on "The Cenci" in the April, 1820, number of the Theatrical Inquisitor and Monthly Mirror in which he came to the conclusion that as a first dramatic effort "The Cenci" is unparalleled for the beauty with which the drama can be endowed. Gold's London Magazine gave in October, 1820, a favorable review of "Prometheus Unbound." The poem is called "one of the most stupendous of those works which the daring and vigorous spirit of modern poetry and thought have created."¹ Baldwin's London Magazine for February of the same year contained an article "On the Philosophy and Poetry of Shelley" in which the author placed Shelley superior to Lord Byron in intensity of description, depth of feeling, and richness of language.

In his effort to defend and interpret Shelley, Leigh Hunt stands out in his generation. Although the Examiner was regarded as decidedly radical, and Leigh Hunt's gallant championship was not very beneficial during Shelley's lifetime, we are interested in the fact that when the Quarterly attacked, Leigh Hunt defended. In the Examiner from 1816 to 1822, eleven of Shelley's poems were criticized, quoted approvingly, or published for the first time. As early as 1816, Hunt hailed Shelley as a striking thinker. It cannot

¹ Campbell, Pyre, Weaver, op., cit., p.81.

be said that Leigh Hunt was blind to Shelley's faults. He recognized, however, what posterity has clearly found, the beneficent social purpose in Shelley's poetry, and the true Christianity in his faith--a faith in the slow, gradual change in human affairs, and in the power of his poetry to benefit mankind.

Shelley was known in England to many of the most eminent men of letters. When he had in 1811 his long anticipated meeting with Southey in Keswick, he was disappointed, for the two seemed to have very little in common. Shelley did not meet the other members of the Lake School, who at the time were away from Keswick. Those members of a literary group in England and Italy who valued Shelley's friendship and some of whom did much after his death towards furthering his fame, included Leigh Hunt, Keats, Horace Smith, and J. H. Reynolds. Shelley also met Charles and Mary Lamb. Horace Smith admired Shelley and appreciated his works. A sonnet by Smith, "To the Author of 'The Revolt of Islam'," appeared in the Examiner for February 8, 1818.¹ Keats never welcomed the friendly advances of Shelley, and Shelley and Lamb never became friends. Hazlitt seemed to have an antipathy for Shelley. Shelley's friendship with Byron did not to any great

¹ White, op., cit., p.363.

extent increase his fame, although Byron was lavish in his praise of Shelley's poetry and mentioned Shelley's goodness.¹

Shelley himself kept a watchful eye upon the remarks of the critics. This was shown in frequent letters to Mr. Ollier. In a letter sent from Florence on October 15, 1819, Shelley says:

The droll remarks of the Quarterly, and Hunt's kind defense, arrived as safe as such poison, and safer than such an antidote, usually do

The only remark worth notice in the piece is the assertion that I imitate Wordsworth. It may as well be said that Lord Byron imitates Wordsworth or that Wordsworth imitates Lord Byron, both being great poets, and deriving from the new springs of thought and feeling which the great events of our age have exposed to view a similar tone of sentiment, imagery and expression As to the other trash, and particularly that lame attack on my personal character . . . 'Tis nothing I was amused, too, with the finale; it is like the end of the first act of an opera, when that tremendous concordant discord sets up from the orchestra, and everybody talks and sings at once.²

In a letter from Pisa on January 20, 1820, the poet asks Mr. Ollier about the author of a friendly review of Ollier's publication of the "Cenci." Then on March 6, 1820, he writes from Pisa:

If any of my Reviewers abuse me, cut them out and send them. If they praise, you need not trouble yourself. I feel ashamed if I could believe that I should deserve the latter; the former, I flatter myself is no more than a just tribute. If Hunt praises me, send it because that is of another character of thing.³

¹ For a thorough discussion of Shelley's relations with this literary group, see Willis Pratt, Shelley Criticism in England, 1810-1890 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1935)

² The Best Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley (edited with introduction by Shirley Carter Hughson. Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1892), pp. 220-21.

³ Ibid., p.237.

In a letter written from Rome on April 6, 1819, Shelley tells Peacock how keenly he felt the calumnies heaped on him during his life. He says:

Bye the bye, have you seen Ollier? I never hear from him, and am ignorant whether some verses I sent him from Naples, entitled, I think, Lines on the Euganean Hills, have reached him in safety or not. As to the Reviews, I suppose there is nothing but abuse; and that is not hearty or sincere enough to amuse me . . . I believe, dear Peacock, that you wish us to come back to England. How is it possible? Health, competence, tranquillity, -- all these Italy permits, and England takes away. I am regarded by all who know or hear of me, except, I think on the whole, five individuals, as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution, whose look even might infect. This is a large computation, and I don't think I could mention more than three. Such is the spirit abroad as well as at home.¹

Slandorous criticism assailed the poet even at the time of his death. In the September number of the Gentleman's Magazine, 1822, was published an obituary notice, with a short and fairly accurate account of the poet's life. The following comments, however, were made:

Mr. Shelley is unfortunately too well known for his infamous novels and poems. He openly professed himself an atheist. . . . It has been stated that Mr. Shelley had gone to Pisa to establish a periodical work, with the assistance of Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt.²

Notices of Shelley's death, all short and non-committal, appeared in several other journals during the autumn. In the December number of the Gentleman's Magazine there was an

¹ Ibid., pp. 193-94.

² White, op.,cit., p.329.

attack on Shelley brought about by an elegy on Shelley written by a youthful admirer, Arthur Brooke, and published before September by Ollier. The writer says:

Mr. Brooke, an enthusiastic young man, who has written some good but licentious verses, has here got up a collection of stanzas for the ostensible purpose "of commemorating the talents and virtues of that highly gifted individual, Percy Bysshe Shelley." (Sic) (Preface)

Concerning the talents of Mr. Shelley, we know no more than that he published certain convulsive caperings of Pegasus labouring under choleric pains: namely, some purely fantastic verses, in the hubble, bubble, toil and trouble style; and as to Mr. Shelley's virtues, if he belonged (as we understood he did) to a junta whose writings tend to make our sons profligates and our daughters strumpets, we ought as justly to regret the decease of the devil (if that were possible), as one of his coadjutors. Seriously speaking, however, we feel no pleasure in the untimely death of this type of the Juan school, that pre-eminent academy of Infidels, Blasphemers, Seducers, and Wantons. We had much rather have heard that he and the rest of the fraternity had been consigned to a Monastery of La Trappe, for correction of their dangerous principles, and expurgation of their corrupt minds

The only one of Shelley's works to attain a second edition during his lifetime was "The Cenci." The first collected edition, appearing in 1823, consisted of the four poems: "Prometheus Unbound," "Rosalind and Helen," "Hellas," and "The Cenci." This was not an edition to meet a popular demand. Mary Shelley wished at once to publish the remaining poems in her possession. She was assisted by three Shelley admirers: Thomas L. Beddoes, Bryan W. Procter (Barry Cornwall), and Thomas Forbes Kelsall, who had to

¹ Ibid., p. 330.

guarantee the sale of two hundred and fifty copies before John Hunt would publish the book, Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley. The publication of this volume between April and August, 1824, marks the beginning of an almost imperceptible rise in Shelley's reputation up to 1829. Although the Shelley family, displeased with the publication, compelled Mary Shelley to suppress it, she was not much concerned, for more than three hundred copies had been sold. In the Edinburgh Review for July, appeared William Hazlitt's review of this book. Hazlitt acknowledged that, with all of his faults, Shelley was a man of genius; yet he stated that an uncontrollable violence of temperament gave that genius a forced and false direction. He thought that Shelley's desire to teach and his ambition to excel encroached upon, and outstripped his powers of execution. He further stated that Shelley had no deference for the opinion of others and too little sympathy with their feelings.¹ Two years after its publication, Posthumous Poems received a not unfavorable review in the Quarterly.

The old idea of Shelley as an anarchist and an atheist was slow to fade. "Queen Mab" seems to have been the one poem of Shelley's which was read widely and reprinted during the 1820's. Shelley's influence between 1822-28 was considerable in the world of radical journalism and agitation. Of the admirers who kept the name of the poet alive, Leigh

¹ Campbell, Pyre, and Weaver, op.cit., p. 697.

Hunt continued to publish lyrics and anecdotes, extolling the excellence of his poetry. Horace Smith was ever loyal to the memory of Shelley. The early attitude of Shelley as being a genius with "miserable delusions" in his opposition to Christianity continued to represent many writers of this time. The great literary figures of the 1820's said very little of Shelley.

Although these years directly following Shelley's death did not do so much in furthering his literary reputation, they do show a gradual intimation of growth. During the 1830's, barren years in England in creative literature, Shelley's influence began to be felt upon the poetry of the period. This influence was also felt among a group of undergraduates in Trinity College, Cambridge, that counted among its members several who were destined to become important in the literary and political affairs of the Victorian period. This group included Monckton Milnes, the three Tennysons, Thackeray, G. S. Venables, James Spedding, Richard Trench, Arthur Hallam, and Charles Rann Kennedy. Many of these belonged to the society known as "The Cambridge Apostles." Through their zeal in regard to Shelley, zeal which culminated in their reprinting the poem "Adonais," engaging in debates concerning Shelley and Byron, and defending Shelley's moral tendencies, this Cambridge group succeeded in spreading the knowledge of the poet.

After 1830, we still find an echo of those earlier critics who enjoyed Shelley's poetry but looked upon him as a misguided young man. These "Poor Shelley" articles found expression in such periodicals as The Athenaeum, Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, and Fraser's Magazine. At this time, comparisons of the work of the new school of poets, among them Hallam and Tennyson, with that of Shelley served to further Shelley's reputation by making him a standard of comparison for their excellence. The introduction to the first complete publication of Shelley's "Wandering Jew" in Fraser's Magazine for 1831, and an article in the April, 1836, number of The Westminster Review are significant as the earliest treatment of Shelley as a thinker and a prophet without reprehending his mode of life. The article in Fraser's calls Shelley a true reflex of his age and speaks of his poetry as that "true poetry" which offers the "best practical refutation of the maxim that there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses." The Westminster writer discusses Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge, and tries to explain their main trend of thought. Shelley is contrasted with Wordsworth. The growth in Shelley's power is mentioned, although the poet is condemned for occasionally giving beautiful images or ideas with no new topics of thought. Shelley, declares the reviewer, even

if destitute of religious belief, saw beauty in Nature and benevolence in Man.¹

Several outstanding writers of the 1830's were antagonistic to Shelley. In his essay "Characteristics," published in the Edinburgh Review in 1831, Carlyle mentions Shelley as "filling the world with inarticulate wail, like the infinite inarticulate grief and weeping of forsaken infants."² According to Pratt, Carlyle, whose ideas of the moral quality were much the same as those of Shelley, condemned Shelley as a weakling and his poetry as containing a morbid sensibility.³ In his essay, "Poetry and Varieties," first published in 1833, John Stuart Mill mentions Shelley's lack of culture. Mill does, however, admit that when under the overruling influence of some one state of feeling, either experienced or otherwise, Shelley writes as a great poet.

Among the writers of the 1830's who were firm admirers of Shelley's genius may be mentioned Leigh Hunt, who in 1832 published "The Mask of Anarchy," with an appreciative preface; Hogg, who gave an appealing portrait in the same year; and

¹ Pratt, op.cit., p.67.

² Ibid., p. 70.

³ Loc. cit.

Macaulay, who spoke of Shelley as one of the greatest English poets. Robert Browning, an ardent Shelley enthusiast, at an early age entertained a love for Shelley. In 1833, "Pauline," in which the Shelleyan influence was immediately recognized, was published anonymously by the young man. In the poems "Paracelsus" (1835) and "Sordello" (1840), there are traces of Shelleyan influences.

At this time Shelley's personality was used as material for literature by Mrs. Shelley, William Godwin, and Disraeli, and in various poems by Henry Austen Driver, Thomas Wade, and Sir Egerton Brydges.¹

¹ In the field of American criticism from 1810-1835, the neglect of Shelley is a very interesting phenomenon. That neglect was due partly to England's aversion to him, and, to a great extent to Shelley's radical political doctrines which were contrary to political conservatism. An early appreciative essay was published in Willis' American Monthly Magazine in 1829. The greatest tribute to Shelley appeared in 1836 in the American Quarterly Review. The writer declared that Shelley was one of the few great literary men who stood well above their audience. His "remote chain of thought," however, will give him a small, but select audience."

See: William Charvat, The Origin of American Critical Thought, 1810-1835 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1936), pp. 83-4.

OVERVIEW II

OVERVIEW

PUBLICATIONS
CONCERNING THE
LIFE OF SHELLEY

PUBLICATION OF
SHELLEY'S WORKS

INTERPRETATION

PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING THE LIFE OF SHELLEY	PUBLICATION OF SHELLEY'S WORKS	INTERPRETATION
1839-49	1839-49	1839-49
'40--Essays, Letters from Abroad (Edited by Mrs. Shelley)	'39--Mrs. Shelley's edition of Shelley's poems (4 vols.)	'39--Mrs. Shelley--a good man
	'41--Mrs. Shelley's edition of S helley's prose (2 vols.)	'40--Emerson--a poor poet Poe--a good poet
	<u>'41--Prosecution of Publisher Edward Moxon for publishing "blasphemous matter" in his edition of Shelley's works. This resulted in a broader interpre- tation for literary works in the laws governing printed matter.</u>	
		'45--George Gil- fillan--a literary curiosity
		'46--Henry Tuckerman a fine poet
		'49--Margaret Fuller a good poet
'47-- <u>The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley</u> --Medwin		
1850-1859	1850-1859	1850-1859
'50-- <u>The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries</u>		'50--Leigh Hunt-- a good man

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

'52--The publication
of certain "spurious"
letters of Shelley

'54--A Brief Sketch of
the Life of Percy Bysshe
Shelley--Watson

'58--The Life of Percy
Bysshe Shelley--Hogg
(2 vols.)

'58--Shelley and His
Writings--C. S. Middle-
ton (2 vols.)

'58--Recollections of
the Last Days of Shelley
and Byron--Trelawny

'58--Memoirs of Shelley
Peacock

'59--Shelley Memorials
with an essay on
Christianity (edited
by Lady Jane Shelley)

1860-1869

'62--Reliques of Shelley
(edited by Richard Garnet)

'52--Browning--a
good man; a good
poet

'53--Charles Kings-
ley--a bad man

'53--De Quincey--
a partial lunatic

'56--Walter Bagehot--
a reformer fanatic

'58--Hogg--irrespon-
sible child

'58--Middleton--a
child

'58--Trelawny--a
good man

'58--Peacock--a good
poet; subject to
semi-delusions

1860-1869

'61-62--James Thomson
a good man; a fine
poet

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

1870-1879

1870-1879

1870-1879

'72--Shelley's Early Life From Original Sources--D. F. MacCarthy

'74--Memoirs--Peacock (New edition)

'75--Shelley Memorials (new edition)

'77--A Critical Biography of Percy Bysshe Shelley--George Barnett Smith

'78--Recollections--Trelawny (new edition)

'78--Life of Shelley--John A. Symonds

'70--W.M. Rossetti's three volume edition of Shelley's poems

'74--Shelley's Works--Mrs. Shelley (new edition)

'76-82--Poetical and Prose Works--ed. H. Buxton Forman (8 volumes)

'70--Mathilde Blind--a good poet

'70--Rossetti--a good man

'74--C. Cowden Clarke a good man

'75--John Dewey--a good man; a good poet

'76--Charles Frederickson--a philosopher

'78--Rossetti--a prophet

'79--Symonds--erratic a good poet

'79--Leslie Stephen--a man of ideas

'79--J. C. Shairp--poet of Democracy

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

1880-1889

'82--Shelley and Mary
Unpublished letters,
poems, diaries, and
other documents at the
time of its production
in the hands of the
Shelley family. For
private circulation
only. (preface by
Sir Percy Shelley)

'86--Life of Percy
Byshe Shelley--Dowden
(2 vols.)

1880-1889

'80--Prose Works of
Percy Bysse Shelley
ed. Forman (4 vols.)

'86--The Shelley
Library--Forman

'86--Inaugural meet-
ing of the Shelley
Society. The so-
ciety had branches
in America. It
was instrumental
through publications
and research in
furthering the
reputation of Shelley

'86-87--Shelley Soc-
iety Publications

'86--The Shelley
Primer--Salt

'87--Hellas
Rosalind and
Helen

1880-1889

'80--David Masson--
a man of ideas

'80--John Todhunter--
a good man

'80--Stopford Brooke--
a good poet

'81--Mathew Arnold--
"ineffectual angel"

'86--Dowden--a good
man; a disciple of
Godwin

'86--Stopford Brooke
a good man; a fine
poet

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

'87--Life of Shelley--
Symonds-(new edition)

'87--Recollections--
Trelawny-(new edition)

'87--The Life of Percy
Bysshe Shelley--Sharp

'89--Letters to Jane
Clairmont (Privately
printed)

1890-1899

'90--Letters to Eliza-
beth Hitchenor (priv-
ately printed)

'91--Letters to William
Godwin (privately print-
ed)

'92--Best Letters of
Percy Bysshe Shelley--
(Introduction by
Shirley C. Hughson)

'88--A Proposal for
Putting Reform to
the Vote

'88--Review of Hogg's
Memoirs of Prince
Alexy Haimatoff

'88--Notebook of
Shelley Society

'88--Prose Works--ed.
R. H. Shephard (2 vols)

'89--Complete Poe-
tical Works-- ed.
Dowden

1890-1899

'90--An Address to
the Irish People
(reprinted for
Shelley Society)

'91--A Defense of
Poetry--A. S. Cooke

'92--A Lexical Con-
cordance to the Works
of Percy Bysshe Shelley
(compiled and arranged
by F. S. Ellis) An
attempt to classify
every word found therein

'87--Salt-- a man
of ideas

'87--Rossetti-a
fine poet

'88-Edward and
Eleanor Aveling --
a man of ideas

'88--Salt--a man
of ideas

'89--Swinburne--
a good poet

'89--Patmore--a
child

1890-1899

'90--Saintsbury --
a fine poet

'92--Edmund Gosse--
a man of ideas

'92--Salt--a man
of ideas

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

'94--Letters to Hogg--
(privately printed)
2 vols.

'96--Percy Bysshe
Shelley, Poet and
Pioneer--Salt (a
biographical study)

'98--Last Links with
Byron, Shelley, and
Keats--William Graham

1900-1909

'04--Life of Shelley--
Hogg (reprinted)

'05--Recollections--
Trelawny (reprinted)

'06--Life of Shelley--
Hogg--(reprinted)

1900-1909

'01--Complete Poetical
Works--ed. by
G. E. Woodberry

'03--An Examination
of the Shelley Man-
uscripts in the
Bodleian Library--
C. D. Locock

'04--5 Complete Works
(with materials never
before printed) ed.
T. Hutcheson

'05--Early Shelley
Pamphlets--ed. by
Percy Vaughan

'06--The Necessity
of Atheism (reprinted)

'96--Salt--a man of
ideas; a great poet

'98--A. L. Lilley--
among the prophets
of the century

1900-1909

'03--Thomas Slicer -
a man of ideas; a
follower of Godwin

'05--Margaret Croft--
a good man

'08--Yeats--a good
man; a man of ideas

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

'08--Letters to Elizabeth Hitchenor

'09--Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley--ed. by Roger Ingpen (2 vols.)

'09--Memoirs--Peacock (reprinted)

1910-1920

'10--Leigh Hunt's Relation with Byron, Shelley, Keats--Barnette Miller

'10--La Jeunesse de Shelley--Koszul

'12--Letters--ed. Ingpen (new edition)

'09--The Cenci--ed. by G.E.Woodberry (Belles Lettres Series)

1910-1920

'11--Notebooks of Shelley (with Commentary by H. Buxton Forman)

'11--Poems--ed. C. D. Locock (2 vols.)

'08--Francis Thompson--a good poet; a child

'08--Ernest Bates--a good poet

'09--Clutton-Brock --a good poet

'09--A. C. Bradley --a good poet

1910-1920

'10--More--a dangerous poet

'12--Birkhead--a good poet

'12--MacDonald--a man of ideas

'12--L.J. Wylie--a man of ideas

LIFE

WORKS

INTERPRETATION

'13--New edition of
Medwin's "Life"

'15--New edition of
Ingpen's Letters

'17--Shelley in England--
Ingpen

'20--The Relations of
Percy Bysshe Shelley
with His Two Wives
Harriet and Mary and
a Comment on the Charac-
ter of Lady Byron--
(privately circulated)--
Trelawny

'20--A Philosophical
View of Reform (print-
ed for the first
time) Introduction
and appendix by
T. W. Rolleston

'13--Winstanley --
a man of ideas

'13--Santayana --
a good poet; a
philosopher; a
prophet

'16--A. R. Benham --
a man of ideas

'20--Rolleston--a
man of ideas

CHAPTER II

THE RISE TO FAME, 1839-1920

CHAPTER II

THE RISE TO FAME, 1839-1920

It would be a lengthy task to trace the various political movements that left their influence upon this extensive period. Mr. Pratt has arranged in chronological order the main features of Shelley criticism in England from 1810-1890. The purpose of this chapter is different. I propose to analyze and summarize my findings in regard to Shelley's rising fame, and to point out critical influences that have helped to usher in the Shelley of today. From this point of view there are three periods of Shelley criticism.

The period from 1839 to 1870 is marked by the publication of memoirs by people who knew Shelley, and by the publication of additional works; the years from 1870 to 1886 saw further scholarly editions of Shelley's works. From 1886 through 1920 there is a full length biography of Shelley and an increasing number of important publications, including additional editions of Shelley's works and various Shelley letters and notebooks. There is evidence of increasing interest in individual poems. As early as 1870, Shelley's ideas and skill as a poet are beginning to receive attention. His detractors continue to speak of him as a child, a bad man, or a fanatic. On the other hand, his sincere admirers begin to hail him as a genuine poet and a man of ideas.

Although Shelley's ideas were not at an early date readily shared by many to whom he became a great poet, he was gradually accepted and read by a great number of people, and toward the latter part of the nineteenth century he became for some a prophet of social revolution, even as he had hoped.

In 1839, Mrs. Shelley's four volume edition of the poems of Shelley, and in 1841 the two volumes of Shelley's prose were important publications. In the first edition, only a fragment of "Queen Mab" appears, but a second edition of 1839 restored the omitted passages and included the unpublished "Oedipus Tyrannus" and "Peter Bell the Third."

Although Mary Shelley was required by Sir Timothy to publish the poems without a memoir, she appended notes at the end of each section. An interesting angle of the publication of Mrs. Shelley's edition was the government prosecution of the publisher Moxon on the charge of disseminating blasphemous literature, "Queen Mab" being the offending poem. When the case was tried on June 23, 1841, Thomas Noon Talfourd for the defense gave a plea for a broader and saner interpretation for literary works of the laws regarding printed matter. The prosecution, which had been instituted by Henry Hetherington, an admirer of Shelley's, with the hope of obtaining more freedom of speech under the English law, won its point.

Moxon, although found guilty, was never arrested. In 1847 Medwin published the first full-length biography of Shelley. The book, full of inaccuracies in detail, was objected to by

Mary Shelley. It, however, shows a sympathy for Shelley and a love of the poet. In 1858, Hogg published two volumes, intended to be the first half of the official life of Shelley, C. S. Middleton published a two-volume biography, Trelawny, his "Recollections," and Thomas Love Peacock, his early memoirs of the poet. In 1859 appeared the Shelley Memorials, edited by Lady Jane Shelley. Hogg's life, which received the instant disapprobation of readers and which has been characterized as more of an autobiography of Hogg than a life of Shelley, emphasizes the simplicity of Shelley, and marks him as a child. Although Hogg showed disrespect for the text of Shelley's letters addressed to him, he does present some aspects of Shelley in a clear light. The Oxford memoirs are accepted as generally authentic. Middleton's two volumes, having little significance in its own day, or now, brings out another "poor Shelley" attitude. Peacock mentions the "semi-delusions" of Shelley, but acknowledges the genius of the poet. Trelawny was among the personal friends of Shelley who after his death testified as to their faith in the character of the poet. He gives us a pleasing picture of Shelley, one which helped to promote a better appreciation of the poet. The Shelley Memorials include extracts from Mary Shelley's Journal, and materials bearing upon Shelley's later life. In this volume was included for the first time Shelley's "Essay on Christianity."

In 1870, W. M. Rossetti published in three volumes, the first scholarly edition of Shelley's poems. The first volume contains a comprehensive memoir of the poet, which shows Rossetti's admiration for Shelley and a desire to present a true picture of his character. From 1876 to 1882, H. Buxton Forman edited the poetical works of Shelley in four volumes and then the prose in four volumes. These editions, especially the prose volumes, did much to increase the fame and the understanding of Shelley. Mr. D. F. MacCarthy's volume, published in 1872, throws much light on the hitherto obscure period of Shelley's Irish sojourn. Edward Dowden's Life of Shelley, published in 1886, has been criticised by several recent critics for Dowden's failure to portray the whole Shelley, and his tendency to "explain away" Shelley's faults. Dowden's work was received by many with acclamation, but by others with disapproval.

On Wednesday, March 10, 1886, the inaugural meeting of the Shelley Society was held at University College, Gower Street, London. The lecture was delivered by Stopford Brooke, who stated that the purpose of the society was:

. . . to connect together all that would throw light upon the poet's personality and his work, to ascertain the truth about him, to issue reprints, and above all to do something to further the objects of Shelley's life and work, and perhaps to better understand and love a genius which was ignored and abused in his own time, but which had trampled it to live in the hearts of men.¹

¹ Notebook of the Shelley Society (Published for the Shelley Society. London: Reeves and Turner, 1888), p.2.

The Shelley Society, which at an early date launched upon the aim of publishing facsimile reprints of Shelley's rarer works, was widely known and did a great deal to promote Shelley's fame. Branch societies were begun. Two of these were in America, one in New York and one in Massachusetts. One object of the society was to put the "Cenci" on the stage. The play was given on Friday, May 7, 1886, to an audience whose admission was by invitation. It was almost unanimously decided by the critics that the play is not suited to the English stage. On Tuesday, November 16, 1886, at Saint James's Hall, a performance of Shelley's "Hellas" took place. Although it was well received, it was a financial loss.¹

Shelley's life continued to be for some a source of criticism. Some critics looked upon the poet as a mere child in his impulsive actions; others spoke of a queer "mental streak" in his nature. Adverse criticism was launched against Shelley's poetry, which certain critics maintained was thin and unsubstantial. Charles Kingsley in 1853 denounced Shelley in no uncertain terms.² Kingsley was decidedly antagonistic to the pagan spirit of the poet, and he saw in Shelley's sensitivity to the world's wrongs only morbid unrest. In 1841

¹ 1892 is given by Mr. Pratt as the probable year in which the Shelley Society went out of existence.

² Charles Kingsley, "Thoughts on Shelley and Byron," Fraser's Magazine, XLVIII (November, 1853) Cited by Willis Pratt, Shelley Criticism in England, 1810-1890. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1935)

Emerson stated his lack of enjoyment of Shelley's poetry. In a Dial paper in 1840, he had asserted that while full of aspiration and noble traits, Shelley was never a poet, as he lacked the imagination and the original authentic fire of the bard.¹ Walter Bagehot in 1856 speaks of Shelley as a "man of impulse," and makes no distinction between Shelley's youthful ardors and his later more mature writings. Bagehot gives us a picture of Shelley as a reformer-fanatic. He shows us a person who was unique in religious ideas. Shelley's style, according to Bagehot, notable for its "Intellectuality," forms a contrast to his impulsiveness.² Hogg and Middleton had in 1858 fostered the "poor Shelley" attitude. In the same year Peacock had called attention to the semi-delusions of Shelley. John Addison Symonds in 1879 also brings out Shelley's eccentricity which at times approached madness. This critic saw no defect of power in Shelley, but a lack of patience. Acknowledging the value of many of Shelley's poems and pointing out the

¹ Norman Foester, American Criticism: A Study in Literary Theory from Poe to the Present (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), p.86.

² Walter Bagehot, "Percy Bysshe Shelley," The National Review, III (October, 1858) Cited by Pratt, op. cit.

great lyrical faculty of the poet, Symonds nevertheless classifies the larger bulk of Shelley's poetry as immature, He does concede that Shelley was gradually becoming wiser during the last years of his life.¹ Thomas De Quincey traces the "partial lunacy" which he declared affected Shelley.² Thomas Slicer in 1903 gives a version of Shelley as travelling close to the boundary between genius and madness.³

In his attempt to exhibit the real Shelley, so unlike The Shelley of biographical romance, John Cordy Jeaffreson presents an egotist in the superlative degree, one who forced his personality upon the reader's notice. This Shelley was in his youth a troublesome person of a freakish imagination who deliberately distorted the truth, a young man who cursed his father and deliberately undertook to lure girls of tender age from the religion of their parents. This skeptic could never have been the "Savior of the World." The "Real Shelley" of Jeaffreson acted with deceit and treachery in his course of action toward his familiar friend's daughter, Mary Godwin;

¹ John A. Symonds, Percy Bysshe Shelley, (London: Mac Millan and Co., 1879), p. 33.

² Thomas De Quincey, Essays on the Poets and Other English Writers (Boston: Tichnor and Fields, 1853), pp. 42-43.

³ Thomas Slicer, Percy Bysshe Shelley (New York: Privately Printed, 1903), pp. 24-25.

he thought of himself and his doings in a self-justificatory fashion.¹

In 1881 Mathew Arnold, who long had held a distrust of Shelley, came forward in the preface of his anthology, The Poetry of Byron Chosen and Arranged by Mathew Arnold, with the famous comparison of Shelley to a "beautiful and ineffectual angel." In his essay "Shelley," written in 1889, Arnold, after reading Mr. Dowden's history of the occurrences of Shelley's private life, is moved to the expression, "What a set! What a world!" Arnold mentions the changing opinions of Shelley in regard to others, his power of persuading himself, his love of high thoughts, his generosity, but above all, his inflammable disposition. He also points out Shelley's want of humor. As to Shelley the artist, Arnold comments:

To all this we have to add the charm of the man's writings--of Shelley's poetry. It is his poetry, above everything else, which for many people establishes that he is an angel. Of his poetry I have not space now to speak. But let no one suppose that a want of humor and a self-delusion such as Shelley's have no effect upon a man's poetry. The man Shelley, in very truth, is not entirely sane either.²

¹ John Cordy Jeaffreson, The Real Shelley (London: Hurst, 1885) 2 Vols.

² Mathew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, Second Series (London: MacMillan and Co., 1908)

Then follows a quotation from Arnold's own preface to his Selections from Byron:

The Shelley of actual life is a vision of beauty and radiance, indeed, but availing nothing, effecting nothing. And in poetry, no less than in life, he is a "beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."¹

Originally prepared for publication in 1889 and finally published in 1908 by the Dublin Review, is the essay "Shelley," by Francis Thompson. In this study the author stresses the child-like qualities of Shelley. This simplicity of Thompson's Shelley consisted of a power of investing little things with imaginative ability and make believe. Although this essay cannot be considered as hostile toward Shelley, it does little to bring out the true substance of Shelley's thoughts.

During these years of Shelley's growing fame, there were numerous testimonials as to the character of the poet. Mary Shelley in 1839 had tried to give to the world a picture of the noble and generous man. She emphasized the sublime aspects of Shelley's character which should make it beyond criticism and reproach. DeQuincey conceded that Shelley was filled with the love of man, and that if he was an infidel by intellect, he was a Christian in the tendencies of his own heart.

The sale in Sotheby's auction room in London in 1852

¹ Loc. cit.

of certain letters of Byron and Shelley, the publication by Moxon of those attributed to Shelley, and their subsequent exposure as forgeries, helped to further Shelley's fame.

Robert Browning's introductory essay to Moxon's volume marks an important phase of the development of Shelley's reputation, because of the fact that it gives just attention to Shelley's poetry, as well as brings out the Christian qualities of the poet. Shelley, he maintained, was a moral man because he was true, simple-hearted, and brave; and a man of religious mind, because "every audacious negative cast up by him against the Divine was interpenetrated with a mood of reverence and adoration . . ."¹ Browning believed that there was a gradual change in Shelley, and that had the poet lived, he might have ranged himself with the Christians.

Trelawny was among the personal friends of Shelley who after his death testified as to their faith in the poet's character. "The truth was that Shelley loved everything better than himself," points out Trelawny,² and he adds that to form a just idea of Shelley's poetry, one should have witnessed his daily work and actions.

¹ The Complete Poetic and Dramatic Works of Robert Browning (Student's Cambridge Edition, Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1895), p.1013.

² Edward Trelawny, Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron (London: Milford, 1905. First printed in 1858.), p.30.

James Thomson, who wrote a poem to Shelley in 1861, gives us an essay on Shelley and a letter concerning the religious opinions of the poet. In speaking of Shelley's religious character, Thomson mentions the poet's love for all holiness, truth, and beauty, and he refutes the opinion that Shelley was an atheist. Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, there appears a more tolerant spirit toward Shelley's religious views. Such a spirit is reflected in John Dewey's¹ comment that Shelley is a staunch upholder of the tenets of the New Testament, and in John Cowden Clarke's² statement that Shelley's conduct toward his fellow mortals is enough to substantiate the opinion that Shelley was -- in action -- a follower of Christ. In 1880 John Todhunter, in his book, A Study of Shelley, attempt to point out the Christian element in Shelley. Dowden had in 1886 defended Shelley's essential goodness, Stopford Brooke in the same year spoke of "the plain living and high thinking of Shelley,"³ and even Mathew Arnold could see in Shelley's actions toward the poor and his kindness to others admirable character traits.

¹ John Dewey, A Comparative Estimate of Modern English Poets (London: Moxon, 1875), cited by Pratt, op., cit.

² Charles Cowden Clarke, Recollections of Writers (London, 1874-1878), cited by Pratt, Ibid.

³ Notebook of the Shelley Society, op. cit., p.2.

Many of the admirers of Shelley are by now acknowledging that Shelley is a fine poet. In America, Edgar Allen Poe grouped Shelley with Coleridge, Keats, and Tennyson as his ideal types of poets. As an instance of the ideal, Poe mentions "The Sensitive Plant" of Shelley. Henry T. Tuckerman in his Thoughts on the Poets (1846), gives appreciative comments on both Shelley's poetry and his character. In 1852 Robert Browning called attention to Shelley's genius. Peacock in 1858 called Shelley a "genius unsurpassed in the description and imagination of scenes of beauty and grandeur; in the expression of impassioned love of ideal beauty; in the illustration of deep feeling by congenial imagery; and in the infinite variety of harmonious versification."¹ Swinburne, who regarded Shelley as the divinely inspired master singer of all modern poets, had in his boyhood a deep admiration for Shelley. His sonnet to Shelley, "Cor Cordium," published in 1871 in Songs Before Sunrise, shows Shelley's influence. Although John Addison Symonds calls the larger bulk of Shelley's poetry immature, he points out that Shelley had a great lyrical faculty. Symonds declares that Shelley wrote the best lyrics, the best tragedy, the best translations, and the best familiar poems of the century. He maintains that the poet flew at the grand and the spacious and the sublime, not always succeeding

¹ Thomas Love Peacock, Memoirs of Shelley (London: Henry Frowde, 1909, pp. 82-83. First published in Fraser's Magazine in 1858.)

in realizing for his readers what he had imagined, but gradually becoming wiser during the last years of his life.¹

Mathilde Blind in 1872 comments on Shelley's genius; Stopford Brooke in 1878 speaks of Shelley's individuality and his splendid nature descriptions. In 1886 Brooke speaks of the power and beauty of Shelley's blank verse. Among the general criticisms of the 1890's, George Saintsbury's is influential. He places Shelley if not among the first three or four, certainly of the first ten or twelve writers. Arthur Symonds, a recent historian of the Romantic Movement in English letters, gives Shelley a high place in literature. In 1900, William Butler Yeats wrote an essay, "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," which was published in 1903 in Ideas of Good and Evil. Of prime importance to Yeats is Shelley's mysticism. He speaks of the rightful place of "Prometheus Unbound" as one among the sacred books of the world. In addition, Yeats gives an excellent discussion of the symbolism in Shelley's poetry. In 1908, Ernest Sutherland Bates made a thorough study of Shelley's "Cenci." Bates agrees with many others that Shelley failed in his initial purpose of writing a play suitable for the English stage, but that "he succeeded, through his deep emotional and imaginative sympathy with his subject, in writing a dramatic poem which must take rank among the chief English literary works of his era."²

¹ Symonds, op. cit., pp. 185-7.

² Ernest Sutherland Bates, A Study of Shelley's Drama The Cenci (New York: The Columbia University Press Published doctoral dissertation), 1908, p.103.

There remains the introduction of Shelley as a philosopher, a prophet, and a man of modern ideas. In 1878 in the Dublin University Magazine there were published two lectures given at Dublin by W. M. Rossetti in which Rossetti speaks of Shelley's thought and its similarity to the prophetic minds of the ancients. Leslie Stephen in 1878 gave us a picture of Shelley as a philosopher.¹ Stephen, together with Dowden, Thomas R. Slicer (1903), and Henry Brailsford (1903),² presents Shelley as a disciple of William Godwin, while Miss Winstanley in 1913 attributes much of Shelley's body of thought to Plato.³ John Todhunter as early as 1880 had spoken of Shelley, Victor Hugo, and Walt Whitman as the three great poets of democracy. Todhunter classified Shelley as "a poet of revolution," a prophet, and a philosopher with a spiritual message. In 1916 Laura Johnson Wylie gives Shelley a prominent place as a poet of democracy.⁴ H. L. Salt, Dr. Edward and Eleanor Marx Aveling, and George Bernard Shaw further promoted Shelley

¹ Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library (London: Smith, 1874-9.)

² Henry Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1913)

³ L. M. Winstanley, "Platonism in Shelley," Essays and Studies of the English Association, IV, Oxford, 1913. (Cited by Pratt, op. cit.)

⁴ Laura Johnson Wylie, Social Studies in English Literature (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916)

as a thinker. These writers won more serious consideration for "Queen Mab," and stressed certain prose works of Shelley. Mr. Salt was selected by the Shelley Society to write the Shelley Primer. (1886). Salt speaks of love as being at all times the dominant quality of Shelley. A Monograph by Salt published in 1888, contains more of the Socialist element than the Primer. Salt feels that Shelley anticipated the next period of social and moral evolution. Salt's publication of 1892, Shelley's Principles, Has Time Refuted or Confirmed Them? attempts to show the importance to a later age and the originality of Shelley's practical theories and ideals. At a gathering of Shelley admirers on August 11, 1892, George Bernard Shaw was among the speakers. Shaw mentioned the radical views of Shelley and the scope and the importance of these views.

In 1913 in his Winds of Doctrine, George Santayana says:

Substance, sanity, and even a sort of pervasive wisdom are requisite for supreme works of art. On the other hand . . . the rebels and the individualists are the men of direct insight and vital hope.¹

Santayana further points out:

The poetry of Shelley in particular is typically poetical. It is poetry divinely inspired; and Shelley himself is perhaps no more ineffectual and lacking in humor than an angel properly should be¹

¹ George Santayana, Winds of Doctrine (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), p. 158.

Shelley's mind, maintains Santayana, was too sensitive and too highly endowed for the world into which it had descended. Shelley was a child of nature--innocent and cruel, swift and wayward, illuminated and blind. Being incapable of understanding reality, he revelled in creating world after world in ideas. Shelley the idealist (at first after Berkeley's fashion, but more deeply and constantly after Plato) was carried away by enthusiasm for what his etherial and fertile fancy pictured as possible and by detestation of the reality forced upon him instead. Santayana points out that Shelley had faith in his philosophy. His mind was angelic in its purity and fervour and its moral authority and prophetic strain. Shelley, ignorant of the world, was "like a child, like a Platonic soul just fallen from the Emyrean, and the child may be dazed, credulous and fanciful. But he is not mad."¹ Shelley the unteachable could never put together any just idea of the world; he merely collected images and emotions out of which he made worlds of his own. One who is seriously interested only in what belongs to earth will not be seriously interested in Shelley, maintains Santayana. Shelley deserved the epitaph, Cor Cordium, the heart of hearts.

This beautiful tribute to Shelley marks the climax of his slow rise to fame.

¹ Ibid., p.175.

PART II

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The growth of modern universities and the development of specialized research in the twentieth century with a scientific, rather than a purely literary attitude, have done much toward furthering the knowledge of the essential values and chief problems of the great Romantic thinkers. The modern writer has not been content to present to the world meager and incorrect sketches. The facts have been accurately gathered and carefully weighed.

With respect to Shelley, there have been changes of great importance. Biographical research has no longer allowed Shelley's early follies to obscure his manly, generous, and sensible traits. The modern critic attaches more importance to Shelley's maturer views than to his youthful opinions and hasty sentiments. Attention is being focussed upon Shelley's prose. In the opinion of many, he ranks with our modern thinkers.

Important contributions toward the recent estimate of Shelley extend from the novelized version of the life of Shelley, written by Andre Maurois, to the extensive, carefully presented Life of Shelley by Walter Peck. Mrs. Olwen Campbell has written a sympathetic life of Shelley with ample comments on the works of the poet. Books such

as Carl Grabo's The Magic Plant, Archibald Strong's Three Studies in Shelley, Bennet Weaver's Toward the Understanding of Shelley, Floyd Stovall's Desire and Restraint in Shelley, and J. R. Ullman's Mad Shelley, have done a great deal to clarify our interpretation of this great poet. Outstanding studies of special works of Shelley have been made by Harold Hoffman, Benjamin Kurtz, John Lindsay, and Carl Grabo. Shelley has been psycho-analyzed by such writers as T. V. Moore, Edward Carpenter, and George Barnefield. Melvin Solve and Louise Propst have made special studies of Shelley's verse. T. H. Hutchison has edited the complete poetical works of Shelley, in addition to the one edited by Roger Ingpen and Walter Peck. New fragments and manuscripts of the poet have been discovered by Edmund Gosse and Walter Peck. Leslie Hotson's Lost Letters to Harriet have made a contribution toward the estimation of the personality of Shelley. Other hitherto unpublished letters have been edited by R. H. Hill. Thomas Wise has collected a valuable Shelley Library, and Ruth Shepard Grannis has edited a descriptive catalogue of the first editions in book form of the writings of Shelley. George E. Woodberry has reproduced with notes and a postscript the Shelley notebook in the Harvard Library. In the history of Shelley criticism, important works are those of Willis Pratt and N. I. White.

From the great mass of later Shelley criticism there have been selected for this study what appear be definite scholarly contributions toward the modern estimate of the poet. Many other writers who have done their part in presenting the life and work of Shelley have been mentioned in the notes or placed in the bibliography of this thesis.

In the following chapters, which analyze this recent Shelley criticism, it would be well to keep in mind the original question: "How effectual was Shelley the Man, Shelley the Philosopher, and Shelley the Poet?"

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S PERSONALITY

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THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S PERSONALITY

Shelley's personality continues to present a baffling and an interesting problem. In 1925, Mr. N. I. White made this striking comment:

Shelley conforms to biographers about as he conformed to the Church of England. While Mary Shelley talks of philosophy, Jeaffreson talks of "Wilful untruths." While Leigh Hunt and Lady Shelley talk of philanthropy, Mark Twain thunders of desertion. While Dowden talks of Shelley's beneficent influence on Byron, the "unromantics," as Mrs. Campbell seems to call the unsympathetic, think about his influence on Harriet Shelley and Elizabeth Hitchener. All are about equally right, and all are incapable of synthesizing the conflicting traits of Shelley into an authentic human being.¹

Was Shelley a dreamer, always losing himself in fanciful ideas that ended in poetry without real substance? Was he capable of deep love and deep feeling, or was he continually jumping from one love to another, never capable of remaining true to any? Was he, according to the belief of many critics, a "bad man as well as a bad poet"? The later twentieth century critics have given the world various pictures of Shelley the man. In this chapter, interpretations of Shelley as "the eternal child," Shelley "the madman," Shelley the man of practical ideas, and Shelley the Christian will be presented.

¹ N. I. White, "The Beautiful Angel and His Biographers," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXIV (January, 1925), pp. 77-78.

Variations of the "eternal child" attitude continue to interest the modern writer. Andre Maurois,¹ James Ramsey Ullman,² and George R. Elliott³ have made unique contributions toward this angle of the famous personality.

In connection with the discussion of the poet's madness, there are, in addition to Ullman's study, evaluations by Ernest Sutherland Bates,⁴ Thomas Vernor Moore,⁵ Edward Carpenter⁶ and George Barnefield.⁶

Toward the ushering in of a Shelley fairly new to biographical research -- a Shelley more in keeping with the

¹ Andre Maurois, Ariel ou La Vie de Shelley (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1923)

² James Ramsey Ullman, Mad Shelley (Princeton: University Press, 1930)

³ George R. Elliott, The Cycle of Modern Poetry (Princeton: University Press, 1929)

⁴ Ernest Sutherland Bates, Mad Shelley: A Study in the Origins of English Romanticism. Fred Newton Scott Anniversary Papers (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1929)

⁵ Thomas Vernor Moore, "Percy Bysshe Shelley," Psychological Monographs, XXXI (New York, 1922)

⁶ Edward Carpenter and George Barnefield, The Psychology of the Poet Shelley (London: Allen and Unwin; New York: Dutton, 1925)

practical man of affairs--Walter Peck¹ Carl Grabo² and Olwen Ward Campbell³ have made important studies.

In addition to Campbell and Peck, Solomon Francis Gingerich,⁴ Bennet Weaver,⁵ Gilbert Thomas,⁶ and Robert Moss Lovett⁷ have brought out the Christian qualities of the poet's nature.

In his delightful biography, Maurois has presented a Shelley that is a fairy sprite, an Ariel whose declamatory vehemence tickled his friend Hogg, but whose feverish energy accomplished nothing. This Shelley, who seemed to live in a land of baseless and visionary fabrics, was quick

¹ Walter Peck, Shelley: His Life and Work (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927 2 vols.

² Carl Grabo, The Magic Plant: the Growth of Shelley's Thought (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936)

³ Olwen Ward Campbell, Shelley and the Unromantics (London: Methuen; New York: Scribner, 1924)

⁴ Solomon Francis Gingerich, Essays in the Romantic Poets (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929)

⁵ Bennet Weaver, Toward the Understanding of Shelley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1932)

⁶ Gilbert Thomas, "The Divine Poet," Fortnightly Review, DCLXVII (July, 1922), 68-78.

⁷ Robert Moss Lovett, "The Ethical Paradox in Shelley," The New Republic, XXXI (July 19, 1922), 204-206.

to champion a cause -- any cause -- and was always ready to enlighten those who seemed to be in need of such service. In Maurois' "Life" there is portrayed a Shelley who loved to write incendiary pamphlets, place them in bottles, and watch them as they were carried seaward. A favorite relaxation of this Shelley was blowing soap bubbles and watching them float away until they vanished. Shelley, according to Maurois, was "wild-looking, intellectual, always the image of some heavenly spirit come down to earth by mistake."¹ It seemed that all the pretty women delighted to cluster around this good looking and well-born young man, who loved ideas and expressed them with warmth. He was selfless, generous, and above the material things of life. Although he was generally serious, he was capable of fun, and he had a contempt for ceremony. He was beloved of many women -- Harriet, Mary, Claire, Fanny -- and interested in many. Shelley, points out Maurois, looked to women as a source of exaltation. He venerated them!

Maurois' Shelley was generous to every one in need. It was he who promised his friend Peacock a hundred a year so that Peacock might go on writing, and sent large sums to William Godwin. It was Shelley who provided Charles Clairmont the means for marriage.

¹ Maurois, op. cit., p.120.

This Shelley of Maurois was impetuous. When he really determined on a thing, nothing could stop him. He took no notice of the outside world and cared nothing for the society that rejected him. He said that he called himself an atheist because it is a word of abuse, to stop discussion, a painted Devil to frighten fools. He took it up, he said, as a knight takes up a gauntlet, in defiance of injustice. Even Mary reproached him for his complete indifference to the things considered worthwhile by others. Mary wondered why Shelley could never use his strength to his own advantage and seemed to have no notion of his own interests.

In Maurois' sympathetic picture of Shelley, perpetually youthful, always lovable, we see one not unlike Mathew Arnold's "angel beating in the void his luminous wings in vain."¹

In his doctoral dissertation, Mad Shelley, James Ramsey Ullman maintains that Shelley is like a radiant new-born creature, fresh from "Elsewhere," possessed by some mystic process, of a vast store of knowledge and unquenchable

¹ N. I. White speaks of Ariel as one of the most entertaining books ever written about Shelley. He says, however, that in the final analysis Ariel is no more than what it was intended to be, a witty, dramatic narrative character study rather than a substantial biography. White, op.cit., p.83

A review of Ariel in Current Opinion for June, 1924, points out that it was characterized in the London Mercury as "the best portrait of Shelley in existence."

Carl Grabo says that Maurois misrepresents Shelley as Ariel. Grabo, op. cit.

vital energy. The preservation of his "innocent simplicity" was his greatest struggle and his greatest victory.¹

George R. Elliott in an essay on "The Solitude of Shelley," brings out this angle of the poet's personality. Elliott does not agree with Santayana's assertion made in 1913 that Shelley deserved the epitaph *Cor Cordium*, the heart of hearts.² Elliott pictures the poet as a friendly will-o'-the-wisp, dependent on human companionship but devoid of any deep passion for human Personality. His nature craved continual, but not profound relationships with persons. The man Shelley was deficient enough in self-control and often followed the impulse of the moment. He was devoid of meditation. He did not weigh and consider. This young man had

¹ Gilbert Thomas gives another angle to this child-like quality of Shelley. The poet possessed a certain simplicity, the type that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven. His simple, child-like heart which the New Testament exalts, implies a restless, ardent, questioning spirit. Shelley, who constantly sought with youthful impetuosity to read the riddles of the world, retained, in a word, the spiritual simplicity and the burning perplexed mind of childhood. "His eager metaphysical speculations were those of childhood; the faults of his life and of his works -- faults born of rashness and haste -- were those of childhood; but, above all, this radiant genius and abounding generosity and charm of character were those of childhood." Thomas, op.cit., p.71.

According to Arthur Keith, Shelley was always something of a child whose psychology did not come to the full development on all sides. "The Imagery of Shelley," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXIII (Jan., Apr., 1924)

² See page 48 of this thesis.

a vague yearning to break through the "shallow round" of his nature. This yearning is the most humanly poignant thing in Shelley's life and poetry. Elliott calls Shelley's love for women a "sort of erotic congeniality diluted with priggish theorizing."¹ He says that Shelley was too wilful to build up a higher companionship through meditation. Elliott is led to the conviction that Shelley the man and Shelley the poet must undergo a single plain judgment: extraordinarily shallow.

From the Eton days when the schoolmates of the youthful Shelley hurled after him, "Mad Shelley," to the present day when even the ordinary reader sometimes exclaims, "Why, the man was mad," this angle of the poet's personality continues to present itself.

In an essay on Shelley, Ernest Sutherland Bates presents this side of the poet against a background of the age. Of all the poets of the Romantic School, Shelley, according to Bates, most completely carried out its tendencies. Judged by Eton standards, Shelley was mad. He would not accept the things that made up Etonian reality. His devotion at this time to the horrible was due to the fact that horror was at this time the strongest emotional reaction of which he was capable. Mr. Bates points out that

¹ Elliott, op. cit., p.4.

in the "Mad Shelley" of the Eton days lay Shelley the Angel as well as Shelley the Atheist -- a Shelley whose early baffled scramblings and tossings are but the preliminary to a firmer command of the horses of the air and braver riding than any other poet has ever achieved.

In a psychological monograph, T. V. Moore has given a rather thorough study of Shelley's "madness." He traces the characteristic trend of the poet, saying that when he terms Shelley a praecox, he does not mean that Shelley was so far deranged that he should have been confined to an asylum; but only that his disposition in its main outlines resembles that of praecox patients. He points out that in Shelley the dominating complex was the unpleasantness of his relation to his father, commenced in childhood and deepened and intensified in manhood. Shelley's "plan of life" was a blind emotional drive -- a reaction to difficulties experienced in childhood. In considering his conflict and defense reactions, we shall see that Shelley was one of those who in his own estimation was like the king who can do no wrong. He had the added craving for the affection of one who could understand -- an ideal woman. Shelley's plan of life included knowledge of hidden lore, living the thoughts and actions of a prince's high nobility, warring against tyranny, and

knowing one who understands him and sees into his very soul, loving him with sensuous love.

According to Moore, the chief complex in Shelley's life became the tyranny of an irreconcilable father. As the father stood for authority, so Shelley revolted against all that law holds sacred -- he became a thorough anarchist.

Shelley's craving for sympathy, points out Moore, was developed to a pathological degree. He suffered imaginary ills and let others know how badly he was treated. In the supreme trial of his days, the disintegration of his married life with Harriet, he felt sorrow, but he did not sink under it. "I wanted Mary and I was unhappy with Harriet," seems to sum up the whole situation. There is no moral conflict . . . "without moral ideals there can be no conflict,"¹ At a second time of conflict -- the suicide of Harriet -- Shelley must justify himself in the forum of his own conscience and in public opinion. There was no self-reproach. His defense reactions cast a screen about this stain. Shelley belonged to a group of people who cannot see their faults. "In the compensation of his revolt against tyranny, he got rid of the burdensome load of the ideals of conscience and kept only their spangled coverings. He would be good in dreams but not in reality."²

¹ Moore, op. cit., p.42

² Ibid., p.45.

Shelley, according to Moore, could not honestly face a situation, pass true judgment on himself, and take the blame that was his due. His plan of life was inadequate, for a plan of life should lead to contentment. The poet's solution was a blind drive for self-satisfaction in an object of sensuous love. Moore points out that perhaps a bi-sexual trend existing in childhood and dormant in his later life but rendering impossible a complete fixation of his love on any woman, was perhaps one element in Shelley's discontent.

In their essays on Shelley, Edward Carpenter and George Barnefield have pursued still further this bi-sexual quality of Shelley. Carpenter says that the very variability of Shelley's character is largely the key and the explanation of it. According to Carpenter:

"It gave him wide sympathy with and understanding of different and almost opposing types of humanity, and gave him at the same time his strong determination to get at the root of things with the result that he ultimately combined in himself a great range of qualities both masculine and feminine.¹

Carpenter points out the degree to which the love element and interest saturate all of Shelley's poetry and the fact that Shelley while showing the utmost boldness with sex, at the same time treats with marked reserve and

¹ Carpenter and Barnefield, op. cit., p.13.

a kind of childlike innocence any direct reference to physical sex acts. Shelley, says the writer, might have believed in the new type of human being, having the grace of both sexes, but not dependent on mere sexual and corporal urge.

Carpenter points out that there was a marked development in Shelley of higher powers more or less occult and difficult to explain. Shelley might have been to some extent mediumistic.

According to Carpenter, there were three marks of the feminine temperament in Shelley: the predominance of love-interest; marked idealism in regard to sex matters; and a hysterical tendency indicated by Shelley's behavior at various times. The writer comes to the conclusion that the poet's nature was intermediate between the masculine and feminine or double as having that twofold outlook upon the world. He maintains that this remark is not to be interpreted as derogatory but that it indicated that the poet had reached a higher level of evolution than usual. The poet, like Goethe, possessed in his own nature an extraordinary sympathy with, and understanding of, every variety and phase of human temperament.

Barnefield speaks of the force, the complexity, and the attractiveness of the personality of Shelley, declaring

that Shelley's biographers have been too confused by the contradictions of his character to analyze it satisfactorily. He turns to modern psychology as a means of resolving and explaining these contradictions.

Barnefield sees Shelley as "the poet of unsatisfied love". He calls attention to Shelley's feminine appearance, his shrill voice, and his peculiar mincing gait. He declares that Shelley, together with many artists of very diverse qualities, belonged to the class of double-natured or intermediate types. Had the poet lived a few more years, states the writer, he would have been driven perhaps into a serious neurosis. As a youth he felt himself not like his fellows; in manhood he was always fundamentally out of harmony with himself and with his fellows and he always remained in the adolescent stage. The poet's search for love in an idealized form of woman, a search in which he could never achieve success or peace of mind, is pointed out by Barnefield. Shelley, on the other hand, was not very susceptible to the physical charms of real women. His friendships with men were no less romantic and on the whole much more permanent and successful than his affairs with women. Like all bisexual people, he automatically altered his polarity in accordance with his company. The writer cannot discern any great difference between Shelley's love affairs and his friendships.

Indications of Shelley's bisexual disposition are scattered throughout his writings, says Barnefield.

Shelley, Barnefield points out, suffered from Paranoia, a mental disease characterized by delusions of persecutions, jealousy, or grandeur. Barnefield says:

So with Shelley, we find not merely the pathological results of mental dissociation not even only the signs of genius--swift and subtle intuitions scattered through his works--but also, at times we see indications of powers which, for want of a better term, may be called occult.¹

Shelley may have possessed, according to this writer, the germs of powers and faculties that are at once vaster and subtler than those familiar to us all. Although he died before his latent faculties were fully established, had he lived, Shelley would have taken his place beside the great mystics.²

Another type of "madness" is pointed out by James Ramsey Ullman. In a society in which conformity is the beginning and the end of sanity, Shelley was mad. The author

¹ Ibid., p. 109.

² Ullman says that Mr. Barnefield's deductions are excellent but that they tend to place too much emphasis upon the subconscious and have to complicate a personality of which the keynote is utter simplicity. Ullman, op.cit., p. 103.

says:

The evaluation of a man depends upon the perspective in which he stands. The Shelley of today and tomorrow and a thousand years from tomorrow, while he may very well be different from other men, and, therefore, in the myopic eyes of his contemporaries, a bit mad, is unfadingly beautiful. That is the important thing to us. The Shelley of a century ago, the waking, breathing, living man -- while he may very well have created verses and dreamed dreams of surpassing ideal beauty, was without doubt dangerously mad -- a misfit, a trouble maker, and a menace to organized society. That was the important thing to his age.¹

Yes, Shelley was unique, according to Ullman, unique to his contemporaries and to the afterworld who viewed him as an isolated phenomenon among men, a being aflame with visions of which the mass of men have not the least surmise. Shelley was unique in his thoughts and his actions. Ullman proceeds to examine Shelley as a phenomenon and as a noumenon. Why was Shelley not as other men? To the end the poet kept faith in the "cause," He saw beyond the substance to the spirit, believing and affirming in the face of a world in which there appeared to be neither reason, nor hope, nor humanity -- Shelley, the slim, child-like, singing madman. Ullman speaks of Shelley as the "wildest individualist," but at the same time the "most perfect child of his age." Shelley, he declares, had an overdeveloped and often feverishly unhealthy imagination,

¹ Ullman, op. cit., p.6.

but his spirit and his mind were his own. "As a noumenon-- as an entity--Shelley stands alone, as a phenomenon in the stream of history he occupies the supreme place in the development of the thought and literature of eighteenth century England."¹

Shelley, according to Ullman, demanded too much of people. He, however, was a unified personality. "The devotion to something afar" was the core and the circumstance of Shelley's being. He was mad because he stood alone. He was a straight line in a world of easy curves and aimless angles.²

Walter Peck's two volume Life of Shelley, with its careful analysis, notes, references, and letters, is one of the most valuable present-day studies of Shelley. Peck points out Shelley's practicability--that other side of the poet's nature generally neglected by his biographers. He admits that Shelley is a baffling subject for any biographer

¹ Ibid., p.25.

² Arthur Keith also mentions this angle of Shelley's madness. If judged by the standards of the world, then the poet was irrational. He was constantly at war, not alone with the external world and with those of his household, but with himself. Keith, op. cit., p. 176.

desirous of recording nothing but the facts. Peck presents to us a man of action, eager to hurl himself into the lists against the arrant oppressor, and on behalf of the victim of oppression. This man was not content with "parlor radicalism," but he must preach, and publish, and convert his fellows from the present state of darkness. He was an "eager, inquiring spirit unsatisfied until he had drained the very dregs of truth."¹

Because he was preoccupied with things of the mind, this Shelley led a life of denial. Peck, however, does not excuse Shelley in his actions toward Harriet. He says that there can be no exoneration for him in any act of hers. Eliza Westbrook, he maintains, might have been the spark that set the magazine ablaze. In discussing Harriet's suicide, Peck remarks:

Shelley's abandonment of her had been sudden, selfish, and deliberate. When she could no longer maintain herself honorably Harriet put as sudden an end to her life. It is useless for any Shelley biographer to pretend that all the wordy incantations, or fragrant perfumes of Arabia can cleanse the hands of the poet from the original responsibility for the state of the spirit which induced the crime.²

Surely Peck's Shelley had a "touch of earth." Peck regrets the absence of tenderness toward Harriet in Shelley's letter to Mary on December 15 concerning the tragedy. He

¹ Peck, op. cit., p. 78. (Vol. I)

² Ibid., p. 504.

did not "recognize the alloy in his own nature,"¹ Shelley, says Peck, believed that the blight of government and church and law was responsible for the evil there was in the world. He could not perceive that these organisms with their good and their evil were but a reflection of the mixture in the hearts and minds of the persons who created institutions.

In a study of Shelley's large-heartedness toward Godwin, Peck mentions a detailed report sent to Godwin on February 26. He points out that this letter, above all others, positively refutes the notion held by some of Shelley's critics that he never had his feet on the earth or that he was merely a "bright being" or a "citizen of Mercury" and was incapable of mastering the details of this world's business. Shelley gave a clear explanation to Godwin of the legal aspects of the Shelley properties -- as clear as a simple sum in arithmetic!

In her well-written biography of Shelley, Mrs. Olwen Ward Campbell brings out the fact that Shelley is in many ways typical of the modern man. Mrs. Campbell gives a very sympathetic picture of the poet. His mistakes were due, she says, to a typically modern practice of analyzing and rationalizing his motives with the result that he sometimes determined his conduct by an abstract theory. Shelley learned revolt before he found Faith. He revolted against his fellows--

¹ See the estimate of Shelley given by T. V. Moore: Shelley was in his own estimation like the king who can do no wrong. (Page 59 of this thesis.)

against their brutality and rowdiness--instead of learning a lesson in reading and understanding human character and impulses. The young poet suffered from the fact that during the years of adolescence he was driven into a position of isolation and defiance. At an early age he blazed out into a fire of fury against all forms of persecution.

Mrs. Campbell's Shelley has his undesirable side.

The Shelley of the Christmas heart-break, of the Easter expulsion, of the summer elopement; the gushing, infatuated devotee and subsequent sputtering defamer of Elizabeth Hitchener; the effusive, self-dreaming Shelley, with his impassioned insincerity and futile energies--there is no denying him; he is there before our eyes. To attempt to conceal him is vain, since he confesses himself in a hundred letters.¹

This Shelley whom certain of his gentler critics would have looked away from, is the one who is presented to us as "Shelley the Man" or "The Real Shelley". He is not the real man at all. He is, according to Mrs. Campbell, only the misguided and misguiding youth, "blundering upon the stage of unkind circumstance, and betraying equally in his melodramatic gestures and his desperate and feverish earnestness that he has not got his role by heart."² Shelley, she points out, emerged in 1814 to 1817 from the experiences of love and hope, the menace of death, the dawn of poetic ambition, the sting of injustice, the bitterness and the sweetness of true

¹ Campbell, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

² Loc. cit.

friendship to become a man who was the amazement, inspiration, and delight of all who knew him. During his last seven years he was much kinder, surer of himself, and certain of his right to advise and comfort and sustain. His worst enemy was a morbid melancholy. Shelley, she maintains, was a strong man in spite of his rash impulses, sensitiveness, variableness, and melancholy. To study his life and letters is to realize how wise he was in his maturity and courage which together make up goodness. He was a teacher and a leader of his fellow-men, and in his heart he knew it.

In his delightful book, The Magic Plant, designed to trace the growth in the mind and the art of Shelley, Carl Grabo points out that far from being wholly understood, Shelley has been for the most part thoroughly misunderstood. Shelley's mistakes and misfortunes should be buried with him. If ever a man lived the intellectual life and was not the victim of blind emotion it was Shelley. He was a supreme individualist whose mistakes sprang from attributing to certain people certain virtues which they did not possess.¹ He was in later

¹ J.de Gruyter also mentions this characteristic of Shelley. Although the poet was a most lovable man and the best of friends, a kind of intellectual and spiritual fanaticism gave him an almost infallible trust in the values he put on men and things and made him judge these as good or bad without acknowledging the fact that all men form a mixture of good and bad qualities. "Shelley and Dostoievsky," English Studies, IV (July, 1922), p. 130.

years, a shrewd judge of character. He was trusting, credulous, and generous, until, often deceived, he awoke to the realities of human nature. Mr. Grabo mentions the extent of Shelley's reading. At the time of his death he must have been, for his years, one of the best-read men in Europe. This scholar is quite the opposite of the Shelley of popular fancy -- a dreamy, erratic, wild-eyed man, devoted to love affairs, verse making, and ill-considered denunciations of the established order. He was not a secluded scholar out of touch with life, but one concerned with the evils of the world. This student Shelley had a passionate concern for impersonal ends. "Few human beings understand an abstract devotion or can credit one who professes it. Such a one is characterized as a madman, an Utopian dreamer, or a poetic visionary. He is a likely theme upon which to spin humorous fables."¹ One should discredit that which makes Shelley seem irresponsible, insincere, futile, and crack-brained. Much of the misunderstanding of Shelley and much of the falsity of common appraisal, is due to a confusion of his youthful beliefs and acts with those of his later years.²

Grabo states that the natural beauty and lovableness of Shelley's nature led him to seek solace in dreams of a regenerate world, to believe in man's native goodness, and

¹ Grabo, op. cit., p. 18.

² See Mrs. Campbell's Shelley and the Unromantics for a similar attitude toward Shelley.

to put his trust in individual love and friendship. Shelley was an outcast, not for what he did, but for his openness and honesty in doing it.

In August, 1822, after Shelley's death, Byron said in a letter to Moore: "There is another man gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally mistaken. It will perhaps do him justice now when he can be no better for it."¹ At another time he wrote to Murry: "You were all mistaken about Shelley, who was without exception, the best and least selfish man I ever knew."² It was years before any critic attempted to pay tribute to the Christianity of Shelley. Robert Browning asserted in 1852 that had the poet lived he would have ranged himself with the Christians. Browning referred to Shelley as a moral man because he was true, simple-hearted, and brave; and a man of religious mind, because "every audacious negative cast up by him against the Divine was interpenetrated with a mood of reverence and adoration."³ The Christianity of Shelley is a subject for much recent discussion.

Gilbert Thomas, in his essay on Shelley as a "Divine Poet," asserts that Shelley was one of the few poets who

¹ Edward Trelawney, Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron (London: Milford, 1905) p.26.

² Ibid., pp.26-27

³ See page 42 of this thesis.

have not only written poetry but lived it. What distinguishes Shelley from other poets who have shared his belief and his aim is the fact that without losing his lyrical note, Shelley, alone, with the exception of Blake, sings of love and truth and brotherhood as one who himself "breathes their own native air," while others treat such subjects objectively from a distance. The critic says that although Shelley was an "atheist," his portrait of Prometheus enduring without resistance all the tortures of the Furies bears in certain of its lines (however imperfectly) a strange likeness to that of Christ. He recoiled from the Deity who was the object of conventional worship.

Shelley's status as a Christian, points out Thomas, is determined only after one defines the term Christianity. If the word implies primarily a loyalty to dogma, superstition, and established authority, then Shelley was a blasphemer; if it means brotherly love and involves a spiritual kinship with Christ, Shelley was only an "atheist" in that he was "more Christian than the Christians." The writer further states that although it is easy to fall into excess adulation of this "pard-like" spirit, he remains alike by virtue of his life, his personality, and his work -- a shining and a singing angel. No poet has exemplified in his own conduct more of the virtues that he praised.

Solomon Francis Gingerich, in his essay on Shelley,

agrees that whether Shelley, or any other man, was a Christian depends almost wholly on our own definition of Christianity. Says Gingerich:

Shelley undoubtedly expressed some convictions that are fundamental to the teachings of Jesus, but because they are not so numerous nor so broad-based nor so heartily sympathetic with Christianity as those of Browning, men have accorded to Browning the name of Christian but have persistently withheld it from Shelley.¹

Peck agrees with Thomas that Shelley declared war, not upon Christianity, but upon the accompaniments of Christianity. Shelley explained that he was at war with Christianity because it did not induce to virtue, but taught a morality whose judgments were those of fear of Hell or reward in Heaven rather than the true disinterested virtue which springs from the love of good because it is good, and which is its own reward. In his later works Shelley shows a deepening conviction of the beauty and strength of the Master, although he never directly acknowledged Christ's divinity.² In a discussion of "Hellas," Peck gives quite a little space to the matter of Shelley's attitude toward Christianity, and says that he desires to show a "misjudging world" how much of the heart of Christianity Shelley accepted before he died,

¹ Gingerich, op. cit., pp. 237-38.

² Marie Bald also says that Shelley did not explain life but lived. If he does not try to prove by logical demonstrations the existence of a God, he makes us certain that he at least believed it. "Shelley's Mental Progress," Essays and Studies by Members of the English Associations, XVIII, 1928.

and how beautifully he set forth his creed in the "Essay on Christianity" and in "Hellas."

Mrs. Campbell gives various testimonials as to the innate goodness of the poet. Although he was inclined to form sudden Platonic attachments, he was no philanderer but rather a true philanthropist. He was a faithful friend and possessed an unusual amount of sympathy and compassion for all who crossed his path.¹ He was remarkable in the steadfastness of his designs and aspirations. There was a development of character in Shelley's later years -- a development that is evident in his works.

In an essay on the ethical paradox in Shelley, Robert Moss Lovett points out that one of the sources of the fascination which has compelled this interest in Shelley's life and personality is the extraordinary contradictions which they exhibit. In Shelley, it seemed that conduct was divorced from character. Hogg testified to the fact that Shelley had of moral truth in the abstract, a developed sense and an acute perception. On the other hand, Shelley took little heed of its application in detail to the affairs of men and to his own circumstances. Lovett says that although one cannot acquit Shelley of egoism, the poet was singularly

¹ Peck mentions that a newly found letter from Shelley to Hunt, probably written on June 24, 1822, shows Shelley's generosity and utter self-abandonment in friendship, of which he stands as an example almost without peer among the English poets. "New Shelley Manuscripts," Living Age, April 30, 1921, p. 307.

free of the baser motives of ambition, selfishness, and lust.¹ As an angel, Shelley must be judged by his being, not his doing, in his wholeness, not in his elements.

Bennet Weaver has given us the most thorough recent study of the Christianity of Shelley. In his book, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, Weaver tries to "usher a great poet into a new light." He selects materials taken by Shelley from the Holy Scriptures and shows the influence upon the poet, not of Godwin, but of Jesus. Shelley, according to Weaver, desired a religion of humanity which meant a religion for humanity. Shelley's friends often paid tribute to his spiritual face, his kindness for others, his love of the Bible, which Peacock declared was "first." Leigh Hunt, Mary Shelley, and Medwin also testified to the poet's knowledge of the Bible.²

¹ J.de Gruyter speaks of Shelley's selfless life. "In other times and under other circumstances he would have been worshipped as a saint." J.de Gruyter, op. cit., p. 130.

Leslie Hotson adds his tribute: "It would be difficult to find in history a mind so sensitive, loving, and generous, which had its best efforts more cruelly beaten by disappointment and disillusion. We feel for his sufferings, but we cannot utterly deplore them. Suffering purged him of his early errors and folly and helped him to become before his thirtieth year the wise and courageous leader who in his love of mankind hoped all things and endureth all things." Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet, edited by Leslie Hotson, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1930), p. 59.

² In his book, The Odyssey of the Soul, Harold Hoffman also speaks of Shelley's extensive knowledge of the Bible.

Says Mr. Weaver: "It was probably the sympathetic similarity of the poet's nature with the nature of the prophets, together with certain basic similarities continuing between his age and theirs, which made this relationship between him and them so vital."¹

There is thus presented the twentieth century version of Shelley the Christian. Many find in his works the essence of the true Christian ideals and hail him as a great religious teacher. That phase of Shelley's Christianity will be discussed in the next chapter.

In reviewing the modern estimate of Shelley the man, one is led to the following conclusions: early versions of Shelley the child and Shelley the man with a complex or subject to hallucinations continue to present themselves; there has emerged, however, a new angle to the personality of Shelley, the manly and sensible side of his nature, stressed by his two outstanding recent biographers and numerous other writers; closely related to this manly, sensible Shelley is the Christian Shelley who has been defended by one careful, lengthy study and various testimonials; as a result of the careful investigations of our recent scholars, Percy Shelley seems to be fairly well established as a human being rather than "an ineffectual angel."

¹ Weaver, op. cit., p. 15.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S IDEAS

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The majority of the twentieth century critics agree that there is an intellectual concept underlying Shelley's most subtle fancies. More and more is the spotlight turned upon Shelley's philosophy and its interest to the modern world. The discussion concerning this phase of Shelley's writings falls into three groups: first, the kinds of ideas the poet offers; secondly, the growth of those ideas; and thirdly, their effectiveness.

Shelley is now being called a religious teacher, a scientist, and a forerunner of modern thought. In addition to those contributions made by Bennet Weaver, Mrs. Campbell, and James Ullman, important studies toward Shelley as a religious teacher have been made by Archibald Strong,¹ Melvin Solve,² and Floyd Stovall.³ Shelley as a scientist has been extensively studied by Carl Grabo.⁴ The importance

¹ Archibald Strong, Three Studies in Shelley and an Essay on Nature in Wordsworth and Meredith (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921)

² Melvin Solve, Shelley: His Theory of Poetry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927)

³ Floyd Stovall, "Shelley's Doctrine of Love," P.M.L.A., XLV (March, 1930), 283-303.

⁴ Carl Grabo, A Newton Among Poets; Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1930)

of Shelley as a modern thinker is brought out, in addition to the studies of Solve and Grabo, in works by Alexander Patterson Cappon,¹ John Middleton Murry,² and J.de Gruyter,³ Mrs. Campbell, Peck, Ullman, Weaver, Strong, Gingerich, Grabo, Solve, J.de Gruyter, Ernest Bernbaum,⁴ and Stovall⁵ have given careful consideration to the development of the poet's mind and art. This development furnishes a key to the effectiveness of Shelley's ideas.

In his splendidly written book, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, Bennet Weaver has thoroughly traced the poet's effectiveness as a Christian teacher. The critic selects materials taken by Shelley from the grand storehouses of "enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, the Holy Scriptures." He agrees with Santayana's statement that the poetry of Shelley is poetic, divinely inspired, and no more ineffectual than an angel should be.⁶ He points out that parallel to the teach-

¹ Alexander Patterson Cappon, The Scope of Shelley's Philosophical Thinking (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938. Part of doctoral dissertation.)

² John Middleton Murry, Heroes of Thought (New York: Messner, 1938)

³ J.de Gruyter, "Shelley and Dostoievsky," English Studies, IV (July, 1922), 129-51.

⁴ Ernest Bernbaum, Guide Through the Romantic Movement (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1931)

⁵ Floyd Stovall, Desire and Restraint in Shelley (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1931)

⁶ See page 47 of this thesis.

ings of Christ are certain of the main conceptions of Shelley's philosophy. In making a survey of Shelley's verse, Weaver comes to the following conclusions: In "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Shelley dedicated himself to beauty; like the prophets, Shelley associates the priests and the kings; "Let Judgment run down as waters and righteousness a mighty stream," might well be the summary of "Queen Mab"; Shelley shared with Job the feeling of equality; the poet had Paul's idea of a Christian community; there are traces of twenty-eight psalms in seventeen works of Shelley; "Swellfoot the Tyrant" is to be compared to the book of Micah; "Ozymandias" is to be compared to thoughts on death from Solomon: "Whatever moves or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep"; hundreds of the ideas and conceptions of the New Testament have their root and flower in the mind of Shelley; the Sermon on the Mount furnished the "very stuff of Shelley's thoughts"; the Beatitudes were especially appealing to him. Weaver declares:

It was inevitable that the influence of the Bible upon his very process of life should become so great and so vital that not to understand this influence is not to understand him.¹

Archibald Strong has also made a study of Shelley's faith. According to Strong, Shelley believed in beneficence

¹ Weaver, op. cit., pp. 237-38.

waiting to be brought out; he felt that evil, even if it is positive and deep-rooted is also eradicable; he believed in the regeneration of man; he thought that the history of life is an orderly progress through distinct stages; he felt that Love was the highest and strongest thing in the human soul. In "Prometheus" and "Hellas" are to be found a symbol of that which may yet be -- if man's progress, in spite of imperfections and frustrations, be an upward one for promoting an increased love of this kind.

Shelley's attitude toward love is thoroughly discussed in an essay by Floyd Stovall, who points out that the conception of love as the supreme spirit and sole productive source of good in the life of the world is the fundamental conception pervading all of Shelley's thinking. The word "Love" sums up, not only his philosophy, but his theology and ethics. Shelley held with Rousseau that nature is altogether good. He early adopted the view, however, that evil is not inherent in man, but arose from the violation of the law of nature. The poet seems to affirm that there is an immaterial world in which the spirit dwells, and that control over the spiritual world is divided between the two powers of Evil and Good. He conceived of love as having a threefold aspect: a seraphic being, the Supreme

Spirit of Good, symbolized in the morning star; the universal and pervasive influence everywhere felt as good; and a daemon or intermediary spirit. Love is that which rising from within, lifts living matter toward its highest desire, the perfection of that self which is felt to be good. The poet believed in a spiritual and a religious evolution corresponding to material progress.

Shelley, according to Stovall, became an enthusiastic teacher and a crusader for institutional reform. When he became convinced of his failure in his crusade for public reform and his campaign of enlightenment, his egoistic impulse reverted to its true character of desire for personal happiness. Says Stovall:

During these last months of his life Shelley forgot the purposes that for years had driven him to a strenuous and unabating labor. His absorption in this new and purely selfish love results from sheer exhaustion, not from any change in his opinions. Temporarily he may have lost confidence in himself and faith in mankind, but he never doubted the power of divine Love to cure the ills of the world if only it would consent to be medicined.¹

Ullman points out that Shelley's challenge was spiritual. He differed from his contemporaries in verse in that whereas their attitude toward life was objective and 'appreciative,' his was subjective and passionately partisan. They loved the "thing," but Shelley loved the "idea." They were simply poets. In addition to being a poet, Shelley was a prophet who gave a plea to man to recognize and assert

¹ Stovall, op. cit., p. 303.

his highest potentialities. In "Prometheus Unbound," "Adonais," "To the Skylark," and "Ode to the West Wind," are to be found the driving power of Shelley's "Cause." The poet sought a God who was more than a word; he sought Him in the spirit of love!

Melvin Solve points out that Shelley's passion for reform remained with him to the end. The poet believed, like Milton, that man's ills are largely of his own making. In spite of his periods of deep melancholy, Shelley was essentially an optimist who saw that the good would slowly and surely triumph. Shelley's doctrine that everything is potentially beautiful, suggests the classical and the Christian notion of the divinity of all creation and the sentimental notion of the goodness of all nature. Shelley's attitude

¹ Hoffman points out that the theme of "Alastor" is love of self--of soul within the soul. An Odyssey of the Soul: Shelley's Alastor, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933).

Kooistra brings out the altruistic side of Shelley's pan-eroticism. The desire to give was in Shelley's mind an equally strong goad to action as the hunger to receive. The wish to impart joy was the main source of his creative energy. The innate thirst for the sympathy of mankind was one of the motives which made him appeal to all its interests. He could not help making the world better at the same time he was making it more beautiful. To Shelley, far more than to Keats, Truth was Beauty; Beauty, Truth. The very soul of Shelley let in Truth and Beauty, whose common origin was the Sun of Love. "The Pan-Erotic Element in Shelley," English Studies, IV (July, 1924), p. 175.

toward beauty is one of religious veneration.¹

Mrs. Campbell feels that Shelley was in complete agreement with the teachings of Christ. He spoke of morality as the means and the end of man. His philosophy included belief in an all-pervading Benignant Principle and in an immortal soul. He pictures for us heavens upon earth and heavens beyond the grave, ideal human character, and nature penetrated by a divine spirit, found only to be lost again.²

Carl Grabo points out that Shelley strove to reconcile science and religion. In his book, A Newton Among Poets, Grabo has made a splendid analysis of the scientific angle of Shelley's philosophy. Grabo sees science as of Shelley's chief interests, literature and reform being the other two. The youthful interest in science and the teachings of science combine with Plato and the humanitarian French philosophers

¹ Gregory agrees with Solve that whatever Shelley had to say sprang from a deeply seated conviction. In attacks upon the Church he was careful to show distinction between religion and ritual--ritual and its perversion of religion were the objects of his attacks. Today we see the value of Shelley in his courage and his willingness to use his brains and learning toward the poetic realization of his moral convictions. "A Defense of Poetry," The New Republic (October 11, 1933), p. 38.

² J. V. Nash maintains that Shelley's whole philosophy was at heart a spiritual one. Demanding a true opportunity for all men and women toward the realization of the highest possibilities of their natures, he was the prophet of the free and untrammelled spirit. "Shelley After a Hundred Years," The Open Court, XXXVIII (January, 1924)

compose Shelley's philosophy. The philosophy of science contributed to Shelley's great achievement as a philosopher poet.

Grabo points out in "Queen Mab" certain passages that have their successors in "Prometheus Unbound." Of the scientific facts introduced in "Queen Mab," the astronomical are the chief. The writer sees in "Queen Mab" certain echoes of Erasmus Darwin. An idea common to both was that all matter was once a part of some living creature. Grabo also points out the importance of Erasmus Darwin as suggesting to Shelley the poetic possibilities of scientific matter and as opening his imagination to the far reaching speculations of scientific thought. Many scientific allusions in "Prometheus Unbound" are explicable upon a careful reading of Darwin's epics and the Zoonomia. According to Grabo, Darwin's evolutionary doctrine is reconcilable with the Platonic philosophy to which Shelley more and more inclined as he matured, and in Darwin's scheme there is a place for soul. Among the other scientists whose theories are linked with Shelley's allusions, are Hershel, Davy, Father Giambatista Beccaria, and Newton.

In discussing "Prometheus Unbound," Grabo points out Shelley's electrical theory of matter and his astronomical allusions. In this poem, Shelley adds to the theme of man's moral regeneration and the consequent transformation of the

physical universe the thought of man's mastery through science of the forces of nature -- a mastery that comes only as mankind ceases to be a group of warring individuals and shares a common mind and soul. In the fourth act of the poem is to be found Shelley's belief in the unity of knowledge. The individual adds his bit to the whole, and he is a drop in the ocean of mind, but of himself he is nothing. Grabo mentions the importance of "Prometheus Unbound" as philosophy, as well as poetry.

According to Grabo, Shelley's ultimate position as a scientist may be near the truth as we now apprehend it or as the innovation of science may tomorrow demonstrate it to be. Science was to Shelley one strand of human knowledge to be woven into a synthesis with moral philosophy and metaphysics.¹

Shelley the scientist is closely related to Shelley the modern thinker. Placing the poet among his "heroes of

¹ In 1924, Alfred Noyes, in speaking of the scientific phase of Shelley's art, said: "Indeed he often writes like a prophet who had foreseen the way in which science herself would one day dissolve the material universe into the stuff of dreams, till its atoms, electrons, centers of force and whirling fairy gulfs of (perhaps we shall discover eventually) intellectual energy outmiracled the miracles." Some Aspects of Modern Poetry (New York: Frederick Stokes Co.), p. 25.

Miriam Deford traces Shelley's interest in science from his earlier days even before he went to Eton. She sees science, philosophy, and humanitarianism as the three loves of Shelley's life. His science was that of the poet--personal, exalted, and speculative. "A Poet's Science," The Open Court, XXXV (September, 1921)

thought," in his book by that name, John Middleton Murry sees a great similarity between Shelley's political faith and his religious faith. Shelley saw what many Socialists have failed to see -- that "although it might be true that history had a struggle between classes and that the replacement of one class by another had always been attended by violence, it did not follow that the final class struggle must be violent."¹

Shelley, points out Murry, was a champion and apostle of the democratic social revolution, which could be achieved only through democratic process, even though that meant centuries of apparent delay. He thought that the path to a society of peace must be peaceful, and to a humane community the advance must be human. In all of his political thinking, Shelley was a democrat of the finest. The poet did not absolutely repudiate violent revolution, but the responsibility for violence is not on the revolutionaries, but on those cruel defenders of privilege who make it inevitable.

Crane Brinton sees Shelley as one of the accredited poets of Socialism.² Shelley believed, not in universal suffrage, but gradual suffrage. He wanted universal education

¹ Murry, op. cit., p. 308.

² As early as 1892, H. S. Salt and George Bernard Shaw pointed out the fact that Shelley anticipated the next period of social and moral evolution. (See pages 46-47 of this thesis)

at public expense, the disbanding of the standing army, the abolition of sinecures and tithes, the disestablishment of the Church of England, and complete religious toleration. Common law should be abolished and the judges apply common sense instead. Justice should be made "cheap, certain, and speedy." Crane sees the influence of men like Marx in Shelley's faith in the goodness of man -- a faith persisting through all the trials of science and experience; and his belief in a bloodless revolution, divinely guided by the divinity in common men.¹

For years after Shelley's death, the various schools assumed that Shelley's character and work was a static thing. It was not until comparatively recent years that critics have sought to distinguish between the several stages of his life and art, and thus arrive at a juster appreciation of their nature and value.²

¹ Gilbert Thomas says that time is vindicating the essential sanity of Shelley. Although Shelley died a hundred years ago, he belongs to the future rather than to the past. He sang of Utopia as if he belonged to it; he pointed out not a little of the way by which we must travel. "The Divine Poet," Fortnightly Review, "DCLXII (July, 1922)

J. V. Nash also hails Shelley as a herald of the modern world of thought. He was far in advance of his age and attacked the existing economic system long before social reform or socialism became questions of the hour. Nash, op. cit.

² See Bernbaum, op. cit., p. 371.

This growth of Shelley's explains to some extent his effectiveness as a philosopher. Many recent critics have traced Shelley's changing views.

In 1886 Dowden pointed out Godwin's great influence upon Shelley's ideas. Thomas Slicer in 1903 maintained that the one influence--that of William Godwin--wrought more than all others in Shelley. Brailsford in 1913 also pointed out Godwin's influence upon Shelley's works, including "Queen Mab," "Prometheus Unbound," and "Hellas." Although many of the more recent critics agree that Godwin did have a share in shaping the youthful philosophy of Shelley, they maintain that Shelley's views changed as he grew older.¹

Weaver and Bernbaum speak of Shelley's temporary conversion to the French philosophers and his gradual metamorphosis from a materialistic reformer into a poet. Shelley's views became modified; he began to recognize forces which seem mystical but are real; he began to be less certain that a state of perfection could be quickly brought about.

In tracing the growth of the poet's thought, Archibald

¹ Gingerich is inclined to agree that Shelley derived many of his doctrines directly from William Godwin. The critic takes his stand that in spite of the fact that Shelley attempted to graft Platonic forms on the Godwinian doctrine of Necessity, the poet was more like Godwin than he was like Plato. Essays in the Romantic Poets, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1929)

Elizabeth Wagner in her thesis "Godwinian and Platonic Doctrines in the Poetry of Shelley," (University of Louisville, 1934) traces the growth of Platonic doctrine in the works of Shelley.

Strong presents in turn Shelley the atheist, Shelley the Platonic idealist, Shelley the practical reformer, and Shelley the modern symbolist. Strong points out that as an undergraduate Shelley was filled with contradictions. While he fulminated against orthodoxy and intolerance, he invoked God, whose mercy is great. Only two months before the youthful poet was expelled from Oxford for circulating "The Necessity of Atheism," he was arguing with his friend Hogg for the existence of a Deity. After Shelley was expelled, he hardened to such an extent that he even threw over Deism. He objected to particular forms of faith. Strong maintains that the influence of Godwin was also a cause of Shelley's attack on the recognized faith. At one period, according to Strong, Shelley not only denied the divinity of Christ, but showed signs of doubting his sincerity and beneficence. He branded Jesus as "an ambitious man who aspired to the throne of Judea." There was a marked change, though, in Shelley's attitude toward Christ, and an ever-increasing sympathy and reverence for His personality.

Strong points out that there was another conflict in which the poet's "rationalizing habit" strove with the mystical impulse of his inmost nature. In "Hellas" Shelley declares that reason is a substitute for God. He makes God synonymous with morality, and thus satisfies reason. On the other hand,

he clings to a belief in the immortality of the soul, and therefore, throws over reason and falls back on the inward sense. Strong says that "Hellas" shows a deepening of thought and a growing transcendentalism. In "Prometheus," Shelley dissociates Love from the sway of Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change. In "Adonais," Love has become the moving spirit of existence. The poet has moved away from materialism. Shelley declares that there is one mind, one power, one all-pervasive spirit, and that the world possesses a Soul. Strong states that Shelley was influenced by Plato, whose teaching regarding the dual nature of Virtue was accepted by the Romantic poet. Virtue was neither a habit nor an effort, but a passion, an affirmation of the universal principle of Love. The writer disagrees with the theory that Shelley is merely the sequel to Godwin, or of other writers of the day. Although Shelley in "Prometheus" owes something to Godwin's praise of sincerity, its general setting is un-Godwinian.¹

¹ Gingerich comments thus on Strong's studies: "Had Mr. Strong stuck to his text (one mind, one power, one all-pervasive spirit, that is after all the cardinal principle of Shelley's philosophy and faith) he would have avoided the pit-falls of over-ingenuity in which he speaks of the speculation of Shelley with the speculations not only of Plato, but also of Aristotle, Spinoza, and Kant. Presumably these are the philosophies chiefly worthy to be compared with Shelley. . . . It is really refreshing to go back to Leslie Stephen and Mathew Arnold on Shelley after reading the Dithyrambic expositions of Shelley's faith by Miss Winstanley and Mr. Strong." Gingerich, op.cit., p. 217.

Carl Grabo in his book, The Magic Plant, attempts to trace Shelley's ideas as found in his prose fragments and in his poetry. He mentions the intelligible order of Shelley's intellectual development, which can be traced step by step. His "Address to the Irish People" is the first of his works of much importance to his mental history. Although the poet was influenced at this time by the works of Godwin, there is in the "Address" a warmth and a passion that Godwin never knew. "Queen Mab" displays the promise of Shelley's later poetry. Shelley's philosophy was continually evolving.¹ The Platonism evident in a few passages of "Queen Mab" was destined to become the solvent which blend these seeming recalcitrant materials to a unity. The years from 1814 to 1816 mark Shelley's development from youthful visionary reformer to a philosopher. It is difficult to determine the exact extent of Shelley's indebtedness to Plato. In "Prometheus," Shelley's liberation from the materialism that had hampered his first philosophic gropings is complete. He

¹ Marie Bald speaks of Shelley as a man who grew. As a man, a thinker, and an artist he made stupendous journeys. He never stopped growing until the day of his death. His mind repeated itself in spirals, not in circles. With the deepening of emotion come subtleties of contrast. The conceptions have become wider and more significant. The poet's advancing individuality was the basis of his advancing art. "Shelley's Mental Progress, Essays and Studies of the English Association, XIII, 1928.

becomes to a considerable degree a mystic, and attempts to reconcile science and philosophy on a metaphysical basis.

In his doctoral dissertation, Alexander Patterson Cappon traces the scope of Shelley's philosophic thinking. He agrees that in his maturity the poet has gone a long distance from his youthful theories. Cappon says:

Shelley gives expression to feelings induced in him by experience in his inward and outward life -- a life of philosophic reading and a life of action. He ardently seeks to embrace earth as well as heaven and brings to his work some anticipation of the best of modern thinking with which he tries to combine some of the subtlest idealistic reflection of the past.¹

Floyd Stovall gives a careful account of Shelley's development as a thinker, a poet, and a responsible member of society, from the attitude of revolt, through conflict and suffering, to the attitude of compromise in his relations with the world and with his own soul. Stovall presents Shelley the rebel who developed into the enthusiastic reformer, revolting against authority and convention, probably as a result of his study of Godwin. This reformer was bursting with enthusiasm and self-expression. He early repudiated institutions, especially those of religion, parental authority, and law and custom. In the Eton days, the reformer became a devotee of reason; later there was a struggle between reason

¹ Cappon, op. cit., p. 141.

and feeling. This passion for reform inspired the early years of Shelley's career. The critic points out that Shelley's two greatest mistakes consisted in his belief in the natural goodness of man, who has only to be relieved of the laws of religion, government and custom to be made perfect; and the attempt to prove these ideas by refusing to obey these laws and trying to persuade others to do so.

The next step in Shelley's career, as brought out by Stovall, is the role of Combatant. Shelley at this time became a broader and saner individual and began to have more respect for the religious views of others. Stovall points out the remarkable growth between May, 1816, and February, 1818. Shelley began to leave the views of Godwin for those of Plato.

Shelley's early prejudices and opinions were revived by the suicides of Fanny and Harriet and the attempt of Shelley to secure Harriet's children, maintains Stovall. The cloud of sadness over his spirit was reflected in his poetry. Shelley the combatant became Shelley the sufferer. During the last four years of his life, he sought to avoid the encounter rather than to make an attempt to remedy the ills of the world. At the close of his brief career, however, he had a steadier and more comprehensive view of life. His mind had grown and his character developed. At the end of his life he seemed to be reaching another stage in his development.

Benjamin Kurtz finds growth in Shelley's attitude toward death. Shelley shows his interest in death by the fact that out of fifty-eight compositions written before "Queen Mab," only four poems and three fragments fail to mention death. Shelley's attitude toward death changed from the terror formed by his youthful imagination to a suffering inflicted by an oppressor. Next, it became an escape for the oppressed, and finally, death became something over which love triumphs. Shelley, who did not attempt to solve the mystery of death but to conquer his own disgust for it, gradually was able to put the beauty of life above the ugliness of death.

Kurtz also traces other changes that appear to have occurred in Shelley's philosophy. He finds the poet going from his first child-like beliefs to intense idealism. Kurtz offers as proof the following facts: Shelley's essay on "A Future State" contains ten chief arguments against survival of any sort; in a "Refutation of Deism" the Christian doctrine is ridiculed; in "On Life," Shelley takes his stand with idealists; and in his "Essay on Christianity," Christ's traditional teachings concerning the future state is rationalized. "Prometheus Unbound" is a great poem of self culture.

Mrs. Campbell also mentions the poet's changing philosophy. She considers the early theories and arguments merely

the foam of Shelley's mind. The poet, she avers, had more in common with Plato than with the other philosophers. By 1814 Shelley began to build a philosophy both mystical and practical.

There is thus traced by various modern scholars the growth of Shelley's philosophy from the first blind gropings of doubt and uncertainty to the calm assurance of an effectual thinker.

How effectual are these ideas of Shelley's? Surely the careful studies made by many of our modern critics prove that men have faith in at least Shelley's maturing thoughts. Bennet Weaver classifies Shelley as an effectual Christian teacher who was influenced by reality. In this relation, Ernest Bernbaum says:

If the world is never to be a better abiding-place for the soul of man than it has been, the condemners of Shelley will stand approved. But that verdict only the distant future has a right to pronounce confidently. For the time being Shelley is not ineffectual, since he keeps hope and determination alive in the hearts of those reformers who believe that by far the greater part of man's past follies and vices are avoidable, and who yearn to see society reorganize itself, without compulsion or bloodshed, in such a way that each individual might enjoy equal opportunity of access to enlightenment, beauty, and happiness.¹

Carl Grabo points out that Shelley the scientist and the philosopher made a rare philosophy. Floyd Stovall saw real substance in Shelley's later views and felt that had the poet lived he might have attained still greater fame.

¹ Bernbaum, op. cit., pp.381-82.

John Murry shows us Shelley's insight into fundamentals which are too easily forgotten -- an insight that led him to the essentials of true political wisdom. Had Shelley lived, he might have been a great political leader, even as he may still be a great fount of true political inspiration. In the realm of politics, Shelley's appeal to the natural goodness of man has lost nothing of its power with the lapse of time. De Gruyter points out that with Dostoievsky, Shelley has given us brilliant and lasting contributions toward our own problems of solving the future -- they both deserve an important place as benefactors and heroes of the race. In discussing "Laon and Cythna" and "Prometheus Unbound," Peck says:

... And yet though considered as poetry neither of these poems is likely to pass into the stored memories of the million as easily as

Music when soft voices die

or any other of a dozen unforgettable lyrics from his pen, the passion for reform which would not let Shelley rest still indubitably stirs the hearts of men, and that passion, however brokenly it found expression in his verse, and that vision of the poet which caused him to realize not only the necessity of certain immediate reforms in politics, society, and government, but also the inevitableness of other reforms yet unaccomplished which yet must come have endeared him as none of these same priceless lyrics have to the hearts of men suffering under the ships and scorn of time and all the manifold injustices of our commercial civilization. For this reason, it seems to me that all the tears which editors and biographers have shed over Shelley's obstinate and self-willed perversion from the path of 'pure poetry' have been shed uselessly and without regard for the real basis of Shelley's importance to our literature.¹

Others have added their voice to this praise!

¹ Walter Peck, Shelley: His Life and Work (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927), pp. 116-117. Vol. 11)

From the many extensive and careful studies of Shelley's ideas, one may draw the following conclusions: Shelley the philosopher is today taking his place beside Shelley the poet; the old idea of Shelley as a spreader of sedition has disappeared, and in its stead one finds Shelley the poet of brotherly love and Christian concepts; the early twentieth century's interest in Shelley's political views continues to hold the interest of the modern critic; had the poet lived, he might have gone still further as a prophet and a great thinker; as it is, the modern world has much to learn from his philosophy.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF SHELLEY'S ART

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In the preceding chapters I have attempted to show that Shelley's ideas have become increasingly important to the world of today. There remains for our consideration the modern conception of Shelley the artist. In connection with the discussion of the artistic angle of Shelley's poetry, we shall keep in mind the following questions: Which of Shelley's poems are judged best and why? Wherein do we find his strength and his weaknesses?

In addition to the careful analyses found in the books of Peck, Solve, Strong, and Grabo, important lengthy studies of Shelley's verse have been made by A.C. Bradley,¹ H.L. Hoffman,² and Louise Propst.³ Interesting essays dealing with Shelley's ability as an artist have been contributed by R.C. Trevelyan,⁴

¹ A. C. Bradley, A Miscellaney (London: The MacMillan Company, 1929)

² H. L. Hoffman, An Odyssey of the Soul: Shelley's Alastor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933)

³ Louise Propst, "An Analytical Study of Shelley's Versification," Humanistic Studies, V (no. 3, Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1932)

⁴ R. C. Trevelyan, "The Poetry of Ecstasy," The New Statesman, XIX (July, 1922), 357-58.

Arthur Keith,¹ Stephen S. Brown,² N. I. White,³ and George R. Elliott.⁴

Mrs. Campbell calls attention to the fact that "Prometheus Unbound" contains some of the strongest and finest blank verse written since Shakespeare. It contains some impressive, though rather peculiar, character drawing, and some magnificent dramatic touches. The figures of this poem are not, maintains Mrs. Campbell, ineffectual angels. Prometheus is one of the most convincing strong characters Shelley has created. This work is filled with "audacious idealism and imaginative daring," in spite of the fact that it suffers from excess of light and even of philosophical truth. Bernbaum also calls "Prometheus" Shelley's greatest work, and N. I. White emphasizes its importance. Peck speaks of the "Cenci" as a great closet drama--a great achievement. He calls the "Ode to the West Wind" one of the most exalted poems in any

¹ Arthur Keith, "The Imagery of Shelley," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXIII (January--April, 1924), 61-72, 166-76.

² Stephen S. Brown, "The Imagery of Shelley," The Catholic World, CXXXV (April, 1932), 46-51.

³ N. I. White, "Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, or Every Man His Own Allegorist," P.M.L.A., XL (March, 1925), 172-84.

⁴ George R. Elliott, "How Poetic Is Shelley's Poetry?" P.M.L.A., XXXVIII (June, 1922), 311-23.

literature, and he mentions the popularity of the "Cloud," and the perfection of verse technique to be found in "Adonais." R. C. Trevelyan sees much dross in "Prometheus," great poetical design in "Adonais" and "Epipsychidian," and great skill in "Ode to the West Wind" and "The Triumph of Life." Grabo selects "Julian and Maddalo" and "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" as poems containing an ease and naturalism combined with felicity of phrase and flexibility of meter that marks them of being anticipatory of much of the best of modern verse. The critic points out that Shelley's artistic maturity is reached in "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills" that contain exactness of observation, felicity of word and of emotional responsiveness, rhythm, and depth of reflection. J. de Gruyter reminds us of the music in "Prometheus," and the greatness of "Hellas" and "Epipsychidian." Ullman speaks of "The Revolt of Islam" as the poem that contains Shelley's philosophy of life and vision of the future, as it is with "Paradise Lost," the most grandly conceived and executed narrative poem in the English language. Ullman also points out the beauty to be found in the "Cenci," and splendid poetry and dramatic action. According to Ullman, "Prometheus," "Adonais," "To the Skylark," and "To the West Wind" are filled with the driving power of Shelley's "cause." Mrs. Campbell also points out the great art of "Ode to the West

Wind," the perfect harmony of "Ode to the Skylark," the inspiration of "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," and the importance of "Adonais," "Epipsychidian," and "Hellas." Arthur Keith says that Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," the "Skylark," "The Cloud," "Liberty," and "Adonais" are unexcelled in any language.

Some of Shelley's most enthusiastic admirers admit that there are limitations to his art. Mrs. Campbell mentions three great poetical faults that the poet could at times commit: a coldness of intellect; an occasional dullness of ear; and a numbness of feeling in which a certain intellectual tiredness would cause rambling descriptive passages in the longer poems and irregularity of verse form. She speaks of Shelley's passion for abominable jerky see-saw meters. She sees these weaknesses of Shelley's verse as a reflection of certain weaknesses of the character of the poet. Just as the poet could work himself into a frenzy by a ghost story or a midnight conversation, so could he work up to a frenzy a poem concerning some passing emotional excitement--a poem resulting in chilly sentimentality, long winded descriptions, or lack of harmony.

George R. Elliott, who declares that "Adonais" is thoroughly representative of Shelley, admits the fascinating treatment of an old human subject. The mixed emotions of the poem, however, cause a restlessness that fails of elevation.

Elliott speaks of the false harmonies of Shelley and the frustration for the reader. Shelley's verse, which is best when expressing lonely emotion, could rarely assume poetic shape.

A. C. Bradley points out that Shelley's attitude of being extreme in his sympathies and his antipathies tended to abstraction almost as if it had a single quality. He agrees with Elliott as to Shelley's failure to realize that evil is not here for nothing and that the greatness of the mind is seen in its power to win good out of evil. Bradley also mentions Shelley's tendency to shrink from differences. This tendency is probably responsible for the feeling of many readers that Shelley's poetry is "thin" or "unsubstantial."

John Drinkwater¹ maintains that much of Shelley's earlier work contains looseness of construction, vagueness of outline, and uncertainty of intellectual purpose, combined with extraordinary patches of verbal insensitiveness. Suffusing the whole, however, is the peculiar Shelleyan flush of beauty. Shelley's art is more one of color than of form. Shelley did have sense of form, but he lacked the austere architecture that is the chief poetic glory of Milton and Keats and Wordsworth. Shelley was not so exact in the details of his work. He has frequent heavy-handed use of words,

¹ John Drinkwater, The Muse in Council (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925)

and is given to lapses into downright bad writing. He was conscious, though of his purpose as a poet with a mission.¹

Although some of the scholars of today admit Shelley's defects as a craftsman, many come to his aid with lavish praise. Shelley's fame as an artist falls into three classifications: his ability as a writer of lyrical verse; his powerful imagery; and his mastery of words and of verse technique.

In her analytical study of Shelley's versification, Louise Propst pays tribute to Shelley's lyrics. Among them, to be sure, are to be found deviations from the norm, but only a few that are perceptibly inharmonious in their regularity. These lyrics illustrate a reciprocal use of uniformity and variety--a blending of tradition and innovation.

A. C. Bradley also praises Shelley's ability as a singer, which Bradley declares is a good deal wider than the ability of Wordsworth. The compass of Shelley's voice is not unlimited, and he is not equally master of rhythms and meters. Keats surpasses him in a full-toned slow moving rhythm, and Milton, Keats, and Wordsworth do in feeling for the movement of a sonnet, but it is an error to attempt in general to put either of these three poets beside Shelley as a lyric poet. Bradley asserts that had not lyrical poetry in Shakespeare's

¹ Ibid., pp. 146-47.

day been much more restricted in subject matter than that of Shelley's day, no doubt Shakespeare would have been our greatest lyricist; but, as it is, Shelley deserves that title.

Mrs. Campbell offers the lyrics of the latter half of 1814 and the beginning of 1815 as proof that Shelley was a poet. Shelley's art, which was rapid, but not reckless, aimed at that true harmony of manner and matter which alone is style. According to Mrs. Campbell, Keats was more thoroughly an artist than Shelley, but Shelley could compose a more finished, rounded lyric. "He had indeed 'an inner and an outer music,' and the whole effect of his metre and the very sound and sense of language can be changed by a change in his mood. Though it cannot be too clearly understood that both metre and mood are in the control of his art."¹

R. C. Trevelyan sees Shelley as a lyrical poet by nature. The same qualities, he maintains, that gave to his shorter and more perfect poems their greatness are freely developed in "Prometheus," "Adonais," and "Epipsychidion," lyrics of enormous dimensions. Shelley could conceive and execute a long poem with a substantial lyrical energy almost equal to that which inspired his shorter poems. Of all the English poets, there is none with swifter natural pace or longer breath than Shelley's. In "Epipsychidion," perhaps the

¹ Campbell, op. cit., p. 242.

most beautiful of Shelley's poems, the theme is produced in beautiful form. Trevelyan points out that in the production of the poetry of ecstasy which requires harmony and a sort of madness, Shelley had few rivals and no superiors.

According to Peck, such poems as "Laon and Cythna" and "Prometheus Unbound" are not likely to pass into the stored memories of many readers as easily as Shelley's unforgettable lyrics.¹

J.de Gruyter speaks of Shelley's lyrics that have a miraculous precision of statement. He compares Shelley's flights with the wide sweep of an eagle rather than the passionate note of a nightingale.

Gingerich declares that the intense lyric quality of Shelley's work saves it to poetry, and Harold Hoffman mentions the lambent quality of Shelley's lyricism that has helped to make Shelley among the greatest of "poet's poets."

J. W. Beach says that Shelley's lyrics have been praised too much by indiscreet mediocrity. Few English poets have been more widely submissive to the inner movement of feeling and fancy. Few have listened more reverently for the special strain of music vouchsafed to their ear alone.²

Carl Grabo and James Ullman classify Shelley as more

¹ See page 97 of this thesis.

² J. W. Beach, "Latter-Day Critics of Shelley," Yale Review, XL (July, 1922), p. 721.

than a lyric poet. Grabo calls him a thinker who is able to express his subtle philosophy in verse. Shelley's great skill as a lyric poet, however, causes his skill as a philosopher to suffer. He reaches his poetic heights when he gives expression to ideas. Ullman reminds us that in Shelley, song and thought were one. He brought to poetry the mind of a philosopher and to philosophy the spirit of a poet. The devotion to a cause did not stifle the pure poetry in Shelley.

Another phase of Shelley's mastery of verse is his powerful imagery. Strong,¹ who has made a thorough study of Shelley's images, finds in Shelley's poetry a deliberate use of abstractions and images, and a recurrence of certain definite ideas and images and even of certain significant words and phrases. The symbol of the Veil, used quite often in Shelley's youth, is often used to express that which conceals trust and beauty from man. In "Prometheus" the Veil is regarded as a symbol of life. It was a frequent thought of Shelley that dreams, through kinship with Death the Revealer, offer man a fuller vision of reality than life can supply. Human thought is regarded as concealing the eternal verities. In the "Ode to Liberty" and "Epipsychidion," Shelley applies the Veil to art. Another symbol of Shelley, points out Strong, is that which shows him as a transvaluer of the customary ethical value. Still another type is the

¹ Archibald Strong, Three Studies in Shelley (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921)

use of constantly recurring images to express evil: poison is used in a physical sense and a spiritual sense; the scorpion is used to represent an evil force. The Boat and the Stream give us another symbol. The stream in "Alastor" is the stream of life and of the poet's own life. The stream of thought flows through the individual mind. The boat stands for the human soul received by the stream and swept along toward its spiritual consummation. In "The Revolt of Islam" this goal is love; in "Alastor" the goal is death. Another image is the moon -- a planet of "magic and calm and hope."

Stephen J. Brown in an essay on this subject, agrees that the study of Shelley's imagery is one of the approaches to the appreciation of various aspects of Shelley's genius. Brown mentions the influence of every object of sensation that touched Shelley's sensitive soul, but he declares that Shelley was not moved so much by these things as by what he wrought out of them or the ideas they symbolized. Brown places Shelley next to Shakespeare in wealth and beauty of imagery. He sees in the imagery of Shelley, a reflection of Shelley himself, an idealist and a dreamer, a poet of exquisite sensibility, and an enchanted child.

Arthur Keith in another essay reminds us of the artistic worth in Shelley's imagery, which reflects the

beautiful in a manner unsurpassed in literature. To Shelley, the image was supreme. So intense did the poet grow in contemplation of his image that it ceased to be an image for him but became the reality. Shelley's imagery fires the dullest mind. Keith passes through several categories of Shelley's images to portray the nature of the poet's genius. He points out the images from animal life, plant life, the Stream, the Sea, and the shadows. He speaks of Shelley's images of cloud, vapor, mists, and music, and those taken from thoughts, dreams, and emotions.¹

Closely related to this quality of Shelley is Alfred Noyes's conception of Shelley as the poet of light. According to Noyes, some of the most representative criticisms of Shelley's poetry have used the term "radiance" with no attempt to discover the exact reason for this; nearly every critic suggests that this "radiant poetry" had something of the disembodied spirit about it. Too many critics, points out Noyes, impute their own mistakes to others. In speaking

¹ B. I. Evans points out that Shelley had an adequate range of imagery, but that certain images--the sphere, the star, the boat, the lake, and the autumn leaves, remain in persistent images, threading themselves through the poems. The power of the permanent image in Shelley cannot be established with greater strength than in "Prometheus Unbound." In these images Shelley saw much of life. "The Persistent Image in Shelley," The Nineteenth Century, XCI (May, 1922), 791-97.

of Shelley's poetry as "like the writing of a ghost, uttering infinite wail into the night, unable to help itself or any one else, "Carlyle, says Noyes, imputes his own mistakes to Shelley.¹ Mathew Arnold also in his famous lines concerning the "beautiful and ineffectual angel," is imputing more than a little of his own "hovering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born."²

Most of the adverse criticism of Shelley, points out Noyes, seems to take it for granted that the light around which his poetry plays is a vain allusion. Browning, however, in his phrase "Sun-treader" reveals the poet, in his greatest work, with the universe under his feet. Shelley was an artist, using effects of light for symbolical and spiritual purposes. He is the supreme poet of light. There is hardly a page in Shelley that does not deal directly with the phenomena of light. Noyes points out that one great stanza at the end of "Prometheus" both answers with curious completeness the sentence of Arnold, and suggests in its last five lines the significance of the poetry of Shelley to our own day.³

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
 In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
 Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
 And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
 And folds over the world its healing wings.

¹ See Pratt's estimate of Carlyle's criticism of Shelley. Page 23 of this thesis.

² Alfred Noyes, Some Aspects of Modern Poetry (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1924), p. 19.

³ Ibid. p. 40.

These lines from "Adonais" have, according to Noyes, the passionate serenity of one who has attained to the light itself:

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move. . .¹

There remains the question of Shelley's mastery of words and verse structure.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and A. C. Bradley assert that Shelley had a mastery over words.

Melvin Solve points out Shelley's own defense of this phase of his poetry. Shelley's purpose was to produce "something wholly new, and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful." Most critics, declares Solve, agree that Shelley succeeded in this aim. Shelley has been criticised for his imperfect metre, lapses in grammar, and bad rhymes. The poet maintained that the grammatical forms as to moods of time and difference of person are of no value in the highest poetry. Color, form, religious and civil habits of action, as well as language, are all, according to Shelley, instruments and materials of poetry. Shelley did not acknowledge any "system" as to the vocabulary of his own poems; he felt that a poet should make his own medium and not follow the great poets of the past. Solve points out that what Shelley lost in technical skill, he gained in freshness and spontaneity.

¹ Loc., cit.

Mrs. Campbell mentions Shelley's use of words as one of the evidences of his genius. He had a poetic style nobly descended from the great traditions; his themes were all his own. His poems should be studied often and carefully. These poems are not sensations for the moment and cannot be measured by the judgment of a mere century. Shelley, Wordsworth, and Keats, according to Mrs. Campbell, embody the "real Romantic movement."

Grabo mentions the enlargement of Shelley's craftsmanship.

Bernbaum also says that Shelley gave great care to the choice of his verse forms, that he was the master of a nobly eloquent prose, and that he commanded many meters and forms in verse. In addition to this variety of verse forms, always used with appropriateness and potency, Shelley showed skill in choosing metaphors.

Miss Propst points out that Shelley's poetry impresses one with its constant variation. Attention to the particulars of his versification, however, reveals a good deal of uniformity. Throughout the whole group of his shorter lyrics, double time as set over triple, predominates, just as does rising rhythm over falling. The author points out the subtleties of structure that arise from the modulation of metrical feet and the consequent variations of lines from different arrange-

ments in the stanza of the number of lines, length of lines, and rhyme scheme; and from the setting up of new rhythms, either by the shifting of lines from rising to falling, or by the equal inter-weaving of double and triple time. Miss Propst also discusses Shelley's range in technique and harmony in variety, including rhythmical pauses, run-on lines, and phrasal units -- consonance, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition, and refrain.

These rather meager studies of Shelley's art are in contrast to the numerous, lengthy contributions in regard to Shelley's philosophy. This seems to indicate that modern students are no longer greatly concerned with the exactness of Shelley's style. Several other points are clear: Many of the recent critics agree that as a craftsman Shelley has his faults, which are evident in occasional shadowy abstractions and diffusion of ideas, and at times careless construction of his verse; Shelley, however, in addition to his ability to produce effectual philosophy, possesses great genius as a lyrical poet, skill in the use of imagery, and mastery of a certain ethereal beauty. Percy Shelley takes his place as one of the greatest poets in the English language.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

I shall summarize the results of this study of the development of the reputation of Percy Bysshe Shelley:

(1) During Shelley's lifetime, opinion regarding him was divided: he was championed by a few; he was hated, scorned, and feared by many, with a hatred and a scorn that remained for some time after his death.

(2) By the middle of the nineteenth century, with the publication of memoirs of the poet and additional publication of his works, Shelley's fame has begun to rise. Still, however, the Victorian critic is often prone to allow facts in Shelley's biography to hinder and even overshadow his status as a poet. The "poor Shelley" attitudes of this period, and the "eternal child" or "ineffectual angel" verdict, needless to say, did little to strengthen the position of Shelley.

(3) Toward the end of the nineteenth century, one finds foreshadows of a new Shelley-- a philosopher, a prophet, and a thinker. Even in this new conception of Shelley, however, the idea of the poet dominated by such writers as William Godwin is slow to fade.

(4) It remains for the "latter-day" critics to come boldly forth and declare Shelley not necessarily a complete follower of any philosopher, but a man of independent and

original thinking, a man who in his unique way has something more to offer than just an echo of some other writer. It remains for these recent critics to place more fully before us Shelley's contribution made as a Christian teacher, a scientist, and a champion of democracy.

(5) The modern version of Shelley the man ranges from a delightful fairy-like creature to the practical business man, deep thinker, and prolific reader. This picture makes us see a human being, not an ineffectual angel.

(6) Shelley is today generally accepted as a successful artist.

The complexity of all human natures certainly causes many opinions regarding Shelley, but most of us today exclaim with an ardent admirer of his: "Whether in approbation or disapprobation, in admiration or in condemnation, Percy Shelley is worth a glance. For we shall not look upon his like again."¹

¹ James Ramsey Ullman, Mad Shelley (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1930), p. 120.

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Since Mr. Pratt has an almost complete bibliography of Shelley criticism in England from 1810 to 1890, and the Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature covers the period since 1921, it seemed pointless to repeat all this. My bibliography, therefore, is restricted to: (1) General Works; (2) A selection of the outstanding items for the period from 1890 to 1921; (3) An analytical bibliography of major items since 1921, to supplement the analyses made in the body of the thesis.

GENERAL WORKS

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Quaritch, 1892.

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Slicer, Thomas R., Percy Bysshe Shelley. New York:

Privately printed, 1903.

Yeats, William Butler, Ideas of Good and Evil. London:

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Brooke, Stopford A., Studies in Poetry. New York: Putnam,

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Bates, Ernest Sutherland, A Study of Shelley's Drama The

Cenci. New York: The Columbia University Press, 1908.

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Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1909. (1923 copy used)

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John Shawcross) London: H. Frowde, 1909.

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New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1909.

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Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910.

MacDonald, Daniel, The Radicalism of Shelley and Its Sources.
Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America.
(Thesis, Phd.), 1912.

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York: Henry Holt and Co., London: Williams and
Norgate, 1913.

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porary Opinion. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons;
London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1913. (1926
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BOOKS AND ARTICLES

1921

Strong, Archibald T., Three Studies in Shelley and an Essay on Nature in Wordsworth and Meredith. London: Humphrey Milford, 1921.

The book contains a chapter each on "The Faith of Shelley," "Shelley's Symbolism," "The Sinister in Shelley." In addition, there is a chapter on "Nature in Wordsworth and Meredith."

The author attempts, through Shelley psychology, to shed further light upon Shelley's poetry. The growing transcendentalism of the poet's mind is traced. Shelley is presented as an antecedent of the symbolist movement.

These studies of Doctor Strong are valuable twentieth century attempts to penetrate Shelley's heart and mind.

Gosse, Edmund, "New Fragments of Shelley," Times Literary Supplement, February 24, 1921.

These fragments consist of Shelley's pocket edition of Euripides in three tiny volumes. On the blank pages at the end of Volume II, Shelley has scribbled some verses. There is found a first rough sketch for "Autumn--a Dirge" and another short poem. A third fragment is so faint that Gosse failed to decipher it.

Peck, Walter E., "New Shelley Manuscripts," The Living Age, CCCIX (April 30, 1921), 303-308.

Through the kindness of W. T. Spencer, Esq., of 27, New Oxford Street, the owner of the manuscripts, and of Sir John Shelley-Rolls, holder of the copyright, Mr. Peck transcribes a considerable body of unpublished Shelley manuscripts. These include a letter from Shelley to Hunt (November, 1819) partly published by Ingpen, but containing 225 words of new matter; Shelley's correction in the original draft of Mary's Two Act Drama of Proserpine (1820); a fragment of the draft of Mary's drama; and a letter from Shelley to Hunt (hitherto unpublished) probably written on June 24, 1822. Peck offers the correction as evidence of Shelley's power to bring magic out of the commonplace. The June 24 letter shows Shelley's generosity.

Deford, Miriam, "A Poet's Science," The Open Court, XXXV (Sept., 1921), 549-51.

The author traces Shelley's interest in science, from before his days at Eton. Deford sees science, philosophy, and humanitarianism as the three loves of Shelley's life.

White, Newman I., "Shelley's 'Swellfoot the Tyrant' in Relation to Contemporary Political Satire," P.M.L.A., XXXVI (Sept., 1921), 332-46.

The author compares Shelley's satire with pamphleteers of the times to show Shelley's influence on them. He also shows that Shelley borrowed from anonymous contemporaries for this satire and was interested in things of the world.

1922

Moore, Thomas Vernor, "Percy Bysshe Shelley," Psychological Monographs, XXXI, New York, 1922.

This analysis of Shelley is presented as a kind of schematic attempt to study a human being from the life and the writings of the individual. The author analyzes: Shelley's plan of life (in which there was both a drive and a protest); Shelley's complex; and Shelley's conflicts.

The poet is seen as projecting into his works his own personality and that of others with whom he was familiar, including his father. Shelley's craving for sympathy is seen to be developed to a pathological degree. A bi-sexual trend in the poet is mentioned, and special traits of character and intellectual endowments are pointed out.

Evans, B. I., "The Persistent Image in Shelley," The Nineteenth Century, XCI (May, 1922), 791-97.

The author traces certain images threading themselves through Shelley's poems, especially "Prometheus Unbound."

Fletcher, John Gould, "The Quality of Shelley," The Freeman, V (May 24, 1922), 258-60.

This is a defense of Shelley's effectuality. The author traces the influence of Plato, Spinoza, and the great Indian sages of antiquity upon the thought of Shelley.

Elliott, George R., "How Poetic is Shelley's Poetry?", P.M.L.A., XXXVII (June, 1922), 311-23.

This is a discussion of Shelley's art in which the captivating and the repellant qualities of Shelley's work are examined. Although Shelley as a poet is best when expressing lonely joy, this emotion is not very poetic.

Beach, J.W., "Latter-Day Critics of Shelley," Yale Review, XL (July, 1922), 718-31.

This is a defense of Shelley as an artist. Many latter-day critics make the mistake of judging all of Shelley's poems by the same standards. Shelley's lyrical poems are stressed.

Lovett, R.M., "The Ethical Paradox in Shelley." The New Republic, XXXI (July 19, 1922), 204-204.

The author traces the strange contradictions to be found in Shelley's life and personality. He judges Shelley as one in whom conduct was divorced from character.

Kooistra, J., "The Pan-erotic Element in Shelley," English Studies, IV (July, 1922), 171-76.

There is traced in Shelley the union of the moral idealist and the artist. Shelley is called a true poet -- one who let in Truth, Beauty, and Love.

Thomas, Gilbert, "The Divine Poet," Fortnightly Review, DCLXVII (July, 1922), 68-78.

This is a defense of Shelley's poetry and his essential goodness. The author traces the growth in the art of Shelley, showing the poet's changing interests from Godwin to Plato. Shelley is presented as belonging to the future rather than to the past.

Trevelyan, R. C., "The Poetry of Ecstasy," The New Statesman, XIX (July, 1922), 357-58.

The author points out Shelley's deficiencies as a poet as well as his skill as a "poet of ecstasy" in whose work is to be found "harmonious madness."

Hewlett, Maurice, "Shelley's Swan Song," The Times, July 6, 1922; Living Age, CCCXIV (Aug., 12, 1922), 419-21.

The writer suggests that toward the end of life the will to live was not in Shelley; and that, however, he was at the opening of a new emotional experience. The poem "The Triumph of Life" is Shelley's Swan song-- "tragic reading dusty with death."

De Gruyter, J., "Shelley and Dostoievsky," English Studies, IV (Shelley Cen. Number, July, 1922), 129-51.

This presents a contrast between Shelley the idealist, and Dostoievsky, the realist. The two writers were so different and yet so alike in being benefactors of the human race, burning with the flame of missionary zeal.

1923

Benham, R. Allen, "Shelley's Prometheus Unbound," Personalist, IV (April, 1923), 110-20.

The object of the paper is to show that Shelley's pantheism has determined some matters in the technique of the play; to show the importance of certain characters; to point out that the character of Demogorgon is the fruit of Shelley's study of Spinoza; to point out that the theme is closely related to the teachings of Rousseau.

Peck, W. E., "On the Origin of the Shelley Society," Modern Language Notes, XXXVIII (March, 1923), 312-14. (Also in May, 1924)

Peck challenges several statements of Professor White in regard to the origin of the Shelley Society. The various aims of the Society are listed.

Maurois, Andre, Ariel ou La Vie de Shelley, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1923. (text in French)

This complete life of Shelley is a delightfully written document blending facts into an unusual style, a plain narrative form without visible documentation. There are no footnotes or references to any writer on Shelley. The emphasis is upon Shelley's life rather than his works.

Although Shelley is presented as a chivalrous person, a great poet, and a charming gentleman, the reader is conscious of a person not unlike Mathew Arnold's "ineffectual angel."

1924

D'Arcy, Ella, translator, Ariel: the Life of Shelley (by Andre Maurois), New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1924.

This is a splendid translation of the Life of Shelley.

Campbell, Mrs. Olwen Ward, Shelley and the Unromantics. London: Methuen; New York: Scribner, 1924.

The book contains chapters on: Shelley's Readers; Shelley's Biographers and Friends (Trelawny, Leigh Hunt, Byron, Medwin, Peacock, Hogg, Godwin, and Mary); Shelley's Life (The First Twenty-two Years: 1792-1814 and The Last Eight Years: 1814-1822); "Alastor"; "Prometheus Unbound"; Shelley's Lyrics; Some Suggestions on the Romantic Revival and Its Effects; Shelley's Philosophy of Life and Poetry. Index.

The author gives a careful sketch of the life of Shelley, together with vigorous expressions of straightforward opinions regarding his works. Mrs. Campbell quotes freely from Shelley's letters. She stresses the growing personality of the poet.

This biography, written in the new style, is an interesting and convincing piece of work. It is a valuable addition to the recent Shelley biographies.

Wise, Thomas B., A Shelley Library: A Catalogue of Printed Books, Manuscripts, and Autographed Letters by Percy Bysshe Shelley, Harriet Shelley, and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. London: Printed for private circulation only, 1924.

There is an introduction by Roger Ingpen. Part I contains facsimiles of letters written by Harriet Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, with evaluations by the author. Part II is devoted to copies of original manuscripts of Percy Bysshe Shelley, with notations made by the author. Part III contains accounts of the death of Shelley, verses on the death of Shelley, and important criticism through 1924. Index to Part III.

Mr. Wise had devoted many years to this splendid collection. He has assembled all the books and pamphlets written about Shelley and has collected a great deal of valuable manuscript evidence concerning the poet.

Keith, Arthur, "The Imagery of Shelley," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXIII (Jan., Apr., 1924), 61-72; 166-76.

Tracing the various images found in Shelley's poems, the author passes through several categories of Shelley's imagery to portray the nature of the poet's genius.

Hoffman, Harold, "An Angel in the City of Dreadful Night," Sewanee Review, XXXIII (July, 1924), 317-35.

The author points out the ideality, perception of beauty, and the lambent quality of Shelley's lyricism, which have helped to make him one of the greatest of poet's poets. Hoffman speaks of Shelley as a dreamer.

Nash, J.V., "Shelley -- After a Hundred Years," The Open Court, XXXVIII (Jan., 1924), 1-7.

This article hails Shelley as a herald of the modern world of thought, far in advance of his age. Nash compliments Francis Thompson's Essay on Shelley. Shelley's philosophy is seen as a spiritual one.

1925

Carpenter, Edward, and George Barnefield, The Psychology of the Poet Shelley. London: Allen and Unwin; New York: Dutton, 1925.

The book is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, Mr. Carpenter discusses the essay by Barnefield. Carpenter points out the marks of the feminine temperament in Shelley, and comes to the conclusion with Barnefield, that the poet's nature was intermediate between the masculine and the feminine, or double as having that two-fold outlook upon the world.

In the second chapter, Barnefield attempts, by the light of modern psychology, to explain the contradictions of Shelley's character. He stresses the bi-sexual quality of the poet's nature, and finds in many of Shelley's writings proof of this quality.

The authors see in Shelley's variability a key and explanation to his character. Both Barnefield and Carpenter point out the mystical faculties of the poet.

White, N.I., "Literature and the Law of Libel," Studies in Philology, XXII (Jan., 1925), 340-47.

The essay deals with the trials of Heterington, Southwell, Holyoake, and Moxon (June 23, 1841).

For some time the Moxon trial affected the text of Shelley's published writings. The trials show the efforts of the "Radicals" to protect themselves from discrimination under the law of libel and to widen the limits of free speech in England under law.

"The Beautiful Angel and His Biographers," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXIV (Jan. 1, 1925), 73-85.

White discusses Shelley's early biographers from Thomas Medwin through Mrs. Campbell's Shelley and the Unromantics. The author is especially complimentary to Maurois' Ariel and to Mrs. Campbell's biography. The complexity of Shelley's nature is pointed out.

Graham, Walter, "Shelley's Debt to Leigh Hunt and the Examiner," P.M.L.A., XL (1925), 881-92.

This is one of the earliest articles on the beginnings of Shelley appreciation.

White, N. I., "Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, or Every Man His own Allegorist," F.M.L.A., XL (March, 1925), 172-84.

This is an interesting interpretation of "Prometheus Unbound" in which the author maintains that in spite of the opinion of various critics, the poem was not meant as an allegory, does not look like an allegory, and does not act like an allegory.

Chew, Samuel C., "A Note on Peterloo," P.M.L.A., XL (June, 1925), 450.

This article brings out Shelley's interest in the Manchester massacre, an interest that caused him to write the "Mask of Anarchy."

Walker, A. Stanley, "Peterloo, Shelley, and Reform," P.M.L.A., XL (March, 1925), 128-64.

The author brings out Shelley's interest in the Manchester massacre. Shelley is spoken of as a man born out of his time--a prophet.

1927

Peck, Walter Edwin, Shelley: His Life and Work. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927. 2 vols.

Volume I gives a complete account of Shelley's life and works from his birth through his sojourn at Bath and Marlow in 1816 and 1817. The second volume deals with Shelley's life and works from 1817 to his death in 1822.

There are copious footnotes, cross-references, and quotations from Shelley's letters, including the hitherto unpublished letters which the poet addressed to Count Taaffe. There is an analysis of Shelley's works from "The Wandering Jew" and "The Necessity of Atheism" through "The Triumph of Life." The appendices include Elizabeth Hitchener's letters to Shelley, the Shelleyan Formula in Fiction, and various sources for Shelley's early works. Complete index to Volume II.

This is a scholarly and faithful presentation of Shelley's life and works. The practical side of Shelley is brought out.

Solve, Melvin, Shelley: His Theory of Poetry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.

The author tries to show, in addition to the place of didacticism and the treatment of evil in Shelley's art, the poet's attitude toward nature, his consideration of the nature of poetry, his conception of Beauty, and his views on the basis and validity of criticism.

Solve traces the progress made in Shelley's art as the poet drew away from his early didactic point of view and entered into his mature view of poetry as the expression of the imagination. The author points out Shelley's mysticism. He presents Shelley as an optimist and an individualist who did not feel called upon to follow any great poet of the past.

This is a splendid contribution to Shelley's ideas.

Grabo, C. H., "Electricity the Spirit of the Earth in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound," Phil. Quarterly, VI (April, 1927), 133-50.

This is an article upon Shelley as a scientist. (See A Newton Among Poets, 1930)

_____, "Astronomical Allusions in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound," Phil. Quarterly, VI (Oct., 1927), 362-78.

This is another article on Shelley's scientific allusions. (See A Newton Among Poets, 1930)

Saintsbury, George, "The Very Young Shelley," The Nation and the Athenaeum, XL (April 2, 1927), 928.

This is a rather unusual tribute to the youthful freshness, imagination, and charm of Shelley's poetry.

1928

Bald, Marie, "Shelley's Mental Progress," Essays and Studies of the English Association, XIII, 1928.

The essay emphasizes the growth in Shelley's personality, philosophy, and art.

Shelley is presented as a man whose mind repeated itself in spirals, not in circles. Shelley's advancing individuality was the basis of his advancing art. The poet never stopped growing. He was a man, not a lost spirit.

1929

Bradley, A. C., A Miscellaney. London: The MacMillan Co., 1929.

In this series of essays are included: Shelley and Arnold's Critique of His Poetry; Odours and Flowers in the Poetry of Shelley; and Coleridge Echoes in Shelley's Poems.

Mr. Bradley deals with the problems of Shelley's mastery over words, his ability as a singer, Arnold's judgment of Shelley in respect to the expression of man's moral and spiritual nature, Shelley's defects, and the continuous progress in his works.

This is a splendid defense of Shelley as an artist.

Bates, Ernest Sutherland, Mad Shelley: A Study in the Origins of English Romanticism. Fred Newton Scott Anniversary Papers. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1929.

The study deals with Shelley's early attempts at writing, viewing them against the background of the age. The influence of the school of horror is traced in these early works of Shelley.

The early works of Shelley are classified as mad scramblings; however, the author sees the "Mad Shelley" of the Eton days develop into the atheist Shelley of Oxford, and then later into Shelley the philosopher.

Solve, Melvin T., "Shelley and the Novels of Brown," Fred Newton Scott Anniversary Papers. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.

The author compares the thoughts, readings, and works of Shelley and Brown, but declares that the positive borrowings from Brown are not numerous.

Marsh, G.L., "Early Reviews of Shelley," Modern Philology, XXVII (August, 1929), 73-95.

This is one of the earliest studies of contemporaneous Shelley criticism.

1930

Grabo, Carl, A Newton Among Poets: Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1930.

After a brief rehearsal of Shelley's youthful enthusiasm for science, and a recapitulation of the scientific allusions in "Queen Mab," the author devotes several chapters in sketching those aspects of the thought of Erasmus Darwin, Hershel, Newton, Davy, and Father Giambatista Beccaria which seem to bear most closely upon "Prometheus Unbound." Grabo also discusses scientific and astronomical allusions to be found in "Prometheus Unbound."

The book presents Shelley as an excellent scholar, a man well-read in many fields, and fundamentally intellectual rather than emotional. Grabo also points out Shelley's passing from a narrow materialistic and deterministic philosophy to one which seeks to reconcile Platonism with science. The author traces Shelley's interest in science as part of the main structure of the poet's mind.

Hotson, Leslie, Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet. Boston: Little, Brown, 1930.

The author points out that up to the present only one letter from Shelley to Harriet has been known to the world. To this, Hotson by a fortunate discovery adds nine more, written between July 14 and October 25, 1814, and one written on December 18, 1816, to Eliza Westbrook after Harriet's suicide.

Hotson offers these letters as additions to the available evidence that can lead to a clearer view of this turning point in Shelley's life. This presents a sympathetic view of Shelley.

Ullman, James Ramsey, Mad Shelley. Princeton: University Press, 1930. (Published doctoral thesis)

In this prize winning thesis, the author seeks to examine Shelley first, as a noumenon, an entity; and secondly, as a phenomenon in the stream of history. There is an analysis of Shelley's character, a discussion of his outstanding poems, and a brief comparison of Shelley's ideas with those of Plato.

The author calls Shelley the wildest individualist but at the same time the most perfect child of his age.

The poet was a thinker who outgrew all the thinkers who had contributed to his novitiate. He was spiritual and ever faithful to the "Cause." Shelley is presented as being "mad" in that he was different, unique, and ahead of his time. He was mad because he stood alone -- "A straight line in a world of easy curves and angles."

Stovall, Floyd, "Shelley's Doctrine of Love," P.M.L.A., XLV (March, 1930), 283-303.

The essay brings out the three-fold aspect of love as conceived by Shelley: the universal and pervasive influence everywhere felt as good; a seraphic being, the Supreme Spirit of Good; a daemon or intermediary spirit.

Acting upon the theory that the word "Love" sums up, not only Shelley's philosophy, but his theology and ethics as well, this essay proceeds to analyze this philosophy. In addition, the Christian qualities of Shelley are brought out.

1931

Stovall, Floyd, Desire and Restraint in Shelley. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1931.

The author discusses: "Shelley, the Enthusiast"; "Shelley, the Combatant"; and Shelley, the Sufferer," There are frequent references to individual poems and to "The Defense of Poetry," which is seen in general as a defense of Shelley's own poetry.

This is a consecutive account of Shelley's development as a thinker, a poet, and a responsible member of society. This development progressed from the attitude of revolt through conflict and suffering to the attitude of compromise in the poet's relations with his own soul. Stovall tries to portray Shelley, not as a dreamer and romantic poet of idealism, but as an earnest and perplexed citizen of the actual world.

This is an excellent contribution toward tracing the development of Shelley's mind and art.

1932

Weaver, Bennet, Toward the Understanding of Shelley. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1932.

The author presents in turn: the storehouses of Shelley's early inspiration; a brief sketch of Shelley's life; Shelley's Bible; Shelley and his comparison with the prophets; an objective study of special poetry;

Shelley's use of Old Testament materials; Shelley's consideration of the New Testament; and how the Biblical materials were transmitted into poetry. There is an extensive bibliography containing a list of first editions of Shelley's works with complete data, later editions, biography and criticisms, and miscellaneous works concerning Shelley. Index.

Mr. Weaver attempts to "usher a great poet into a new light." Shelley is presented as a close student of the Bible. The Christianity of the poet is defended. There is a thorough comparison of Shelley's ideas with those found in the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament.

Brown, S.J., "The Imagery of Shelley," The Catholic World, CXXXV (April, 1932), 46-51.

Brown places Shelley next to Shakespeare in wealth and beauty of imagery. He declares that Shelley's imagery is a reflection of "Shelley, the idealist, the dreamer, the poet of exquisite sensibility, and the 'enchanted child'."

Propst, Louise, "An Analytical Study of Shelley's Versification," Humanistic Studies, V (no. 3) Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1932.

The study gives an analysis of Shelley's versification, with emphasis upon the lyrics.

Miss Propst points out the subtleties in structure and the range in technique of Shelley's poetry. She mentions the flawless quality in Shelley's lyrics, in spite of a deviation from the norm among them.

1933

Hoffman, Harold Leroy, An Odyssey of the Soul: Shelley's Alastor. New York: Columbia University Press, 1933.

In this study of "Alastor," the author's purpose is: first, to demonstrate the consistency of the poem; and secondly, to consider the imagery of the poem. There are frequent comparisons with other authors and with possible sources of inspiration.

Kurtz, Benjamin, The Pursuit of Death. Oxford: University Press, 1933.

The chapters are devoted to Shelley's early pre-occupation with ghosts, his belief in necessity, the

changing attitude toward death from 1814 to 1817, "The Burden of Life and the Moral Victory," the attempt to put the beauty of love above the ugliness of death (poems of 1820-1821) and, finally, the mystical victory in which the poet conquers the distaste of death.

The author quotes freely from poems and draws comparisons from other poets. He deals at length with a discussion of many of Shelley's poems, tracing the growth of the poet's art, and attempting through an analysis of Shelley's interest in death, to discover his attitude toward life.

Clark, David Lee, "Shelley and Bacon," P.M.L.A., XLVIII (June, 1933), 527-46.

The writer shows the interest which the Philosopher Shelley had in Bacon, "the Morning Star of English Philosophy." Clark groups Shelley's notes found in his copy of Bacon (now in the Library of the University of Texas) into two groups: topical summaries; and the poet's own comments. He shows that the "spirit" of the early philosopher influenced Shelley.

Gregory, H., "A Defense of Poetry," The New Republic, LXXVI (October 11, 1933), 235-38.

This is a splendid defense of Shelley as a Christian in heart, a courageous man, and a forerunner of modern thought. The author admits some defects in Shelley's verse, including a lack of dramatic sense and occasional wordiness.

1935

Pratt, Willis W., Shelley Criticism in England, 1810-1890. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1935.

This study presents in chronological order an account of all criticism from 1810-1890 that had any great bearing upon Shelley's reputation. The final chapter is devoted to several twentieth century criticisms. There is an extensive bibliography. The study included many quotations from periodicals and various critical works.

In this careful analysis of Shelley criticism, the poet's growing fame is traced.

1936

Grabo, Carl, The Magic Plant: the Growth of Shelley's Thought. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936.

The book attempts to trace chronologically the development of Shelley's thought as found in his letters, his prose fragments, and his poetry. The events of Shelley's life are stressed only as they seem to have affected his thought. The intellectual and social influence upon the mind of the poet are brought out.

In this convincing and comprehensive study, Mr. Grabo presents a Shelley whose ideas are important as living thought in the world of today. This thinker and student is quite the opposite person from Mathew Arnold's "beautiful and ineffectual angel."

Lindsay, John R., Shelley's Life as Reflected in Alastor, The Revolt of Islam, and Rosalind and Helen. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1936.

After a biographical sketch of Shelley, the author devotes a chapter each to Shelley's use of his actual experiences in "Alastor," "The Revolt of Islam," and "Rosalind and Helen."

Clark, E.G., "Radical Poets: Old Style, New Style," The Catholic World, CXLIII (May, 1936), 178-81.

This is a championship of some of the new poets and a disapproving comment or two upon Shelley's life and his verse.

1937

Benet, Laura, The Boy Shelley. New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1937.

The book consists of twenty-six chapters concerning the youthful Shelley, from his early boyhood in 1801, through his school days at Eton. The story ends with the eighteen year old Shelley's matriculation at Oxford. There are no footnotes. A brief acknowledgment follows the story.

Shelley's associations and interests, including his love for science are mentioned. His juvenile works are spoken of and foreshadows of his later poems are given.

With a delightful lightness of touch, the author presents this narrative of the youthful Shelley.

1938

Cappon, Alexander Patterson, The Scope of Shelley's Philosophical Thinking. Part of doctoral dissertation. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

The book traces the growth of Shelley's thought from his youthful materialism to his more mature thinking, and brings out the duality present in Shelley's work: the sense of nothingness of existence plus ardent enthusiasms.

Shelley is credited with bringing to his work some anticipation of the best of modern thinking combined with some of the subtlest idealistic reflections of the past. The Shelley of this study is a worthwhile thinker--certainly not "an ineffectual angel."

White, N.I., The Unextinguished Hearth, Shelley and His Contemporary Critics. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1938.

The book contains a splendid introduction concerning Shelley and his contemporary critics. Here the author attempts to break down the tradition of Shelley as the victim of hatred and misunderstanding. Instead, Shelley's unpopularity from 1810-1822 is presented as the result of political and religious fears of the times.

Mr. White reprints practically every available obtainable contemporaneous review or article dealing with Shelley; he either reprints or lists every obtainable incidental contemporaneous mention that could be found during an intermittent search lasting several years. Chapters XV and XVI contain a chronological summary from 1810-1822 of articles concerning Shelley, including Shelley's own publications, and a summary by periodicals and other publications in which Shelley is noticed from 1810-1822 (including Shelley's own publications).

The volume furnishes a basis for sound conclusions as to what Shelley's contemporaries actually thought of him.