

SHELLEY'S USE OF LOVE AND RELATED CONCEPTS

by

Allan Burnam MacLeod

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1962

STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for an advanced degree at The University of Arizona and is deposited in The University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in their judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: Allan Bursary MacLeod

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This thesis has been approved on the date shown below:

Carl H. Ketcham
CARL H. KETCHAM
Assistant Professor of English

May 16, 1962
Date

ABSTRACT

The term love is central in Shelley's thought. This study preposes to analyze the various meanings which Shelley attached to this term and to show its interrelationships, as a method of re-examining with precision the nature of certain of his ideas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Dr. Carl H. Ketcham for his advice, encouragement, and patience throughout this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Page</u>
	INTRODUCTION	1
I	GOD -- "SPIRIT OF UNIVERSAL, IMPERISHABLE LOVE"	4
II	LOVE -- INCREASING RANGE OF SYMPATHIES. . .	30
III	LOVE -- HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, UNIVERSAL	47
IV	LOVE -- HARMONY	60
V	CONCLUSION.	88
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	93

INTRODUCTION

It is strange that scholars of the Romantic period have not written more concerning the various meanings Shelley attached to the word Love; for this term holds the key to the understanding of Shelley's ideas about life and death, about nature and the universe, and about man and God. There are, to be sure, numerous studies attempting to analyze Shelley's philosophy; and one usually finds a page, even a chapter, here and there devoted to this concept and its place in Shelley's thinking. But seldom do writers of these studies offer any more than the broadest of meanings, which will be entirely adequate for the casual reader who wants a surface knowledge of Shelley but not for the student who seeks more specific levels of import. What is the nature and depth of past criticisms discussing the significance of Love in Shelley's writings? Newman Ivey White, in a brief comment on Love, noted: "Shelleyan love was simply an intense longing for complete sympathy. The highest love between two human beings was their common perception, in each other, of the shadow of Intellectual Beauty and their common aspiration toward a more complete unity with Intellectual Beauty."¹ S.F. Gingerich, on the

¹Shelley, II (New York, 1947), 443-444.

other hand, explained:

Love is a word almost interchangeable with Wisdom, or Nature, or God, and though it has a human side, it is chiefly a cosmic force as impersonal and impalpable as Time, Nature, or any other of Shelley's abstractions, which exist and work in a necessitarian spirit almost exclusively 'beyond and above consciousness.'²

To H.S. Salt Love was ". . . the one supreme remedy for human suffering, the charm without which all else is unavailing and unprofitable."³ And James Ramsey Ullman felt:

It is imperative for us of a generation for whom love is an exclusive subcinctural emotion to remember that for Shelley it was not a rather elementary physiological reflex, but a highly spiritualized reflex of such intensity that it may be said to be the basic force of his whole nature. . . . It was love which bound the prophet and the poet in him into perfect unity and which motivated him in every word he ever wrote, every act he ever performed; it was the only standard of value by which he measured the topsyturvydom of the world, the lodestar that he followed in all of his wanderings of the spirit. For him it was the one invincible affirmation which man might pit against the uncounted, uncountable negations which beset his path.⁴

Such criticism is representative of studies which include brief analyses of the meaning of Love to Shelley. Although each makes interesting observations, there is still much

²"Shelley's Doctrine of Necessity Versus Christianity," PMLA, XXXIII (1918), 464-465.

³Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet and Pioneer (London, 1924), pp. 118-119.

⁴Mad Shelley (Princeton, 1930), pp. 98-99.

left unsaid.

Because there has been such limited study of the meanings which Shelley attached to this term, the purpose of this paper will be to analyze precisely the nature of Love, and, having determined the full import in each instance, to attempt a summary of its role in Shelley's thought.

With the aid of the Concordance to Shelley's works, I recorded in context each occurrence of the word Love and its derivatives. Then, after labeling under specific headings similar or identical uses of each word, and arranging the cards under each heading in chronological order, I summarized what study had been done on a particular word and proceeded to verify or to contradict it. As a final means to precision in meaning, each group of cards has been subdivided into two further categories, classified "subjective" and "objective" influences, these being determined by the activity specified in each word.

CHAPTER I

GOD -- "SPIRIT OF UNIVERSAL, IMPERISHABLE LOVE"

Throughout his short life Shelley was a fervently religious man. He was beginning to form set ideas about a universal spirit in the early days of his youth; and his thoughts about a God then, with some modification later, became a permanent part of his religious philosophy. In a letter of 12 January 1811 to his close friend and school companion Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Shelley identified his Deity with Love:

What necessity is there for continuing in existence? But Heaven! Eternity! Love! . . . I wish, ardently wish, to be profoundly convinced of the existence of a Deity, that so superior a spirit might derive some degree of happiness from my feeble exertions; for love is heaven and heaven is love. . . . Oh, that this Deity were the soul of the universe, the spirit of universal, imperishable love! Indeed, I believe it is.⁵

And in the Essay on Christianity (date uncertain) Shelley defined more precisely what he understood this universal spirit to mean:

There is a Power by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended, which visits with its breath our silent chords at will. . . . This Power is God. And those who have seen God, have, in the period of their purer and most perfect nature, been harmonized by

⁵The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen, I (London, 1909), 40, 41, 42 -- hereafter cited as Letters.

their own will to so exquisite [a] consentaneity of powers as to give forth divinest melody when the breath of universal being sweeps over their frame.⁶

It is important to remember that Shelley's conception of a supreme being was not, by any means, akin to the anthropomorphic God of Christianity. Instead, Shelley believed, as Floyd Stovall remarked, "in a moral force . . . which gives direction to the thought and action of the universe, and is immanent in them."⁷ A.T. Strong also commented: "One mind, one power, one all-pervading spirit, that is after all the cardinal principle of Shelley's philosophy and faith."⁸ And Ellsworth Barnard said that this Power, this God is Beauty and Love in its absolute essence.⁹ It is in order at this point to define the universal Spirit of Love in which Shelley so fervently believed, and Barnard's excellent summary statement about the ultimate reality for Shelley may be quoted: "Shelley assumes . . . that above and beyond the contradictions that are everywhere present in the manifest world, there stands

⁶David Lee Clark, ed. Shelley's Prose, or The Triumph of a Prophecy (Albuquerque, 1954), p. 202 — hereafter cited as Shelley's Prose.

⁷"Shelley's Doctrine of Love," PMLA, XLV (1930), 293.

⁸Three Studies in Shelley (London, 1921), p. 28.

⁹Shelley's Religion (Minneapolis, 1937), p. 79, n. 12.

a unifying principle, 'a supra-rational Absolute,' which the human mind cannot comprehend, but the existence of which man's whole nature demands that he assume."¹⁰ And Carl Grabo similarly concludes: "He--or It-- transcends being and we can say of It only that It is not non-existent. . . . The one is more than being. . . . No quality can be affirmed of it [Shelley himself said in the Essay on Christianity that "The Universal Being can only be described or defined by negatives which deny his subjection to the laws of all inferior existence."¹¹]. It is the Transcendent, the Infinite, the Unconditioned. It is also the Good and the Beautiful. It may be thought of, therefore, as perfect Love."¹² What is most important to remember about this "supra-rational Absolute" is that . . . no definite value can be ascribed [to it]: yet upon the assumption of its existence all values depend."¹³ "It is the eternal X which the human spirit always assumes when it is at a loss to balance its equations."¹⁴ In my various

¹⁰ p. 96.

¹¹ Shelley's Prose, p. 202.

¹² Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation (Chapel Hill, 1935), pp. 84-85.

¹³ Barnard, p. 94.

¹⁴ H.N. Brailsford, Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle (New York, 1913), p. 229.

references throughout this paper to Shelley's final power, these comments may serve as definitions. Let me now proceed, in the first section of this chapter, to examine passages from Shelley's poetry¹⁵ which illustrate the nature of the supreme Spirit of Love.

(1)

In his early works Shelley's power Necessity¹⁶ is sometimes closely parallel to his presentation of Love. In the following passage from Queen Mab (1812) we have a glimpse of the workings of Love as a vast, harmonious force in the system of the universe:

Heaven's ebon vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the moon's unclouded
 grandeur rolls,
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world.

(IV, 4-8)

Shelley describes Necessity as a "blindly working will" (Queen Mab, IX, 5). Floyd Stovall felt that this viewpoint

¹⁵Unless otherwise indicated, all poetry quotations will be taken from The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, (London, 1960).

¹⁶White, I, 293, has an excellent account of the nature of Necessity: ". . . a passionless, impartial force knowing no limits or decay. It extends throughout the whole universe and governs every minute action of every atom of the natural world, and every whim of thought. Nothing acts but as it must act and was predestined to act, without the variation of a hair, from the first instant of time."

explained the means by which Love becomes known:

To man's present foreshortened perception necessity, the law by which the principle of Love is made manifest to the understanding, appears impartial and blind; but to a more comprehensive intelligence it will reveal itself as unerringly productive of ultimate good.¹⁷

That the law of Necessity does produce ultimate good in Queen Mab is consistent with the disappearance of evil and the beginning of a golden Age which Shelley pictures in the last Canto. But I must part from Stovall's interpretation when he suggests that the "blindly working will" of Necessity is always the instrument which fulfills the work of Love. For the attributes of Necessity are too incompatible with those characterizing the Spirit of Love, which emerges several years later. As Newman Ivey White pointed out, Necessity denied freedom of the will and was much "too negative and impersonal for Shelley's impulsive sympathetic nature,"¹⁸ and in 1816, when the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty appeared, Shelley had changed his goddess to Intellectual Beauty or Love.¹⁹ With one exception the principal Shelleyan

¹⁷ p. 288. Stovall feels that the "equable climate, a perpetual April, and the miracle of fruition and fertilization without decay" in Queen Mab, VIII, and Prometheus Unbound, III, iii, is evidence that necessity is "unerringly productive of ultimate good."

¹⁸ II, 438.

¹⁹ Ibid.

critics agree with White and not with Stovall.²⁰

In 1816 we find that Shelley had more firmly established his belief in the reality of a divine spirit; and he asks himself if man has another existence in it:

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

(The Sunset, ll. 47-49)

He does not know at this time; but in 1821 the question seems settled, for he says in Adonais that Keats through death has rejoined the life of the One:

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely. . . .

(XLIII, 379-380)

In other poems written in the years 1817 and 1818 Shelley's belief in "the deep sea of Love" becomes more impassioned:

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
We can desire, O Love! . . .

. . . .

Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls
Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue
Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some light robe. . . .

(Prince Athanase, [1817],
II, 279-280, 284-289)

²⁰Solemn F. Gingerich, Essays in the Romantic Poets (New York, 1924), argues pedantically that Shelley was a necessitarian throughout his life. Gingerich's reasoning is based almost entirely upon assumptions; and Ellsworth Barnard, Shelley's Religion, pp. 136-145, attacks his theory viciously and convincingly.

And others said that such mysterious grief
 From God's displeasures, like a darkness, fell
 On Souls like his, which owned no higher law
 Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible
 By mortal fear or supernatural awe.

(Prince Athanase, I,
 93-97)

I said all hope was vain but love; thou lovest.

(Prometheus Unbound,
 [1818], I, 824)

In each of these selections we see that Shelley is now more convinced than ever that Love is the one divine law of the universe.

Shelley reached great heights of expression in Prometheus Unbound when he described the eternal Spirit; but in the following passage from that drama, when Asia is addressing the earth, it appears that the supreme power is weak:

How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
 The Shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be
 Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
 I could fall down and worship that and thee.

(II, iii, 12-16)

There are numerous interpretations of this controversial passage. H.N. Fairchild commented: "It is astonishing that the God of Prometheus Unbound, Shelley's most confident declaration of faith, should be 'weak yet beautiful.'"²¹

²¹Religious Trends in English Poetry, III (Morning-side Heights, 1949), 380.

And to Carl Grabo the lines implied "a God not wholly omnipotent, one engaged in doubtful strife with the principle of evil."²² I believe that when Asia refers to a weak spirit lovelier than earth, she is speculating on deities which may lead her to the "eternal Love" of which Demogorgon later speaks. That this lovely weak spirit is the ultimate reality is improbable; for this would be inconsistent with Shelley's strong convictions, expressed before, during, and after the year 1819, that Love alone is the one supreme spirit which can never change. We may see two of his most earnest declarations of this faith in a later passage in Prometheus Unbound and in the great fifty-second stanza from Adonais:

If the abysm
 Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
 On the revolving world? What to bid speak
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these
 All things are subject but eternal Love.

(II, iv, 114-120)

The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.

(LII, 460-464)

Each of these passages explicitly states that the only thing which cannot be affected by the limitations fate,

²²Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, p. 69.

time, occasion, chance, and change is the all-powerful force in the universe -- the one, eternal Spirit of Love.

In the fourth act of Prometheus Unbound we find a regenerated world which now feels the influence of an omnipresent Love:

This is the day, which down the void abysm
 At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
 And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
 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.

(IV, iv, 554-561)

The idea in this speech of Demogorgon's contains Shelley's philosophy of good and evil. Prometheus, becoming wise through his pity and forgiveness of Jupiter, has opened his mind to universal Love, which is now able to operate and to cure the world of its ills. But while the heart is selfish and unforgiving, man's will is ill-guided and thus can never be united with ideal Love, whose "healing wings" will remain inactive until the mind does reach purity in thought and deed.

Shelley's attitude toward Love as the supreme God remained consistent throughout the final poems. "Toward this power," commented Melvin T. Solve, "whether symbolized as a goddess or as an inscrutable force, Shelley's attitude is prayerful; he supplicates an omnipotent power which is inevitably virtuous -- to his mind infinitely superior in

virtue to the God of the Scriptures":²³

Great Spirit, deepest Love!
Which rulest and dost move
All things which love and are, within the Italian
shore;
Who spreadest Heaven around it,
Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor;
Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command
The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison
From the Earth's bosom chill.

(Ode to Naples, [1820],
ll. 149-157)

The "Spirit of beauty" in this instance is plainly identified with the essence of Love, and they become one and the same power. The same identification is again seen in Adonais:

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

(LIV)

James A. Notopoulos felt that in this ecstatic stanza "Shelley fuses Platonic Immortality, Beauty, Love. . . ." ²⁴
And Solve goes so far as to say "Beauty, under whatever name it is considered, is the greatest power of the

²³ Shelley: His Theory of Poetry (Chicago, 1927), p. 175.

²⁴ The Platonism of Shelley: A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind (Durham, 1949), p. 301.

universe."²⁵ In another section of the poem Shelley says in a reference to the highest power of which Keats is now a part:

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world. . . .

(XLIII, 379-382)

And in Epipsychidion (1821), exalting Emilia Viviani as a symbol of the one Spirit, Shelley reaffirms that Love is absolute:

An image of some bright Eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
Under whose motions life's dull billows move.

(ll. 115-119)

I believe that in passages of such religious fervor Shelley's God is a combination of all the things which he associated with Good. The "plastic stress" of the one Spirit in Adonais "disposes the heavens and the whole world; it penetrates and permeates nature down to its lowest plants and animals."²⁶ Every form of life

Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst.

(LIV, 484-485)

Life itself is a reflection of Shelley's one God --

²⁵ P. 172.

²⁶ Notopoulos, p. 116.

"the eternal Moon of Love."

(2)

Before I turn my attention to the final section of this chapter, which will constitute a study of the media through which the One is expressed, I wish to discuss an attribute which is significantly related to Love as Deity, namely, its immortality. Throughout his poetry, again and again, Shelley asserted that Love is the final power, the ultimate and eternal Lord of all. Noting Shelley's firm belief about this point, John Addington Symonds remarked: "What he clung to amid all perplexities was the absolute and indestructible existence of the universal as perceived by us in love, beauty, and delight."²⁷ And Ellsworth Barnard, commenting upon the permanency of this order, added:

But it is in love, above all, that the limits of 'blind mortality' may be transcended. . . . Love belongs by its very nature to an eternal world. . . . In a world to which Love leads us, where it and beauty and delight suffer no death or change, there is neither life nor death as we know them, and there are both immortality and annihilation.²⁸

In the following passages from Shelley's poetry it will become clear that the idea of Love as being immortal was a prevalent one in his thinking.

²⁷ Shelley (New York and London, n.d.), p. 153.

²⁸ pp. 239-240.

As early as 1810 we see in a short poem To Death that Love is the one thing over which death has no power:

To know in dissolution's void
That mortals' baubles sunk decay;
That everything, but Love, destroyed
Must perish with its kindred clay,--
Perish Ambition's crown,
Perish her sceptred sway.

(ll. 16-21)

By 1817 in The Revolt of Islam and the fragment Amor Aeternus Shelley's beliefs about the permanency of Love became more profound:

Ye seek for happiness--alas, the day!
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold
And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

(Revolt, XI, xvii)

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
When once from our possession they must pass;
But love, though misdirected, is among
The things which are immortal, and surpass
All that frail stuff which will be--or which was.

(Amor Aeternus, ll. 1-6)

These two passages show the transiency and insignificance of what man thinks is valuable in contrast to the lastingness of Love. We may compare them with this stanza from The Revolt of Islam, where Cythna states that the love which she and Laon bore for humanity will live forever in the minds of men:

Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love
 Our happiness, and all that we have been,
 Immortally must live, and burn and move,
 When we shall be no more;--the world has seen
 A type of peace; and--as some most serene
 And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,
 After long years, some sweet and moving scene
 Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,
 Quells his long madness--thus man shall remember thee.

(IX, xxx)

Shelley's Italian prose parable Una Favola (1820) comments upon the immortality of true love, as is typified by the strong bonds between Laon and Cythna; the allegorical character Death appears to an earthly couple whose "love was so potent that it overcame every other thought,"²⁹ and says to them: "Ye mistrust me, but I forgive ye, and await ye where ye needs must come, for I dwell with Love and Eternity, with whom the souls whose love is everlasting must hold communion."³⁰

It is a cardinal principle in Shelley's thinking that through participation in the eternal soul of Love, man and what he has accomplished on earth may become immortal, because they both possess a portion of the Divine. In the following passage from Prometheus Unbound we may see an example of the immortality of Love as expressed in art. The Spirit of the Earth is to take Prometheus and Asia to the "destined cave," beside which

²⁹Shelley's Prose, p. 360.

³⁰Ibid., p. 361.

Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
 The image of a temple, built above,
 Distinct with column, arch, and architraves,
 And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
 And populous with most living imagery,
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.

(III, iii, 160-166)

Stephen Larrabee noted in his book English Bards and Grecian Marbles that "Among the Grecian sculptors Shelley's favorite was Praxiteles."³¹ And Mary Shelley remarked: "[As Shelley] gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself."³² Because the art forms created by Praxiteles are expressions of divine Love, which is immortal, they too are symbols of the eternal order and thus transmit love "everlastingly," so to speak, to mankind. Similarly, in The Ode to Liberty (1820) Shelley says that although Athens has been dead for thousands of years, the love which was once expressed in its art survives to inspire the people today:

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past:

³¹John Lawrence Zillman, ed. Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Variorum Edition (Seattle, 1959), p. 545.

³²Hutchinson, Note on Prometheus Unbound, p. 274.

(Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:)
 A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
 Which soars where Expectation never flew,
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
 One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

(VI)

Certainly, Shelley remarks about Athens' "marble immortality" in the Preface to his poem Hellas (1821), "those faultless productions . . . cannot cease . . . to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race."³³

In the Essay on Christianity Shelley expresses his belief that the life we live is not real: "Human life, with its unreal ills and transitory hopes, is as a dream which departs before the dawn, leaving no trace of its evanescent hues; all that it contains of pure or of divine visits the passive mind in some serenest dream."³⁴ This thought reminds us of the often quoted lines in The Sensitive Plant (1820) in which the immortality of love and beauty is contrasted with the imperfection of man's organs:

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
 And all sweet shapes and odours there,
 In truth have never passed away:
 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight
 There is no death nor change: their might

³³Shelley's Prose, p. 332.

³⁴Ibid., p. 205.

Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

(Conclusion, ll. 130-137)

Here we see that the only thing true and permanent in life is what we associate with "love, and beauty, and delight"; only this, Shelley says in The Revolt of Islam, "Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness."

(3)

The study of the various media through which the Spirit of Love is expressed remains to be considered, and in the concluding pages of this chapter I shall devote my discussion to this topic.

First of all, since in its pristine perfection the universal Spirit was too vast and incomprehensible ever to become directly intelligible to man, except in the most rare instances,³⁵ Shelley symbolized it indirectly by communicating part of its beauty through certain mediums -- "now a spirit, now a woman, now an abstract unity of Platonic dialectic; sometimes it is emotional, sometimes mystical or intellectual."³⁶ Floyd Stovall also explained:

For communication with men, however, it [Love] usually lays aside its universal and Seraphic nature,

³⁵In The Triumph of Life (1822) Shelley says that Christ and Socrates (ll. 128-136) were the only two men in history who ever perceived Love directly. We shall see that Shelley gives this experience to some of his characters.

³⁶Notopoulos, p. 22.

which the mind of man is incapable of understanding, and assumes the shape of a daemon or intermediary spirit. . . . If one looks beyond . . . and sees Love in its completeness, one must detach oneself from the passions of Life, which obscure or localize one's vision.³⁷

I am in complete agreement with these two comments. On the other hand, Newman Ivey White mistakenly identified the medium with the essence of Love; in failing to distinguish between the two, he wants us to believe that the one Spirit reveals itself often to man. The Witch in The Witch of Atlas³⁸ (1820), the lady who tends the garden in The Sensitive Plant,³⁹ and Asia in Prometheus Unbound⁴⁰ are all, according to White, the ultimate spirit of Love. White says that Asia, for instance, becomes supreme Love after her apotheosis.⁴¹ If this is true, who is the "eternal Love" before the transfiguration? We may remember that prior to Asia's change Demogorgon replies to her question about the origin of evil:

If the abysm
 Could vomit forth its secrets But a voice
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;

³⁷ pp. 293-294.

³⁸ White, II, 218.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 439.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 118, 440.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 118.

For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
 On the revolving world? What to bid speak
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change? To these
 All things are subject but eternal Love.

(II, iv, 114-120)

Is it logical to conclude that Asia will soon become the "eternal Love" to whom Demogorgon is referring, even though Panthea later describes her birth (II, v, 20-32)? How may we reconcile Asia's birth and her apotheosis with the one spirit of Love, which is eternal and unchanging? Similarly, the Witch of Atlas is a sea-nymph and the daughter of Apollo; and the lady who cares for the sensitive plant dies. White seems to think that they, too, are "eternal Love"; but it is evident that each of these two goddesses is as incompatible with the features of the eternal One as is Asia. I do not think that Shelley wanted us to identify any of his characters with the "spirit of universal, imperishable Love," for this belief would tend to make less significant "the vast intellect which animates infinity."⁴² Therefore, Shelley never allowed the Ultimate to become known. A more comprehensible representation, as Asia, the Witch, and the lady of the garden, became the mediator between man and heavenly Love -- "a convenience to mortals for grasping the divinely perfect, which in its pure essence is imageless."⁴³ Let me give and explain some illustrations.

⁴²Letter of 3 January 1811, to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Letters, I, 29.

⁴³Notopoulos, p. 282.

In the poem Alastor (1815) we see Shelley beginning to use symbols to express highest Love. The poet in that tale sees in his sleep a "veiled maiden" who is the shadow of ideal Beauty:

The spirit of sweet human love has sent
A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
Her choicest gifts.

(ll. 203-205)

Enamored by "the bright shadow of that lovely dream" (l. 233), he spends the rest of his life searching for its human representative on earth. The vision, embodying the wisdom and the beauty which the poet, the philosopher, and the lover seek,⁴⁴ is not obtainable in any human form; and the poet dies young through his great disappointment. Shelley tends to treat the vision as a punishment to the poet, who has isolated himself from his fellow man in his quest for ideal Beauty. Shelley believed strongly that one must sympathize deeply with all humanity before he may experience a union with the spirit of Love.

The God in the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty is some unseen Power which Shelley calls "Spirit of Beauty" (II, 1) and "O awful Loveliness" (VI, 71). Man sees only glimpses of its inconstant shadow, which is but "a stepping stone to the apprehension of intelligent Beauty";⁴⁵ what light

⁴⁴Preface to Alastor, in Shelley's Prose, p. 314.

⁴⁵Notopoulos, p. 204.

man is able to perceive, however, is overwhelmingly strong,⁴⁶ and it "Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream" (III, 36), and binds Shelley "To fear himself, and love all human kind" (VII, 84). The shadow through which Intellectual Beauty or Love makes itself known, as W.B. Yeats remarked, is one of the ministering spirits which Love employs to do her will.⁴⁷ In the following passage this medium appears as

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.

(IV, 37-38)

We may notice here that the influence of Love causes Shelley to be more sympathetic with his fellow man, while in Alaster it draws the poet away from humanity. In the poems following the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty we see more specifically the workings of love as symbols for the ultimate Power.

One of the best examples of the expression of love in the individual is seen in The Revolt of Islam. The heroine, Cythna, has just experienced the highest type of union with divine Love; and as a result of her participation in it, she becomes radiantly beautiful:

--her dark and intricate eyes
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,

⁴⁶Solve, p. 161.

⁴⁷Essays and Introductions (New York, 1961), p. 74.

Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
 Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,
 Burst from her looks and gestures; --and a light
 Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
 From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
 Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

(XI, v, 4262-69)

A similar transfiguration occurs in Prometheus Unbound when Asia rejoins the Spirit of Love; she grows so breathtakingly beautiful that Panthea cannot endure the sight of her, only feel her absorbing presence:

How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
 I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
 The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
 Is working in the elements, which suffer
 Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
 That on the day when the clear hyaline
 Was cloven at thine uprising, and thou didst stand
 Within a veined shell, which floated on
 Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
 Among the Aegean isles, and by the shores
 Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
 Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
 Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
 And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
 And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
 Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak
 the love
 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

(II, v, 16-37)

In this drama Asia is symbolic of ideal Love;⁴⁸ her footsteps "pave the world With loveliness" (II, i, 69). J.A. Symonds gave this excellent interpretation of her sudden

⁴⁸Notopoulos, p. 282.

change: "She is the Idea of Beauty incarnate, the shadow of the Light of Life which sustains the world and enkindles it with Love, the reality of Alastor's vision, the breathing image of the awful loveliness apostrophized in the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, the reflex of the splendour of which Adonais was a part."⁴⁹ It seems that Shelley was particularly conscious in his effort to make each symbol of Love blinding in its brilliance. Cythna, in her mystical trance, absorbs the light of the burning skies; and it bursts from her. Asia's smiles "make the cold air fire" (II, v, 51), and wherever she moves the earth's "dim shapes are clad with brightness" (II, iv, 67). The Witch of Atlas and Emilia Viviani in Epipsychidion, both symbolizing the splendor of divine Love, are also described in terms of radiant beauty. Shelley portrays the Witch in the following passages as

A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty--

(V, 81-82)

For she was beautiful--her beauty made
The bright world dim, and everything beside
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade,

(XII, 137-139)

Which, when the Lady knew, she took her spindle
And twined three threads of fleecy mist,

. . . .

And with these threads, a subtle veil she wove--
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

(XIII, 145-146, 151-152)

And he goes on to say in Epipsychidion that Emilia's
"radiant form of Woman" (l. 22) is a veil to

All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!

(ll. 22-23)

She is "Scarce visible from extreme loveliness" (l. 104).

It is to be noted, too, that the love in each of these figures acts as an attractive force, drawing everything after it.⁵⁰ In Alastor the vision of Love obsesses the poet, and he cannot stop looking for it. The shadow of Love and Beauty in the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, when it first fell upon Shelley, affected him so greatly that he vowed to dedicate his powers to the Spirit's service. And the voice of the Witch of Atlas was

like love, and drew
All living things toward this wonder new.

(V, 87-88)

The reason why these symbols of Love and Beauty were so meaningful to Shelley, explains F.A. Lea, is that they "were partial revelation of that One which is manifested fully in rapture."⁵¹

⁵⁰David Perkins, The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 139-140. Perkins makes a limited study of Shelley's treatment of beauty as an attractive force.

⁵¹Shelley and the Romantic Revolution (Routledge, 1945), p. 175.

We see in Prometheus Unbound, when Asia becomes transfigured, that the universal Spirit affects all the creatures on earth through the medium of love:

all love is sweet,
Given or returned. Common as light is love,
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
It makes the reptile equal to the God.

(II, v, 39-43)

And later in the drama, when Prometheus and Asia retire to a cave to contemplate and view the world, they see art forms functioning as media of love between man and the eternal Spirit:

And lovely apparitions,--dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality--
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And art, though unimagined, yet to be.

(III, iii, 49-56)

Notopoulos noted in this passage that "the arts are the immortal progeny of Love,"⁵² and James H. Cousins commented further:

From ultimate powers inherent in the nature of the universe come impulses which, through the mutual co-operation of the intellectual and aesthetical capacities of humanity fulfill themselves in the forms of the arts. These art-forms, partaking at once of the nature of divinity which is their source, and of humanity which is their instrument, are the mediators between both.⁵³

⁵² P. 255.

⁵³The Work Promethean: Interpretations and Applications of Shelley's Poetry, in Zillman, p. 531.

This interpretation may well be applied to the following stanza from Adonais, in which Shelley gives a most vivid picture of Love spreading its beauty into all things. The soul of Keats has gone back to the one Spirit, which is imaged in terms of Nature and Power:

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of Thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

(XLII)

The "never-wearied love" which kindles and sustains the world may be thought of as the medium through which the One reveals itself. Keats is now fused with this Spirit; but while he lived, he transformed the wonders of nature into verse and made the work of the supreme Power more beautiful and meaningful to man. But the poet is not alone in this vast process. "Beasts, and earth, and air, and sea," remarks F.A. Lea, are all "tongues of the universal spirit."⁵⁴ They are symbols shadowing the splendor of the One, and Shelley characterizes them as such with the term Love.

⁵⁴ p. 176.

CHAPTER II

LOVE -- INCREASING RANGE OF SYMPATHIES

Shelley believed very strongly in the power of the imagination. He felt that if man became less aware of himself and tried to understand and sympathize with other people through the use of his imagination, he would have attained the high ideals by which all men should live. Such a turn of the mind would naturally include a wide range of personal sympathies, and to Shelley a sympathetic nature was convincing evidence of the active presence of love. In the essay on "Benevolence" from A Treatise on Morals (1815) Shelley shows in terms of the imagination how the virtuous man and the selfish man differ in their thinking:

Imagination or mind employed in prophetically [imaging forth] its objects is that faculty of human nature on which every gradation of its progress, nay, every, the minutest, change depends. . . . The only distinction between the selfish man and the virtuous man is that the imagination of the former is confined within a narrow limit, while that of the latter embraces a comprehensive circumference.¹

And he later explains in A Defence of Poetry (1821) how the imagination should operate: "A man to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and

¹Shelley's Prose, p. 189.

pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination. . . . The great secret of morals is love."² In the following passages it will be noticed that love is the inspirational force which opens man's mind and activates his imaginative powers.³ They in turn cause him to think kindly toward all humanity and let him perceive all that is beautiful in it.

(1)

In the introductory poem to Queen Mab we learn that the strong love which Shelley receives from Harriet causes him to feel a closer affection for his fellow man:

Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
And loved mankind the more?
Harriet! on thine:--thou wert my
purer mind.

(To Harriet, ll. 7-9)

And the Hymn to Intellectual Beauty shows that Shelley is similarly influenced by the spirit of Love and Beauty:

Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm--to one who worships thee,

²Ibid., p. 283.

³Barnard, p. 271, n. 96, comments that Shelley always treats the imagination as a power for good. "Shelley chooses to define Imagination as the power by which man 'participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one'--that is, in the Good; while Evil is conceived by him as necessarily connected with Time, limitation, and separateness."

And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

(VII, 78-84)

Now let us see how love refines the mind to perceive beauty in everything; and here I may appropriately quote an interesting observation by Melvin T. Solve: "When one by means of the imagination is able to discover the essential harmony in what sensations produce to the mind, he has found the key to beauty."⁴ And he later adds that "beauty is . . . produced by love."⁵ In The Cenci (1819) Shelley exemplifies this thought by showing how a highly cultivated mind can see harmony and beauty in the world. Bernardo, upon hearing that his sister Beatrice has been found guilty of murder and must die, exclaims in remorse:

O life! O world!
Cover me! let me be no more! To see
That perfect mirror of pure innocence
Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,
Who made all lovely thou didst look upon . . .
Thee, light of life . . .

(V, iv, 128-134)

In the fourth act of Prometheus Unbound everyone in the new world of love imagines as Beatrice did and sees only beauty. In the first two passages the spirits of the mind symbolize man's thoughts:

⁴ p. 46.

⁵ p. 171.

We come from the mind
 Of human kind
 Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
 Now 'tis an ocean
 Of clear emotion,
 A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

(93-98)

Our feet now, every palm,
 Are sandalled with calm,
 And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
 And, beyond our eyes,
 The human love lies
 Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

(123-128)

The same idea is repeated by the Earth in a subsequent stanza:

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul
 Whose nature is its own divine control,
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
 Familiar acts are beautiful through love.

(400-403)

And at the marriage festivities in the poem Ginevra (1821) Shelley says of the guests that

The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
 Of love, and admiration, and delight
 Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.

(ll. 108-111)

In each of these instances we see that the imagination stimulates one's ability to love; the power of love in turn lets man perceive all that is beautiful in the world. We may now turn to other examples which show the imagination and love working together to bring man to a complete understanding of others.

(2)

In A Defence of Poetry Shelley explains that the means by which man can forget Self is by "going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person not our own."⁶ In order to have a perfect state of harmony between two persons, Shelley stresses, the process of losing Self must be mutual; then happiness will ensue. The following passages find characters who have a high range of sensitivities, which are made possible because love enables each individual to project his mind away from himself and into the feelings of others.

In these lines from The Revolt of Islam we see a slave youth expressing his affection for a captive maiden whom he has just seen:

--but now the eyes of one dear Maid
On mine with light of mutual love have shone--
She is my life, --I am but as the shade
Of her, --a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

(VIII, xxv, 3420-23)

While in the second act of Prometheus Unbound the love which Panthea is transmitting between Asia and Prometheus broadens and deepens her own personality, and she is able to experience widespread sympathies:⁷

⁶Shelley's Prose, pp. 282-283.

⁷Shelley says in A Defence of Poetry that "the imagination is enlarged by a sympathy with pains and passions," Shelley's Prose, p. 285. Panthea's imagination is stimulated to action by the presence of love, which changes her from an unsympathetic sea-nymph to a very sensitive being.

I was wont to sleep
Peacefully and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine.

. . . .

But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks . . .

(II, 1, 38-43, 50-53)

In both examples the imagination is so vivid that love becomes overwhelmingly strong; and as the Self ceases to exist, only its increasing weakness provides adequate expression. We may turn now to examples in which the Self of man has been erased completely; this is the final goal for which one must strive, and such a state of mind can only be realized when love is the single force ruling man's thoughts.

In the eighth canto of Queen Mab Shelley compares the happy feelings of the Spirit of Ianthe to those of a sensitive lover:

Joy to the Spirit came,--
Such joy as when a lover sees
The chosen of his soul in happiness
And witnesses her peace
Whose woe to him were bitterer than death.

(ll. 31-35)

A passage expressing the same idea is seen in these lines from the Fragments of an Unfinished Drama (1822), where a lady bemoans the loss of her lover:

the gentlest youth
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!

(ll. 77-79)

But the most vivid description of an erasure of the Self is a passage like this from Julian and Maddalo (1818), in which the madman has entered into and become what his mind contemplates:

But me--whose heart a stranger's tear might wear
As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,
And loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glance of phantasy,
And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;
Me--who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth.

(ll. 442-450)

It is apparent that the madman, as well as the other individuals who let love rule their thoughts, possesses a powerfully-operating imagination and typifies the high state of mind Shelley hopes man will reach in the future -- when "the imagination is not subject to the government of the personality, of what man calls his self,"⁸ but "acts in a divine and unapprehended manner, beyond and above consciousness";⁹ only then "will [man] discover the wisdom of universal love."¹⁰

⁸Barnard, p. 256.

⁹A Defence of Poetry, in Shelley's Prose, p. 281.

¹⁰Essay on Christianity, Ibid., p. 209.

(3)

So far I have treated love and imagination as beneficent forces working side by side to produce a wide range of personal sympathies; these, in turn, "are seeds [which] bear the harvest of [man's] happiness,"¹¹ depending upon the will of every individual to put the love and imagination within him into practice. There remains to be considered the fact that love sometimes causes misery rather than happiness.¹² We can see Shelley's awareness that Love is not always fruitful in these words of the madman in Julian and Maddalo:

There is one road
To peace and that is truth, which follow ye!
Love sometimes leads astray to misery.

(ll. 347-349)

The relation between love and truth as they apply to the situation of the madman must be examined. A false act committed by "a mind naturally devoted to truth"¹³ was the cause of much of the madman's agonies, suggested Newman Ivey White. The "mask of falsehood" (l. 308) under which he now lives may be attributed to the love he bore for his Lady,¹⁴ but this false act done through love is

¹¹Preface to Prometheus Unbound, Ibid., p. 328.

¹²Stovall, pp. 301-302.

¹³ II, 45.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 48.

leading to personal ruin. So Shelley forewarned in the essay on "Benevolence" in A Treatise on Morals: "Let it not be objected that patriotism, and chivalry, and sentimental love, have been the fountains of enormous mischief."¹⁵ More about the madman's situation will be explained later.

Love resulting in ruin is also suggested in this passage from Prometheus Unbound, as the Chorus of Spirits sing:

. . . Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,
Man and beast, and foul and fair,
Like a tempest through the air.

(I, 780-786)

The implications of this quotation and the one from Julian and Maddalo will be the aim of the present discussion; and I shall begin by examining the final temptation which caused Prometheus his greatest agony, namely -- what we think is good is really the prelude to destruction.

In order to make this idea as clear as possible, one of the Furies shows Prometheus two visions: one of Christ and Christianity and the other of the French Revolution and its aftermath. The first picture drives home the moral that Christ's sufferings have been in vain, that the

¹⁵Shelley's Prose, p. 189. (italics mine)

love he bore for mankind

. . . outlived him, like swift poison,
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.

(I, 548-549)

As Milton Wilson explained: "The greater the bloodshed in the name of Christ, the more in vain and therefore more horrible does the Crucifixion seem; and the more the suffering of Christ to save mankind is emphasized, the more horrible seem the unintended consequences."¹⁶ The ills which the Furies show to Prometheus as the result of Christianity are later shown by the Chorus of Spirits to be born by Love. They sing: "Hast thou beheld the form of Love?" (I, 763), and the Fifth and Sixth Spirits answer in respective passages:

That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-
braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his
ambrosial tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as
I passed 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound
in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,
unupbraiding,
Gleamed in the night.

(I, 765-770)

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with
silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best
and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes
above

¹⁶Shelley's Later Poetry (New York, 1959), p. 94.

And the music-stirring motion of its soft and
 busy feet,
 Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster,
 Love,
 And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom
 now we greet.

(I, 772-779)

Commenting upon the meaning of these two stanzas, George
 Woodberry noted:

Love followed by Ruin presents in poetical
 and intense imagery the one comprehensive and
 symbolic sorrow of the state of man: love is not
 denied, but its fruits are misery to mankind. The
 prophecy that 'begins and ends' in Prometheus is
 that he shall destroy this death that follows in
 Love's track, . . . but similar ruin pervades all
 life acted on by love.¹⁷

What is an even greater torture to Prometheus is that his
 own attempt to help the human race has only put them into
 a deeper state of misery, as one of the Furies points out
 just after the veil has been lifted:

Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to
 scorn.
 Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst
 for man?
 Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
 Those perishing waters: a thirst of fierce fever,
 Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

(I, 541-545)

Prometheus continues to see evil produced by Love in scenes
 from the aftermath of the French Revolution:

See a disenchanted nation
 Springs like day from desolation;
 To Truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;

¹⁷In Zillman, p. 410.

A legioned band of linked brothers
Whom Love calls children--

'Tis another's:
See how kindred murder kin:
'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
Blood, like new wine, bubbles within
Till Despair smothers
The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

(I, 567-577)

Shelley had written in the Preface to The Revolt of Islam that the French Revolution had resulted in "ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen, as soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened."¹⁸ Consequently, when the cry "Truth, liberty, and love!" (I, 651) arose among the free nations, Prometheus sadly tells Panthea:

Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

(I, 652-655)

"The world repudiates all who do it disinterested service," noted Carl Grabo. "The failure of the French Revolution, as he [Shelley] came to know, was the inevitable expression of man's inability in large to live up to the best ideals of a few."¹⁹

¹⁸Shelley's Prose, p. 316.

¹⁹Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, p. 39.

But worse is to come. What good a man does possess, a Fury tells Prometheus, can never be put into practice because the good he lacks counteracts it:²⁰

The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
 The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.

(I, 625-628)

Good and evil, then, at present, are hopelessly tangled. Man, through his own limitation, is unable to follow the path of Love, which must dominate completely before the limitation of evil can be overcome. Prometheus is soon to end the state of affairs that "Ruin now Love's shadow be" (I, 780), but before the deliverance

Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world
 splendid,
 Can change with its false times and tides,
 Like hope and terror,--
 Alas for Love!

(Hellas, ll. 980-983)

Up to now I have centered my discussion around the inseparability of Love and Ruin as illustrated by the Crucifixion and the French Revolution. These two events, we have seen, indicated how evil can result from historical movements whose original aim was for the benefit of mankind. The fact that love can change to sorrow may be seen in certain of Shelley's characters, who suffer as their love for man is not reciprocated. As Shelley said

²⁰Wilson, p. 98.

in the Preface to Alastor, "Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt."²¹ The truth of this assertion may be readily seen in the following passages.

In an 1811 poem Shelley expresses his despair over losing Harriet Grove, who never fully returned his love:²²

Ah! Why was love to mortals given,
To lift them to the heights of Heaven,
Or dash them to the depths of Hell?

(Melody to a Scene of
Former Times, ll. 5-7)

While this passage from Julian and Maddalo pictures the sad predicament of sensitive men like the madman,

Who patient in all else demand but this--
To love and be beloved with gentleness;
And being scorned, what wonder if they die
Some living death?

(ll. 207-210)

"I did devote to justice and to love/ My nature, worthless now! . . ." (ll. 381-382), cries the suffering maniac, and imagines himself halted on the wayside by Poverty and Shame, who sneer:

That love-devoted youth is ours--let's sit

²¹Shelley's Prose, pp. 314-315. (italics mine)

²²White, I, 68.

Beside him--he may live some six months yet.

(ll. 373-374)

He continues this note as he says to the lady who betrayed him:

'It were
A cruel punishment for one most cruel,
If such can love, to make that love the fuel
Of the mind's hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair.

(ll. 439-441)

The suffering of the madman reminds us of Shelley's own misfortunes in love. In Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples (1818) the poet expresses his despondency, in which the lack of sympathy between him and Mary Shelley played a significant role:²³

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned--
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround--
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;--
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

(III)

Shelley's dejection at the time he wrote this poem is clearly evident; but Professor Hotson, when he comments upon this stanza, is almost too perfervid as he remarks: "It would be difficult to find in all history a mind so sensitive, loving, and generous, which had its best efforts

²³ Desmond King-Hele, Shelley: His Thought and Work (London, 1960), p. 112.

more cruelly beaten by disappointment and disillusion."²⁴
 The same feeling of despondency finds expression in these
 lines from the short poem To Emilia Viviani (1821):

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
 In whom love ever made
 Health like a heap of embers soon to fade--

(II)

Shelley's attitude here brings to mind his personal
 testimony in the Essay on Love: "I have everywhere sought
 sympathy and found only repulse and disappointment."²⁵

A final instance illustrating the detrimental
 effects love may cause in a human being may be seen in
 this stanza from the famous lyric When the Lamp is
Shattered (1822):

When hearts have once mingled
 Love first leaves the well-built nest;
 The weak one is singled
 To endure what it once possessed.
 O Love! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

(III)

The argument here is that the human heart is a substantial
 home for Love while lovers are united. But once there is
 a break in the relationship, the weaker one must endure the
 passion of love, which is not returned. Love continues to

²⁴In Benjamin Kurtz, The Pursuit of Death: A Study
 of Shelley's Poetry (New York, 1933), p. 153.

²⁵Shelley's Prose, p. 170.

act as a strong force, but it is now operating in a weak heart, which is eventually destroyed. As Milton Wilson explained, "The attempt to enclose . . . the unchanging spirit in the changing heart fails. The heart cannot hold the spirit and is itself destroyed in the attempt."²⁶

CHAPTER III

LOVE -- HUMAN, SPIRITUAL, UNIVERSAL

The union of bodies and spirits was profoundly interesting to Shelley; the desire which arouses man to unite with another spirit is love. In this chapter I shall discuss the different levels of conjunction which man can attain. The bodily and spiritual love between the sexes may be studied under one heading. I shall discuss this aspect of Love first.

(1)

The critic who asserted that Shelley "hated the flesh and he was hardly of the flesh"¹ has grossly misrepresented the poet's views on sexual love. And I must agree with H.N. Fairchild when he retorted to this and similar judgments with the comment: "But are his devotees really doing him a favor when they assume that his philandering was purely 'ideal'? He was a very peculiar man, but since he begot children on both of his wives it seems gratuitously uncharitable to suppose that he was no man

¹J. de Gruyter, "Shelley and Dostoievsky," English Studies, IV (1922), 131, in Barnard, p. 281.

at all."² Exactly what Shelley believed about the union of two bodies is explained by Ellsworth Barnard, who remarked that sex was "the struggle to transcend the limitations of personality";³ and James Ramsey Ullman pinpointed further the significance of the sexual act: "For Shelley it was the progressively active force by which the incomplete individual might establish contact with the complete and universal One toward which his being aspired."⁴ The key to this comment is that intercourse is a "progressively active force" and depends, as Shelley himself states, upon "reducing [the instinctive sense] to as minute a proportion as possible";⁵ only then can man rise to a more spiritualized union.

Let us first look at an example of lustful love in The Revolt of Islam, where the tyrant Othman wreaks his passion upon Cythna:

But when he bade her to his secret bower
 Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore
 Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
 And mightier looks availed not; then he bore
 Again his load of slavery, and became

² P. 346, n. 72.

³ P. 276.

⁴ P. 100.

⁵ On The Manners of the Ancient Greeks, in Shelley's Prose, p. 222.

A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

(VII, v, 2869-74)

She told me what a loathsome agony
 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
 Foul as in a dream's most fearful imagery
 To dally with the mowing dead--that night
 All torture, fear, or horror made seem light
 Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight
 Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
 Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

(VII, vi)

Ullman gave this explanation of why such a union can never rise above the physical plane: "He [Shelley] emphatically did not approve of men who were drunk with their visions and who saw in their love a strictly personal relationship."⁶ Othman's bestial appetite in his experience makes it apparent that his interest lies only in self-gratification, which makes the union a "loathsome agony." "I am afraid there is selfishness in the passion of love," Shelley had said to Hogg early in 1811, "for I cannot avoid feeling every instant as if my soul were bursting; but I will feel no more! It is selfish. I would feel for others, but for myself--oh!"⁷ Writing again to Elizabeth Hitchener on 12 November 1811, Shelley again makes clear his views that the sexual drive should not aspire to personal enjoyment but should be directed toward the pleasure of the beloved:

⁶ pp. 103-104.

⁷ Letter of 3 January 1811, Letters, I, 30.

Lord Kaines defines love to be a particularization of the general passion, but this is the love of sensation. . . . It is the love of pleasure, not the love of happiness. The one is love which is self-centred, self-devoted, self-interested. . . . But Love, the love which we worship, --Virtue, Heaven, disinterestedness--in a word . . . that which seeks the good of all, the good of its object first, . . . loving virtue for virtue's own loveliness.⁸

We may compare the stanzas just quoted from The Revolt of Islam with these passages from Alastor and Rosalind and Helen (1817-18), in which Shelley describes a perfect balancing of physical and spiritual love:

His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back awhile,
Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,
With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.

(Alastor, ll. 181-187)

And Lionel sate alone with me,
As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace;
And we looked upon each other's face;
And the blood of our fingers intertwined
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
As the swift emotions went and came
Thro' the veins of each united frame. . . .
Enclosing there a mighty space
Of love.

(Rosalind and Helen, ll.
937-943, 952-953)

In the lines from Alastor the bodily tie between the poet and the "veiled maid" is a strong one, and we see that Shelley had a good deal of insight into physical love. But the vision vanishes and causes the affair to end abruptly.

⁸Ibid., pp. 159-160.

A more elevated union is suggested in Rosalind and Helen, as Shelley uses phrases like "the blood of our fingers intertwined," "thoughts of a single mind," and "the veins of each united frame." In a short prose fragment on beauty Shelley states that "If . . . you can pour forth into another's most attentive ear the feelings by which you are entranced, there is an exultation of spirit in the utterance -- a glory of happiness which far transcends all human transports."⁹ Lionel and his mate Helen appear to be nearing this goal.

The interfusion of two spirits reaches full intensity in these stanzas from The Revolt of Islam, where Laon and Cythna are so absorbed in each other that "the door to eternity stands open to the human consciousness":¹⁰

Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;
 As from the lofty steed she did alight,
 Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light
 Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
 With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
 My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,
 And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

(VI, xxiv, 2544-50)

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
 Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite
 Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.--
 Few were the living hearts which could unite
 Like ours, or celebrate a bridal-night
 With such close sympathies, for they had sprung

⁹Three Fragments on Beauty (1821?), III, in Shelley's Prose, p. 337.

¹⁰Barnard, p. 236.

From linked youth, and from the gentle might
Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest,
strong.

(VI, xxxix)

She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
But each upon the other's countenance fed
Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil
Which doth divide the living and the dead
Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,--
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.--

(XII, xv, 4579-84)

Surely this expression of a spiritual union is what Shelley had in mind when he defined perfect human love in the Essay on Love:

If we reason, we would be understood; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's; if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own, that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood.¹¹

(2)

There is still to be considered one more of Shelley's speculations concerning human love. In the Essay on Love he speaks of an inner soul, which every man possesses:

We dimly see within our intellectual nature a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of everything excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to

¹¹Shelley's Prose, p. 170.

the nature of man. Not only the portrait of our external being but an assemblage of the minutest particles of which our nature is composed; a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness; a soul within our soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise which pain, and sorrow, and evil dare not overleap. To this we eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it. The discovery of its anti-type; the meeting with an understanding capable of clearly estimating our own; an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret; with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations of our own; and of a combination of all these in such a proportion as the type within demands; this is the invisible and unattainable point to which love tends; and to attain which, it urges forth the powers of man to arrest the faintest shadow of that without the possession of which there is no rest nor respite to the heart over which it rules.¹²

In the poem Epipsychidion Shelley thinks that he has found "this soul out of my soul" (l. 238) in Emilia Viviani. It will be noticed that the union he depicts with her is carried out on the physical as well as the spiritual plane; the physical act is significant, as Shelley explained in the 1818 essay On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks Relative to the Subject of Love: "The sexual impulse . . . serves from its obvious and external nature as . . . [an] expression of the rest, as common basis, an acknowledged and visible link":¹³

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 220.

Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,
 And our veins beat together; and our lips
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse
 The soul that burns between them.

(ll. 565-568)

In the closing lines of the poem, however, we see that
 bodily love has expanded to a communion of souls as well:

We shall become the same, we shall be one
 Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
 One passion in twin hearts, which grows and grew,
 Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
 Burning, yet ever unconsumable:
 In one another's substance finding food,
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!
 The winged words on which my soul would pierce
 Into the heights of Love's rare Universe,
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire--
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire.

(ll. 573-591)

Although Emilia proved to be unworthy of the potential
 soul mate whom the poem celebrates, for a short time in
 1821 Shelley actually felt "the presence of that Deity
 which he also feels to be present in himself as 'a soul
 within the soul,' and in whose being he desires to lose
 his own; and a particular object is loved not for its own
 sake but as a manifestation of the divine."¹⁴

¹⁴Barnard, p. 290.

(3)

In the first chapter I pointed out that Shelley mentions Christ and Socrates as the only two men in history who became directly aware of the eternal One. The type of union they were able to achieve I shall call universal love, which transcends human and spiritual relationships and becomes the ultimate expression of an experience in love. In his essay On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks, Shelley states very clearly the exact nature of this pure, mystical union -- "too deep For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense":¹⁵

Man is in his wildest state a social being; a certain degree of civilization and refinement ever produce the want of sympathies still more intimate and complex; and the gratification of the senses is no longer all that is sought in sexual connection. It soon becomes a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment which we call love, which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive, and which, when individualized, becomes an imperious necessity, only to be satisfied by the complete or partial actual or supposed fulfillment of its claims. This want grows more powerful in proportion to the development which our nature receives from civilization.¹⁶

Commenting upon the significance of universal love, A.M. D. Hughes remarks: "This, then, is the end of living for Shelley: the divine possession, of which we can never know

¹⁵Epipsychidion, ll. 90-91.

¹⁶Shelley's Prose, p. 220.

the fullness in this life, 'the invisible and unattainable point to which Love tends.'¹⁷ The following passages will serve to illustrate this supreme type of union in love.

The subject may be fitly introduced by these stanzas from The Revolt of Islam, in which Laon and Cythna mingle their beings with the life of eternal Love:

so the devotion

Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

(VI, xxix, 2592-95)

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapped
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapped,
Though linked years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air:--

(VI, xxx)

Was it one moment that confounded thus
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
Unutterable power, which shielded us
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone
Into a wide and wild oblivion
Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
The seasons, and mankind their changes know,
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

(VI, xxxv)

And later in the poem Laon describes Cythna as transmitting absolute Love; for she is in an experience which leads beyond the realm of sense and reason into a world absolutely

¹⁷The Nascent Mind of Shelley (Oxford, 1947),
p. 200.

distinct from that of matter, space, and time -- into
the very depth of divine Being":¹⁸

I stood beside her, but she saw me not--
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
From common joy; which with the speechless feeling
That led her there united, and shot forth
From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

(XI, iv)

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
Was now heard there;--her dark and intricate eyes
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,
Burst from her looks and gestures;--and a light
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

(XI, v)

In the Notes to Queen Mab Shelley writes that "If . . .
the human mind by any future improvement of its sensibility
should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in
a minute, that minute would be an eternity."¹⁹ This theory
may be applied to the mystical consummation which Cythna
has achieved; for her mind now embraces "a communion not
merely of the senses but of . . . [her] whole nature, intel-
lectual, imaginative, and sensitive";²⁰ and she enters into

¹⁸Barnard, p. 236.

¹⁹Shelley's Prose, p. 340.

²⁰On the Manners of the Ancient Greeks, Ibid.,
p. 220.

an eternal world, where "the loving soul of man and the loving Soul of the Universe are reunited."²¹

The idea of a universal union reaches a climax in Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus becomes "a symbol of a purely spiritual and mystical experience,"²² as he is transfigured by Absolute Love. The experience is related by Panthea, who in her dream felt the love of Prometheus flow through and overwhelm her:

the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm aether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed.

(II, i, 71-86)

Shelley explains in the Essay on Christianity that the perfect mind, one with an unlimited range of sympathies, which we now see in Prometheus, must not only love "all mankind, nay, every individual of mankind,"²³ but must also

²¹Fairchild, p. 360.

²²Barnard, p. 282.

²³Shelley's Prose, p. 208.

contemplate "The mighty frame of the wonderful and lovely world. . . . United they are the consummation of the widest hopes that . . . mind can contain."²⁴ In three thousand years of struggle and suffering Prometheus slowly purges his mind of everything but love;²⁵ and "as love becomes wider, it becomes deeper; as it becomes more inclusive, it becomes more pure and more intense."²⁶ Finally he ascends to the supreme Spirit of Love, with which he is united.

²⁴Ibid., p. 210.

²⁵Fairchild, pp. 361-362.

²⁶Barnard, p. 289.

CHAPTER IV

LOVE -- HARMONY

The power of Love as a harmonizing force runs throughout Shelley's poems. His interest in this function of love was profound and may be observed in four distinct phases: as spiritual nourishment, as a reconciler, as energy, and as a destroyer of barriers. In this chapter I shall focus my attention on the various activities of love in the four topics just indicated.

(1)

Oftentimes Shelley presents his characters in an experience in which the spiritualizing influence of love dominates the mind. The nature of this spiritual presence is explained by William James in The Varieties of Religious Experience:

It is as if there were in the human consciousness a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call "something there," more deep and more general than any of the special and particular "senses" by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed.¹

Spiritual nourishment, which is signified by the term love, expands the Self to include a close communion with the Spirit of

¹(New York and Bombay, 1908), p. 58.

Universal Love. We may observe in the following passages Shelley's treatment of love functioning as spiritual nourishment.

In an 1811 poem Shelley praises the power of love to release the powers of the soul:

And oh! When on the blest, reviving
The day-star dawns of love,
Each energy of soul surviving
More vivid, soars above.

(Love, ll. 11-14)

With greater intensity the same idea finds expression in this scene from The Revolt of Islam, in which a Woman tells how she had "loved all things with intense devotion" (I, xxxviii, 465) until she was visited by the Morning Star or the Spirit of Good. Shelley later identified the Spirit of Good with Love:²

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
Under the billows of the heaving sea;
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
Into one thought--one image--yes, for ever!
Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
Through my benighted mind--and were extinguished never.

(I, xli)

So in Prometheus Unbound Asia and Panthea find themselves at "the realm of Demogorgon," from whose "mighty portal"

The oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,

²See V, li, 2.

That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
 To deep intoxication; and uplift,
 Like Maenads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
 The voice which is contagion to the world.

(II, iii, 4-10)

And in the third act the Spirit of the Hour depicts a
 changed earth enveloped by love:

the impalpable thin air
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
 As if the sense of love dissolved in them
 Had folded itself round the sphered world.
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see
 Into the mysteries of the universe.

(III, iv, 100-105)

In the Essay on Life (1812-14) Shelley explains the sig-
 nificance of these states of mind acted upon by spiritual
 nourishment:

Those who are subject to the state called
 reverie feel as if their nature were dissolved
 into the surrounding universe, or as if the
 surrounding universe were absorbed into their
 being. They are conscious of no distinction. And
 these are states which precede, or accompany, or
 follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension
 of life.³

These moments of reverie, as Shelley calls them, go beyond
 the conditions of ordinary consciousness and bring into
 mind a vivid realization of life. Love or Spiritual nourish-
 ment is the means by which depths of truth become apparent:

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent,
 Man were immortal and omnipotent,
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

³Shelley's Prose, p. 174.

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within
his heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lover's eyes--
Thou--that to human thought art nourishment.

(Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,
IV, 37-44)

"This Spirit is seen and recognized from time to time by artists and thinkers in their deepest flashes of insight,"⁴ commented Desmond King-Hele.

It will be in order now to examine the role of love as an essential element in the inspiration of artistic creation. In A Defence of Poetry Shelley says:

We [artists] are aware of evanescent visitations of thought and feeling, . . . always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, but elevating and delightful beyond expression. . . . It is as it were the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own. . . . The enthusiasm of virtue, love, patriotism, and friendship is essentially linked with such emotions.⁵

"Evanescent visitations," I think, is the voice of the Spirit of Love, as the following lines from Fragments Connected with Epipsychidion indicate:

There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God
Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires
Love, only love--a wind which o'er the wires
Of the soul's giant harp
There is a mood which language faints beneath.

(ll. 134-139)

⁴ p. 68.

⁵ Shelley's Prose, p. 294.

And what is that most brief and bright delight
 Which rushes through the touch and through the
 sight,
 And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,
 A naked Seraph? None hath ever known.
 Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;
 Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,
 Not to be touched but to be felt alone,
 It fills the world with glory--and is gone.

(ll. 142-149)

An earlier passage from A Defence of Poetry states that
 "Love . . . has been celebrated by a chorus of the greatest
 writers of the renovated world; and the music has pene-
 trated the caverns of society and its echoes still drown
 the dissonance of arms and superstition."⁶ Observe in
 the following two passages how love is a direct source of
 inspiration to the artist:

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
 We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,
 Ere from the vine the leaves of autumn fall,
 Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing
 bowls
 Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew.

(Prince Athanase, ll.
 279-283)

And my spirit [Shelley's]

. . . .

Interpenetrated lie[s]
 By the glory of the sky
 Be it love, light, harmony,
 Odour, or the soul of all
 Which from Heaven like dew doth fall,

⁶ P. 289.

Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

(Lines Written Among the
Euganean Hills, [1818],
ll. 311, 313-319)

A cancelled fragment for A Defence of Poetry may be quoted to explain the significance of love in these selections:

For a divine power moves you, as that of the magnet; which not only can draw iron rings to itself but can endow them with a similar power of attraction to draw other rings, until a long chain of rings is attached to each other; and all is attached to the stone itself.--Thus poetry, being itself divinely inspired, communicates this inspiration to others, until a long chain is made, every link of which is a human spirit and the first of which is attached to that of the poet. . . . When they [poets] sing those beautiful poems, they are inspired or possessed by a higher power.⁷

The "divine power" may be identified with the Spirit of Love, as Shelley makes definite association of the two terms in The Colosseum (1818-19). In the words of the old man, "O Power! . . . thou which interpenetratest all things, and without which this glorious world were a blind and formless chaos, Love, Author of Good, God. . . ." ⁸

The words "poet" and "poetry" must be interpreted in the broad sense to mean any art form which has survived the test of time and which, in any generation, "is a fountain

⁷Lea, p. 164.

⁸Shelley's Prose, p. 227.

forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight."⁹ So Shelley tells us in this stanza from The Revolt of Islam:

'The good and mighty of departed ages
 Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
 Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
 Who leave the vesture of their majesty
 To adorn and clothe this naked world;--and we
 Are like to them--such perish, but they leave
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,
 To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

(IX, xxviii)

While in Prometheus Unbound, after Prometheus had given love to man,

the harmonious mind

Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
 And music lifted up the listening spirit
 Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
 Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
 And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
 The human form, till marble grew divine;
 And mother, gazing, drank the love men see
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.

(II, iv, 75-84)

Similarly, in the Ode to Liberty (1820):

Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
 Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly home
 Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

(IX, 131-135)

Both of these passages show the power of love operating upon the human mind. The lines from Ode to Liberty continue

⁹A Defence of Poetry, Ibid., p. 291.

Shelley's theory that the arts "cannot cease . . . to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race."¹⁰ The passage from Prometheus Unbound is more difficult to interpret. Stephen Larrabee suggested that "As beautiful men produced beautiful statues, so the latter reacted upon the former and the state became indebted to beautiful statues for beautiful men."¹¹ And Charles Swinburne commented:

Women with child gazing on statues (say on the Venus of Melos) bring forth children like them-- children whose features reflect the passion of the gaze and perfection of the sculptured beauty; men, seeing, are consumed with love; "perish" meaning simply "deperire"; compare Virgil's well-worn version, "ut vidi, ut perii" ["As I saw, how was I lost!" (Eclogue VIII 41)].¹²

Both readings seem to me to be acceptable. The love expressed in art "is impossible to feel . . . without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate,"¹³ Shelley says in A Defence of Poetry. Similarly, the old man remarks in The Colosseum: "Contemplating this monument

¹⁰ Preface to Hellas, Ibid., p. 332.

¹¹ p. 184. In Zillman, p. 472.

¹² "Notes on the Text of Shelley," Vol. XV, p. 361, Ibid., p. 471.

¹³ Shelley's Prose, p. 289.

as I do . . . I am filled with astonishment and delight; the spirit of departed generations seems to animate my limbs and circulate through all the fibres of my frame."¹⁴ It would follow, then, that mother drink the love and beauty embodied in statues; love "animate[s] . . . and circulate[s] through all the fibres of [their] frame[s]," and is transmitted to children, whose features "excite [in men] an elevating sense of awfulness and beauty."¹⁵ The word "perish" must be interpreted as the mental reaction in the observer; Virgil's exclamation "how was I lost!" is a fitting response to

the love men see
Reflected in their race . . .

(II, iv, 83-84)

Briefly, the artist "participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one,"¹⁶ which is the Universal Spirit of Love.¹⁷ The creative impulse of the artist is inspired by love "to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare

¹⁴Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 227.

¹⁶A Defence of Poetry, Ibid., p. 279.

¹⁷Chapter I, pp. 1-9, of this study discusses "the one" as the Universal Spirit of Love.

not ever soar."¹⁸ The resulting art form "celebrate[s] the dominion of love,"¹⁹ "which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness":²⁰

And lovely apparitions,--dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality--
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned.²¹

(Prometheus Unbound,
III, iii, 49-60)

(2)

We have observed Shelley's faith in love as nourishment and inspiration to the mind. I now wish to turn to the reconciling function which love performs. In the discussion of this topic, the calming effects of love may be illustrated first.

¹⁸A Defence of Poetry, in Shelley's Prose, p. 294.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 289.

²⁰Ibid., p. 288.

²¹Italics mine.

In the following passages love imposes serenity
on the distraught mind:

Love, look thus again,--
That your look may light a waste of years,
Darting the beam that conquers cares
Through the cold shower of tears.
Love, look thus again!

(Eyes: A Fragment, [1810],
ll. 9-13)

O Love, who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves!

(The Revolt of Islam,
VIII, xi, 3289-90)

When ye are cold, that love is a light sent
From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer
the innocent.

(Fragment: A Gentle Story
of Two Lovers Young, [1819],
ll. 9-10)

. . . those whom Love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond Grief asleep.

(Epipsychidion, ll. 65-67)

He was so awful, yet
So beautiful in mystery and terror
Calming me as the loveliness of heaven
Soothes the unquiet sea.

(Fragments of an Unfinished
Drama, ll. 103-106)

While in these instances from Prometheus Unbound, the
Chorus of Hours sing how love has reshaped chaos into
harmony:

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering spheres,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

(IV, 169-171)

The Moon tells the Earth that

So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full!

(IV, 453-456)

And Demogorgon addresses both the Moon and the Earth,
saying how

each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony.

(IV, 526-527)

These tasks of Love may be extended to a related but special function, -- its power to bind men together in unity. "[Love] is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man but with everything which exists,"²² Shelley says in the Essay on Love. Milton Wilson further explains this idea: "Love itself defeats isolation by mingling one person with another or by coordinating into a group the independent groups of society."²³ A passage from The Revolt of Islam speaks of

a nation
Made free by love;-- a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good.

(V, xiv, 1839-41)

While in Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills Shelley

²² Shelley's Prose, p. 170.

²³ p. 213.

pictures the "polluting multitude," (l. 356) which threatens his paradise, as being subdued by

the love which heals all strife
 Circling, like the breath of life,
 All things in that sweet abode
 With its own mild brotherhood.

(ll. 366-369)

With greater effect the same idea finds expression in Bernardo's speech as he tells his doomed Mother:

and thou, Mother,
 Whose love was as a bond to all our loves . . .
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

(The Cenci, V, iv, 135-137)

In Prometheus Unbound Asia says that among the gifts Prometheus gave to mankind during the evil reign of Saturn,

Love he sent to bind
 The disunited tendrils of that vine
 Which bears the wine of life, the human heart.

(II, iv, 63-65)

James Notopoulos cites an interesting passage from Shelley's translation of Plato's Symposium, which explains the thought of these lines: "Plato conceives of mutual love as 'that reconciler and bond of union . . . which seeks to make two, one, and to heal the divided nature of man.'" ²⁴ Later in the drama Shelley specifies the universal brotherhood of mankind made possible by love:

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,
 Of love and might to be divided not.

(IV, 394-395)

Carl Grabo commented that "the metaphor of the chain to suggest unity in multiplicity is analogous to that of the sea with its waves. . . . We encounter the familiar conjunction of love, thought, and might which in man, as in God, is both trinity and unity, three aspects of the One."²⁵ To A.T. Strong "this is the consummation toward which all human kind is unconsciously striving."²⁶ And Shelley himself stressed the importance of unity in the Essay on Life:

The view of life presented by the most refined deductions of the intellectual philosophy, is that of unity. . . . Pursuing the same thread of reasoning, the existence of distinct individual minds, similar to that which is employed in questioning its own nature, is likewise found to be a delusion.²⁷

Shelley sums up his faith in love as a unifying power in The Witch of Atlas:

all things together grow
Through which the harmony of love can pass.

(XXXV, 323-324)

(3)

Still another important function which Shelley attributed to love in its revitalizing role is that of

²⁵Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, p. 148.

²⁶ P. 51.

²⁷Shelley's Prose, p. 174.

energy -- the energy of physical growth and the energy symbolized in electricity. Let us first examine passages which illustrate the former idea.

Floyd Stovall remarked that "Love is the principle which actuates the life of the universe."²⁸ This point is exemplified in the regenerated world of Queen Mab:

All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life.

. . . .

fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair,
And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,
Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

(VIII, 107-108, 119-123)

The same thought finds greater emphasis in this scene from Prometheus Unbound, in which, as Carl Grabe commented, "energy born of love . . . transforms the moon."²⁹ The Moon is filled with love as she looks upon the Earth and says:

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'Tis love, all love!

(IV, 363-369)

²⁸ p. 288.

²⁹ A Newton Among Poets: Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound (Chapel Hill, 1930), p. 161.

Grabo also noted that "Again we have the association of love with force and life, or the identification of them as three aspects of one and the same divine energy."³⁰

Two more passages showing love as the basis of propagation and fertility in nature may be cited:

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

(The Sensitive Plant,
I, 5-8)

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear;
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move
And form all others, life and love.

(When Passion's Trance is
Overpast, III [1821])

Professor Grabo has made an interesting study of Shelley's use of electrical phenomena.³¹ Grabo feels that in some instances love operates in the same capacity as electricity, and he cites as proof certain passages from scientific treatises of the day. I think that Grabo tends to suggest meanings which Shelley had not originally intended, but for the most part his ideas are quite good. Let us examine some of his findings. The following passages are from Prometheus Unbound.

³⁰Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, p. 146.

³¹This subject is treated in Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation and in A Newton Among Poets.

Early in the drama we find Prometheus reminiscing how

I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes.

(I, 122-123)

Grabo had this to say about the implication of these lines:

The imprisonment of Prometheus signalizes his separation from the life-giving forces of nature [Asia], the life which he has drunk from her eyes. This "life" . . . is also "love," and, in a second aspect, electricity or force. The spirit of man languishes because he is divorced from the natural life. He is deprived of life, love, and energy.³²

In the third act Grabo again noted that "the identification of the Spirit of the Earth with electricity, and the further identification of electric energy with love"³³ is implicit. The Earth has summoned the Spirit of the Earth and says to Asia:

This is my torch-bearer;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own.

(III, iii, 148-152)

Two other instances in which Shelley tends to represent love as electricity stand out. The first passage sees the

³²Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, pp. 19-20. We will remember, as was pointed out in Chapter I, that Asia is symbolic of ideal love.

³³Ibid., p. 116.

Spirit of the Hour describing the great change taking place in the new world:

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change: the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.

(III, iv, 98-103)

Grabo interpreted this to mean that "love, energy, electricity, heat are thought of as one, or as but aspects of the ether which, in Newtonian hypothesis, is the source of energy, life, and matter."³⁴ The function which Grabo ascribed to "Newtonian ether," which is the source of life, is seen in practical operation in the final act.

The Chorus of Hours and Spirits sing:

Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

(IV, 177-179)

Grabo's comment may be quoted in full:

The cloud, symbol of fertility and life, bears "love's sweet rain," the "electric rains" without which there can be no verdure, no life. The clouds are led "in leashes like starbeams," guided that is, by invisible electric force. The cloud, thus, in its formation and in its function is guided and animated by an energy which is electricity or "love," as you choose to define it. . . . In the symbols of the cloud he suggests the identification of love with energy in creating and fostering life. And . . . the life cycle of the elements, and, similarly, the life cycle of individual souls.³⁵

³⁴Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation, p. 119.

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

The cloud as a bearer of "love's sweet rain" is again seen in this passage from the poem The Cloud (1820). One would do well to keep in mind Grabo's comment that "The cloud . . . in its formation and in its function is guided and animated by an energy which is electricity or 'love,' as you choose to define it."

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains;
 And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

(ll. 21-30)

(4)

Before I examine love as a destroyer of barriers, I wish to point out briefly the one obstacle against which love is powerless. In A Refutation of Deism (1812-13) Shelley states that some people rejoice instead of shudder at evil:

Many there are . . . sufficiently hardened to the precepts of humanity as to regard the deliberate butchery of thousands of their species as a theme of exultation and a source of honor and to consider any failure in these remorseless enterprises as a defect in the system of things.³⁶

In the Essay on Christianity he further explains this

³⁶ Shelley's Prose, p. 134.

idea: "The nature of a narrow and malevolent spirit is so essentially incompatible with happiness as to render it inaccessible even to the influencings of the benignant God."³⁷ The following passages will serve to illustrate this person who cannot be swayed by love.

In one of the poems of 1810 Shelley pities

that poor wretch who cannot, cannot love:
He bears a load which nothing can remove,
A killing withering weight.

(The Solitary, II,
10-12)

The impression suggested here is given fuller detail in these stanzas from The Revolt of Islam. The first depicts the tyrant's guards:

Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood,
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
Carnage and ruin have been made their food
From infancy--ill has become their good,
And for its hateful sake their will has wove
The chains which eat their hearts--the multitude
Surrounding them, with words of human love,
Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

(IV, xxvi, 1640-47)

While in this instance Shelley pictures the cruel Iberian Priest

who, never in his mildest dreams
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
Had seared with blistering ice--but he misdeems
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
Inly for self.

(XII, x, 4534-39)

³⁷Ibid., p. 204. God, as I have indicated elsewhere -- p. 65, is identified with Love. The same identification is made in the Essay on Love, p. 169.

The hardened nature of the slave and the false Priest bears out the thought in these two lines, which Shelley approvingly quotes from Milton's Paradise Lost: "'The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.'"³⁸ This theme is continued in The Woodman and the Nightingale (1818), which describes how all nature absorbs the beautiful song of the nightingale -- all except the insensate Woodman, who is deaf to the music:

Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm
Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one.

. . . .

The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

(ll. 36-39, 68-70)

In The Cenci Beatrice pleads to Camillo to rescue her from the malicious Count Cenci. All her efforts to change his evil nature have been rebuked:

[I] have sought by patience, love, and tears
To soften him, and . . . this could not be.

(I, iii, 115-116)

So Shelley sums up this sad predicament in human nature in Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills:

³⁸ I, 254-255. In A Defence of Poetry, Ibid., p. 295.

Which doth divide the living and the dead
 Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,--
 All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.

(XII, xv, 4580-84)

A few stanzas later an onlooker, moved to compassion by the execution, drives the moral home and then applies it to himself, as he takes his own life:

--therefore shall ye behold
 How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;
 Tell to your children this!

(XII, xxx, 4713-15)

Act IV of Prometheus Unbound is "a true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love" (l. 384), and we see

Love, Thought, and Breath,
 The powers that quell Death.

(ll. 150-151)

Benjamin Kurtz saw in these lines "love's ecstasy defying death, thought's power assimilating it to a higher reality, and breath symbolizing the everlasting renewal of life in successive forms."⁴⁰ And J.H. Cousins felt that "Love is the redemptive power in the cosmos and human life. Thought . . . is to Shelley but a synonym for Love made intelligent, the power that both consecrates and liberates. The breath of Life-more-abundant blows through every crevice of his brain and heart."⁴¹ Through the

⁴⁰ p. 185.

⁴¹ pp. 42-44. In Zillman, p. 581.

presence of love man is not subjected to "mean passions, bad delights, / And selfish cares" (Prometheus Unbound, IV, 406-407). For as long as love rules his will,

The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
And love and joy can make the foulest breast
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

(The Revolt of Islam,
VIII, xxii, 3394-96)

One of Shelley's favorite uses of Love was to picture it piercing through chaos. Several characteristic passages may adequately illustrate this function of love.

In a stanza from The Witch of Atlas Shelley imagines that in the dawn of existence

when but three hours old,
The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold.

(XXXII, 297-299)

The meaning of "first-born Love" and its relation to chaos is explained in this passage from Plato's Symposium: "[Hesiod] says . . . that after Chaos these two were produced, the Earth and Love. . . . Love, therefore, is universally acknowledged to be among the oldest of things."⁴² The following lines from Prometheus Unbound suggest the vast change Love effects upon chaos during their first meeting:

⁴² (179, 180. Shelley's translation. Julian, VII, 171, 173). Quoted by Helene Richter, "Shelley's Weltanschauung," p. 252, in Zillman, p. 463.

And from beneath, around, within, above,
 Filling thy void annihilation, love
 Burst in like light.

(IV, 353-355)

And in the Ode to Liberty the "one Spirit"

vast

With life and love makes chaos ever new.

(VI, 89)

Finally, in the Preface to Hellas, Christ predicts that
 Greece shall be reborn out of chaos:

She shall arise

Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!
 And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed
 Their presence in the beauty and the light
 Of Thy smile, O Father,--as they gather
 The spirit of Thy love which paves for them
 Their path o'er the abyss.

(II, 112-118)

The barrier of institutions and the evil
 connected with them remains to be considered. Shelley
 is confident, however, that the power of love can
 quickly and effectively dispose of such a formidable
 obstacle. The following passages will make this clear.

In a poem of 1812 Shelley expresses his faith
 that love can triumph over any hardships which may beset
 man:

Shout aloud! Let every slave,
 Crouching at Corruption's throne,
 Start into a man, and brave
 Racks and chains without a groan;
 And the castle's heartless glow,
 And the hovel's vice and woe,
 Fade like gaudy flowers that blow--
 Weeds that peep, and then are gone

Whilst, from misery's ashes risen,
Love shall burst the captive's prison.

(To the Republicans of
North America, II)

The idea in this passage is stated with equal fervor in the famous Letter to Lord Ellenborough (1812), in which Shelley defends the "blameless and respectable character" of Daniel Eaton and denounces Ellenborough, who brought unjustified action against him: "I would have you know, my Lord, that fetters of iron cannot bind or subdue the soul of virtue.⁴³ From the damps and solitude of its dungeon it ascends free and undaunted."⁴⁴ In Epipsychidion we observe Shelley's most passionate declaration of this theme:

The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels--but true Love never yet
Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

(ll. 396-407)

⁴³In the "Benevolence" essay from A Speculation on Morals, p. 189, Shelley says that the man who loves is naturally virtuous. The same identification is also made in An Association of Philanthropists, p. 61.

⁴⁴Shelley's Prose, pp. 78-79.

But although Love is man's personal protector,
it can and does operate on a much grander scale. In
the concluding canto of Queen Mab we see all the evils
of the world vanquished with the dawning of "the morn
of Love" (IX, 38):

First, Crime triumphant o'er all hope careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong;
Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Virtue's attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe,
Till done by her own venomous sting to death,
She left the moral world without a law,
No longer fettering Passion's fearless wing,
Nor searing Reason with the brand of God.

(IX, 41-48)

The power of love brings similar results in The Revolt
of Islam and Charles the First (1819-22):

Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody and false, and cold.

(The Revolt of Islam
IV, xv, 1540-44)

and the golden love
Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends . . .
Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.

(Charles the First,
ii, 282-284, 287)

While at the climax of Act III in Prometheus Unbound, the
Spirit of the Hour appears to tell how

the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.

(III, iv, 100-103)

And we see the visible effects of the triumph of Love
over Evil:

 thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
'All hope abandon ye who enter here.'

. . . .

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors.

. . . .

And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,--
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world, . . .
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines.

. . . .

The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself.

(III, iv, 131-136; 164-172;
180-183, 189; 193-197)

And this is now a reality, says Demogorgon in the final
speech of the play, because

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.

(IV, 557-561)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The numerous capacities which Shelley attributed to the term Love have been illustrated and explained in detail. It will now be in order to summarize my findings by reviewing significant points.

In Chapter One I dealt with Shelley's recognition of the reality of a Universal Spirit of Good, which the poet continually refers to as Love and Beauty. It was learned that this Absolute Reality is eternal and unchanging and is symbolized through certain mediums. Each medium, I pointed out, shadows the splendor of perfect Love and gives man a sense of what is good, beautiful, and true. In the second Chapter I showed that love, imagination, and sympathy are very closely related. Through the power of an active imagination, love can be made to operate in the following ways: to encourage affection for one's fellow man, to let the mind perceive harmony and beauty in the world, to increase sensitivities so that man can enter into and share the feelings of others, and finally to bring about a complete erasure of the Self,

this task being the ultimate goal for which love strives. I passed next to a discussion of the misery and ruin which are often caused by love. On this point I concluded that the evil which follows love results because man is at present limited and is incapable of being guided in the path of love, which must dominate completely before happiness can ensue. Chapter Three was concerned with the different types of love which man can attain as illustrated in human, spiritual, and mystical relationships. Noting briefly the evil involved in egotistical love, I then cited passages to show how human love can reach various stages of development. A physical union, it was pointed out, can become a highly-spiritualized love between the sexes -- the more elevated type depending upon a mutual desire to lose the bond of Self and to aspire toward the pleasure of the beloved. I then passed on to consider another of Shelley's speculations concerning human love, namely the inner soul which every man possesses and with the prototype of which he thirsts to become united. The last of my findings illustrated the ultimate achievement of an experience in love -- a mystical union with the eternal Spirit. The final chapter of my study discussed love as a harmonizing force. The first point I made was to show how love as spiritual nourishment can elevate the mind to perceive a vivid realization of life, after which one is inspired to under-

take great artistic endeavors. The vital influence which love bears upon art was particularly stressed. Secondly I presented love in its reconciling function. Here it was shown that love acts not only as a calming force but also as a power to bind men into unity and brotherhood. Next I examined passages in which love provided the energy of physical growth and the energy symbolized in electricity. Last of all love was pictured in its role as a destroyer of barriers. It was mentioned that human beings of an exceptionally hard nature were unaffected by the sway of love; however, I clearly demonstrated that major obstacles such as evil limitations, chaos, and institutions, would disappear once the universal dominion of love became a reality.

But now that the different uses of love have been brought together into a unified whole, what conclusions may be advanced as to their role in Shelley's thought? First of all I offer the opinion that the poet's approach to and outlook on life rests upon a faith in the existence of an eternal Spirit of Love and Beauty. Once the Goodness which this Spirit offers is fully received, realized, and practiced by man, whose free will can accept or reject its influences, then love can be free to operate; and the ills which plague human life will vanish. Many of the powers which Shelley felt confident that Love could perform outline the type of life

man would lead in a world governed by love. For instance, love would cause universal brotherhood among men, for this is one of its functions. Next, as a result of a highly-refined imagination, man would always perceive harmony and beauty; he would be able to transcend his Self -- once an obstacle in his path, and share in the happiness of others. To make even more significant the world of Love, Shelley pictures all life being animated by the energy in love. A meaningful and happy existence, to be sure, is in store for man if and when he allows love to guide him.

On the other hand, due to strong limitations which prevent most men from attaining the happiness in store for them, evil must exist. Shelley was quite aware of this sad reality, but what proved to be most painful to him was the realization that love itself was very likely to cause misery in a world which was inadequately prepared to receive its healing powers. Thus many of the situations in Shelley's poetry depict the sad disillusionment which befalls men who have acted lovingly, or many of them present in vivid pictures the tyranny and evil which follow historical events whose original purpose was love.

Finally Shelley is concerned with the efficacy of love to medicine the ills of this era. He was aware that a golden age was somewhere in the remote future and

that for the time being man must defy evil and endure its hardships. However, Shelley faithfully believed that if one chose love as a guide through life, he could make insignificant any obstacles which might confront him. Furthermore, if he endeavored to achieve perfection in every aspect of love, he could perhaps attain a divine mystical union with the eternal Spirit of Love; and to Shelley this experience would become the supreme moment in anyone's lifetime.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baker, Carlos. Shelley's Major Poetry: The Fabric of a Vision. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948.
- Barnard, Ellsworth. Shelley's Religion. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1937.
- Brailsford, H.N. Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1913.
- Brandes, George. Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature. 4 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905.
- Brinton, Clarence Crane. The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Cameron, Kenneth Neill. The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950.
- Clark, David Lee, ed. Shelley's Prose, or The Triumph of a Prophecy. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1954.
- Ellis, Frederick Startridge. A Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1892.
- Elton, Oliver. A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920.
- Fairchild, Hoxie Neale. Religious Trends in English Poetry. 4 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949.
- Firkins, Oscar W. Power and Elusiveness in Shelley. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1937.
- Foakes, R.A. The Romantic Assertion: A Study in the Language of Nineteenth Century Poetry. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958.
- Gingerich, Solomon Francis. Essays in the Romantic Poets. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924.

- _____. "Shelley's Doctrine of Necessity Versus Christianity," PMLA, XXXIII (1918) 444-473.
- Grabo, Carl. A Newton Among Poets: Shelley's Use of Science in Prometheus Unbound. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1930.
- _____. Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935.
- Hughes, A.M.D. The Nascent Mind of Shelley. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947.
- Hutchinson, Thomas, ed. The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Ingpen, Roger, ed. The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley. 2 vols. London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1909.
- James, William. Varieties of Religious Experience. New York and Bombay: Longman's, Green, and Company, 1908.
- King-Hele, Desmond. Shelley: His Thought and Work. London: Macmillan, 1960.
- Kurtz, Benjamin P. The Pursuit of Death: A Study of Shelley's Poetry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1933.
- Lea, F.A. Shelley and the Romantic Revolution. Routeledge, London: George Routeledge & Sons, 1945.
- MacDonald, Daniel J. The Radicalism of Shelley and its Sources. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Education Press, 1912.
- Notopoulos, James A. The Platonism of Shelley: A Study of Platonism and the Poetic Mind. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1949.
- Peck, Walter Edwin. Shelley: His Life and Work. 2 vols. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927.
- Perkins, David. The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Pulos, C.E. The Deep Truth: A Study of Shelley's Scepticism. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954.

- Roe, Ivan. Shelley: The Last Phase. New York: Roy Publishers, 1955.
- Salt, Henry S. Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet and Pioneer. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1924.
- Shawcross, John, ed. Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism. London: Henry Frowde, 1909.
- Sickels, Eleanor M. The Gloomy Egoist: Moods and Themes of Melancholy From Gray to Keats. New York: Columbia University Press, 1932.
- Solve, Melvin T. Shelley: His Theory of Poetry. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Strong, Archibald T. Three Studies in Shelley. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1921.
- Stovall, Floyd. "Shelley's Doctrine of Love," PMLA, XLV (1930), 283-303.
- Symonds, John Addington. Shelley, in English Men of Letters Series, John Morley, ed. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, n.d.
- Ullman, James Ramsey. Mad Shelley. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930.
- Weaver, Bennett. Toward the Understanding of Shelley. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1932.
- White, Newman Ivey. Shelley. 2 vols. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.
- Wilson, Milton. Shelley's Later Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Yeats, W.B. Essays and Introductions. New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- Zillman, John Lawrence, ed. Shelley's Prometheus Unbound: A Variorum Edition. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959.