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HIS SELF-REVISIONISM TOWARD “THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE”

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2019

NEGATIVE IDEALISM OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY:
HIS SELF-REVISIONISM TOWARD "THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE"

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**Negative Idealism of Percy Bysshe Shelley:
His Self-Revisionism toward “The Triumph of Life”**

Introduction

“The Triumph of Life”(TL) of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) is the terminal work of self-revisionism, that completes his negative idealism, which urges the poet to express his ideal in his writings and makes him reject his own works because of the hunger for a more ideal way of expression. He tries to express the transcendent perfection which cannot be descriptive by the limited human language. This is a literary application of negative theology that regards human language as being limited therefore tries to explain God by using negative sentences. He continually revises his own works through creation and denial until he reaches TL, which is the most highly valued and the most negative of his works in terms of characters, story, and expressions. Negative idealism is an attitude to be unacceptable toward his own works by pursuing an extreme of Platonic idealism, as well as to be positive in order to keep searching for new poetical expressions in aesthetics, ethics, and language.

Shelley continues to pursue his ideal from his early stage as a poet through repetitive creation and rejection. In *Queen Mab* (1813), his first long poem, Necessity is the source that brings the ideal world, but it has lost its absolute authority in *Alastor* after severe experience and failure in his real life. Although vegetarianism is argued eloquently

around 1813, it is scarcely found in his writings after 1815. The Platonic intellectual beauty that Shelley worshiped in his early stage changes into the beauty in horror described in "On Medusa" through ekphrasis, which is inspired by Italian art. The strong aggression toward Christianity, which is inspired by eighteenth century philosophers such as d'Holbach, is depicted in *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) and *Queen Mab*. However, in "On Christianity," written around 1817, Shelley acknowledges Jesus Christ as having an ideal ethical character, apart from his skeptical view toward the religion. The character of the protagonists Shelley frequently adopts in his poems pendulates between the hero, who saves his people by sacrificing himself, and the artist, who pursues his ideal to the extreme and without caring about other people. Thus, Shelley continues to pursue his ideal, repeating creation and negation of his own works until he arrived at TL. TL is the poem in which his self-revisionism struggles along.

The structure and scene changes make TL the most outstanding and distinctive of his poems, and they result from negating of "Prince Athanase" (1817). In "Prince Athanase," Shelley tries to combine certain elements—such as inconsiderate people, a mentor for a young disciple to surpass, pure innocent days, and a femme fatale—into one poem, but he fails to unite them into one story and finally leaves them as fragments. In TL, he uses a multiple-nested structure instead of forcing the connection of fragments with one story. And the poem

successfully maintains consistency by including the same phrase "Why?" which plays a role of the cue of the scene change.

The absence of the heroic protagonist is another distinctive feature of TL, and it is the fruit of Shelley's self-revisionism. Neither the apparent protagonist nor the hero is described in TL. Jesus Christ, once the target of Shelley's attacks, is regarded as the ideal character, teaching doctrines with which Shelley has great sympathy. Shelley sees Jesus in the same light as that Greek mythology is the catalog of many a various characters. In TL, only Jesus and Socrates are not captives of life's triumphal procession. Shelley expresses the ideal hybrid of Christianity and Hellenism by apophasis.

I obtained the view of Shelley's unspecified expression from two essays on negative theology by Jacques Derrida. Derrida proposes a revolutionary philosophy of negative theology in "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy" in 1982. Moreover, in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denial," he develops a narrow definition of negative theology as the way to recognize God, to the broad definition as the way to recognize what is unsayable with language. Derrida also paves the way for the application of negative theology in philosophy and literature. The present essay takes a suggestion from the viewpoint of "a literature to describe what cannot be described" as well as *Deconstruction & Criticism* (1979) by the Yale critics. The negative theological aspect of Shelley, inspired by Derrida, has been little applied to Shelley studies, which are inclined to see the poet as an idealist pursuing the sublime.

Negative idealism is the basis which I regard as Shelley's creation. Skeptical idealism, the view to find both an idealist and a skeptic in Shelley, has been argued by some critics like Wasserman, Hogle, and Curran. But I see negativity in Shelley's idealism—negativity in thought and negativity in expression. Shelley's idealism is based on Platonism which he has devoted himself to since he was a student. Negativity in thought is his tendency of pursuing to the ultimate. Platonic idea is beyond the material world, so it cannot be acknowledged or expressed in human language. Shelley pursues his ideal given by the poetic inspiration, but the work he composed is limited by the language so that it cannot reflect the inspiration exactly. So he negates his own works even in the middle of writing. Instead the negation urges him to the next creation pursuing a better expression.

Negativity in expression is the way to express what is indescribable by negation. Negative theology is the way to acknowledge God who is beyond the human language and thoughts. The germ of the idea can be found in Patristics and Hellenism, especially Neo-Platonism, and accepted through the Middle and modern ages to the present.¹ It express transcendental God by negatives. Shelley uses this method to express his transcendental ideal. Moreover, he uses "negative" more widely as absence (negative to existence), ambiguity (negative to specify) and apophasis. Using such negative methods, Shelley tries to express the indescribable ideal. Negative idealism, which makes the poet unreceptive to his own works and motivates him to pursue the next

¹ Concerning the history of negative theology, see Rocca 3-26.

creation, connects his conflicting vectors of pursuing the ideal and examining the inner self. Negative idealism of Shelley is the eternal effort to express what is indescribable.

This paper is divided into two parts. In Part I titled "Before 'The Triumph of Life'" I argue how Shelley's negative idealism contributes to his works preceding TL in five themes. Chapter 1 examines his doctrine of Necessity which grows out of materialism afterwards. The most obvious idea displayed in the first published poem *Queen Mab* is materialism. For Shelley the source of world order is not God but Necessity, which is deeply influenced by the eighteenth-century thinkers. But later the absoluteness of Necessity is negated. Shelley regards Necessity in *Alastor* as not the being that guides a stray poet to the right way but the being that only punishes him for selfishness. And the protagonist accepts the punishment. Shelley's Necessity shifted from the order that brings ideal world to the being that makes a person realize his fate.

In his early stage from 1810, when Shelley published "Necessity of Atheism" with his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg, Shelley is a loyal student of thinkers in eighteenth century, especially Hume, D'Holbach and Godwin. Materialism is so dominant for Shelley that he is very sure of the world moving according to the law of Necessity. Every incident has its cause and the incident is to have the result that should happen. In *Queen Mab* Shelley explains that the present misery of the world was caused by mistakes made by previous people and the world is to be

reformed according to the law of Necessity. So absolute is Necessity for Shelley until he comes back from Ireland. The Ireland campaign to save the oppressed Catholic people is a total failure. He has to learn that the misery in Ireland was surely caused by past mistakes but is not necessarily reformed properly. After coming back to England, Shelley's health goes worse. In *Alastor* written at the time of his worst condition tells that Necessity leads the protagonist to death because of his own selfishness. But the depictions of the protagonist are rather sympathetic as if Shelley wanted to admit such a way of life of the poet who pursues his own ideal to death. So the absoluteness of Necessity has gone and Shelley revises his ideal for Necessity around 1815.

Chapter 2 argues his vegetarianism which I regard as a justification by a carnophobe Shelley. Shelley has strict ideas of what to eat and what not to eat early in his career as a poet, and he writes two essays on the theme: "Vindication of Natural Diet"(1813) and "On the Vegetable System of Diet"(1814-15). The former stems from *Queen Mab*. Shelley learns about vegetarianism from precursors such as Plutarch, Ovid, and Rousseau, as well as from contemporaries at the forefront of science and medicine like Joseph Ritson, William Lambe, and, especially, John Frank Newton. As William Axon gives a detailed account, Shelley strongly believes that vegetarianism brings a wholesome society.² Though his tone of attacking meat-eating and alcohol-drinking is severe at the time he wrote these essays, Shelley becomes less ardent about these issues later in life: he sometimes eats

² Axon 8.

meat for the sake of recovering his health, and comes to admit the beneficial effects of meat on the body. His letters and biography tell us that though he gradually becomes less positive toward arguing strict vegetarianism, he does not abandon the idea entirely; the poet abstains from meat and alcohol until his death.

This is not because of its scientific reasons as before but because of the result of his extreme consideration about eating flesh. In some of his works around 1820, the scenes in which the word "eat" is used sometimes depict eating man's flesh.³ This indicates the history of Shelley's changing attitude toward foods. Shelley dislikes eating meat since he was a child, and his dislike meets the proper explanation of medical science and contemporary philosophy of animal protection. Animals are friends and companions for humans. So eating animals means eating friends, that is to say, humans. Shelley's carnophobia is unconscious fear for cannibalism. The doctrines of Pythagoras and Orphism supports this fear.

In chapter 3, I discuss his aesthetics which changes from pursuing intellectual beauty to inspiring beauty in horror. Shelley's reference to the children of John Frank Newton as "the most beautiful and healthy creatures" indicates his strong belief on the connection between foods and beauty.⁴ Like other romantic poets, Shelley's interest in beauty is focused on nature and Greco-Roman art; he looks for the sublime in nature as well as in what was created by humans in ancient time. What

³ "Till she will eat strange flesh" (*The Cenci*, III. i. 48); "What! Do they eat man's flesh?" (*The Cyclops*, l. 120); "and eat / The dead in horrid truce" (*Laon and Cythna*, X. iii. 7-8)

⁴ Murray 88.

makes Shelley's aesthetic different from other romantics is the intellect he finds in beauty. Influenced by Platonism and Neo-Platonism, Shelley thinks that beauty is the existence that teaches him and uplifts him to the extreme sublime. This attitude is kept and described repeatedly in his best-known poems, such as "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Prometheus Unbound*.

His aesthetic is to enter another phase after he comes to Italy, where he experiences Roman and Renaissance art directly. As he travels throughout Italy, Shelley visits many ruins and art museums. Letters to his friends and a few essays tell us how Shelley appreciated the Italian ruins and arts. The poem "On Medusa" (1819), in particular, shows what Shelley finds in beauty: horror. "On Medusa" is a poem of ekphrasis that conveys the beauty of horror more than the picture itself. In this poem Shelley describes not only the images which are actually painted but also time and movement which are imagined by those who watch the picture. Same depictions can be found in "Notes on Sculptures in Rome and Florence" written in the same year. Looking at the statue of Laocoön, he senses the working of the serpent's poison. Shelley's true beauty is revised from the giver and leader to the stimulator and the one who makes the watcher create another work of art.

Chapter 4 investigates his attitude toward religion and myth, which Shelley gradually comes to accept by mythicizing Christianity. Shelley's aggressiveness toward Christianity varies in inverse proportion to his involvement with the religion. Religion has been an object of criticism for Shelley since his student days, when he was

oppressed by the religion. By publishing *The Necessity of Atheism*, Shelley was expelled from Oxford University six months after his enrollment there. His attack on Christianity culminates in 1813 with his publication of *Queen Mab*, when he fought for the oppressed Catholics in Ireland.

In 1817 when he wrote "On Christianity," Shelley still maintains his attitude of criticism for the gospel writers' irresponsibility, while he admires Jesus Christ for his tolerance and nonviolence, and for most of his doctrine; this means that Shelley accepts Jesus as a person with an ideal character. Timothy Webb explains that Shelley regards Christianity as a myth, and utilizes Jesus' character in his poems.⁵ This mythicizing of Christianity gives the poet objectivity to the religion so that he can utilize it in his poems, just like he applies the Greek myths. As Earl Wasserman thoroughly examines the character of Prometheus compared with Jesus,⁶ Shelley tries to create his ideal character compounding Christian and Hellenism ideal personalities. And in *The Cenci* (1819), the relationship between God and man is represented in the relationship between Count Cenci, father, and Beatrice, daughter. The cruel acts of Count Cenci toward Beatrice imply what the religion has done to man. At this moment Shelley is able to get a total objectiveness toward the religion and comes to regard it as a mythology which shows a variety of stories, episodes, allegories and characters. This way of regarding Christianity is the same as he takes

⁵ Webb, *Shelley: A Voice Not Understood* 157-90.

⁶ Earl Wasserman 255-305.

Greek mythology. Just like he categorizes the Books of Moses, Jove, David, and Solomon as poetry in *Defense of Poetry* (1821), he takes the Bible as one of literature.

Chapter 5 considers Shelley's heroism expressed in his character development which is oscillating between a hero and an artist. Since the beginning of his composing poetry, his protagonists are heroic: a hero is always his ideal character. Though a traditional hero is a warrior with extraordinary strength and a brave heart, Shelley's hero is a revolutionary with nonviolence. But later, the character of his protagonists begins to divide into two types: a hero who sacrifices himself for the emancipation of the oppressed people and society, or an artist who pursues his ideal, not caring for others. The protagonist of *Alastor* is the latter type, while Laon in *Revolt of Islam* is the former. Athanase is the former at the beginning of the poem, but turns into the latter by the end, just like the Maniac in "Julian and Maddalo": he who once worked idealistically for people becomes a hermit. Prometheus pursues his way without compromising, and brings peace to the world. In *The Cenci*, this antinomic ideal character is shared by Beatrice and Lucretia. Though both directly opposite characters are ideal for Shelley, he gradually comes to be skeptical of such heroic characters through his experiences in real life. The protagonist of *Hellas* (1822), published two months before Shelley begins to write TL, is an incompetent enemy who suffers nightmare and fears his own ruin. It is not a hero but the fall of the Turks that brings the victory of Greece.

In Part II, I examine TL. Shelley's negative idealism is the most obvious in his last poem "The Triumph of Life." In each scene Shelley reveals his ideal with unspecified expression. On the vision of multitudes and the chariot, Shelley's epistemology and negative sympathy toward the multitude is discussed. Rousseau's explanation about the captives shows Shelley's reinterpretation of Necessity and the ideal way of learning, that is, to overrun the master. The scene of "A Shape all light" from the realm without a name suggests the importance of anonymity and destructive beauty in ideal woman. To be a fragmental poem indicates Shelley's refusal toward specified ending or poetic justice. By not depicting a certain ending, Shelley asserts the limit of human words and at the same time explores the possibility of language.

TL, the most evident of Shelley's negative idealism, is defined as negative theological by clearing Derrida's three objections toward discourses that resembles negative theology: 1. nihilistic or obscurantist; 2. speaking only for the sake of speaking; and 3. sterile, repetitive, or mechanical.⁷ TL is fertile of images and connotation that bring forth Shelley's ideal on human, thought and language. The words and depictions in TL speak for the sake of revealing the logos in his mind. The descriptions of a variety of people are far from repetition or mechanical senselessness.

TL is distinct from Shelley's other poems because of its multiple-nested structure: with continuing visions the scene changes four times

⁷ Derrida 75-76.

in the course of the poem. With the exception of the first change to the second scene, in every scene the main character becomes confused and is led to shout "Why?" By this cue, the scene suddenly shifts to the next one. At first, to observe the first vision of frenzy multitudes and the obscure leader of the triumphal procession, the narrator "I" becomes confused and shout "Why?" Then Rousseau appears and explains the captives one by one. "I," not being able to bear watching the miserable captives, cries "Why?" Then scene changes to Rousseau's recollection of his peaceful days of youth and meeting of "a Shape all light." Urged by the thirst for knowledge, Rousseau asks her "Why?" Just at the moment he touches the cup she offers, the new vision appears.

This dramatic shift is obtained from negation of a previous poem, "Prince Athanase" (PA). In PA, Shelley tries to describe four points that are present in TL: selfish and secular people who do not understand the protagonist, a master who needs to be outrun, a recollection of happy and innocent days, and a femme fatale. Shelley fails to connect these pieces in one story, and leaves PA in fragments. PA has two parts, the second of which includes six fragments. In TL, however, Shelley is loath to force scattered pieces into a connected whole. Instead, the scenes change suddenly (without losing the flow of a single poem) by repeating the key phrase. Adopting the chasing and surging rhythm of *terza rima*, which the poet had tried to apply in PA, as the rhyming pattern also contributes to keep the coherency and to express the waves of visions.

After summarizing the critical history of TL in chapter 1, in chapter 2 I argue Shelley's epistemology through the view of the

multitudes and the chariot from which his negative sympathy toward the multitude is deducted. The contrast between clear and detailed depiction of multitudes and obscure expression of the rider on the chariot provides Shelley's epistemology that he developed from the influence of the eighteenth-century thinkers like John Locke and David Hume. Moreover, philanthropy that Shelley has long pursued is completed by the negative sympathy shown by the protagonist toward the multitudes.

The multitudes, who are shouting and dancing at the triumphal procession, are actually unconscious of what and why they are doing. "I," the observer, is also unaware of what and why he is watching. The observer and the observed are the same in terms of their self-unconsciousness. As Lloyd Abbey elucidates that images in TL are utilized for mirroring effect, the object becomes the subject, so that the philanthropy that Shelley has pursued since his early days is fully represented.⁸ About Life in the chariot, though Shelley describes the vague appearance, it does not explain the Life's substance. This presents Shelley's negative epistemology that what you see is not always what you recognize.

Chapter 3 considers Shelley's reinterpretation of Necessity and his effort to reach out for ideal wisdom by surpassing the master. The explanation of the first captive Napoleon by Rousseau indicates Shelley's new phase of Necessity. In *Queen Mab* Shelley declares his absolute trust on Necessity that brings good, and in *Alastor* he

⁸ Abbey 70-86.

compromises and regards it as the punisher to the self-centered artist. In TL Shelley has negative view toward such a retributive justice: not everything is controlled by the cause and effect. This is Shelley's wishful thinking that ideal must surpass the pre-established harmony.

The negative depiction of Rousseau as a guide shows that the great master should be surpassed by his pupil so that the pupil is able to reach out for ideal.⁹ Shelley's ideal of the great mentor is the one who fills him with all the knowledge and philosophic wisdom like Zonoras in "Prince Athanase," who conducts him to deep understanding by colloquy like Demogorgon in *Prometheus Unbound*, who enlightens him with radical ideas like William Godwin, and moreover, who has absolute ideality. To negate and surpass such a great master is the best way to attain to the image of an ideal sage.

In chapter 4, I examine "a shape all light" from the realm without a name who symbolizes Shelley's ideal woman in anonymity and destructive beauty. Shelley's negative idealism is revealed most efficiently in the concept of anonymity and destructive beauty in "a shape all light." Shelley's ideal woman surpasses any beauty in nature, stimulates his desire for knowledge, and rejects him to urge the poet for more perfect production. She should be anonymous to be released from the limitation of name.

The depiction of nature before entering of "a shape all light" shows perfect harmony of the most comfortable place for a pure young Rousseau. To extinguish that perfect harmony of nature with more

⁹ For interpretation of Rousseau, see Man, Paul De. 39-73.

beauty of “a shape all light” indicates the superiority of idea over this material world. As this Platonic idea is superior to any material in the world all of which have names, “a shape all light” should not be limited by a particular name or country.

Like “a shape all light” lets Rousseau ask her questions, Shelley’s ideal woman is the being who stimulates his desire for knowledge and makes him grow. As Shelley writes many poems dedicated to a certain woman, Shelley’s ideal woman is the source of inspiration. Though this is the same as traditional Muse for an artist, Shelley's Muse is different from traditional one in that she is creative and destructive. The “shape” tramples Rousseau's thoughts and deletes his memory. This means that he is intellectually dead. For Shelley, however, death is not the end at all. Like “the destroyer and preserver” in “The Ode to the West Wind” a new creation is to be brought by destruction. This is the reason why Shelley's ideal woman should be beautiful, anonymous, stimulant, and destructive.

In the last chapter 5, I consider negative ending concerning absence of the hero-protagonist and limitations and possibilities of language Shelley tries to present. Shelley denies to specify the ending of TL because he stops continuing writing the poem one month before his unexpected death. Moreover, there is no hero in this poem. Shelley attempts to express the limitation and possibility of human language through no conclusive depiction of hero and ending.

In reviewing the 548 lines, the reader realizes the absence of the hero Shelley always depicted in his previous poems: no self-sacrificing

hero nor self-centered artist. Even the identity of the protagonist is uncertain. The description of Life who leads the triumphal procession and make people excite totally lacks concreteness. Christ and Socrates who do not become the captives are actually suggested not by name but by the places they came from. In TL, Shelley carves a relief sculpture of his ideal hero by piling up negation. The new and ideal hero for Shelley is not self-sacrificing hero, not self-centered artist, not being proud of his own victory, but the ideal hybrid of Christianity and Hellenism.

As for the ending, the poetic justice Shelley has long adopted is negated. For Shelley, pursuing his ideal to the ultimate makes him realize the limitation of language. The fear and diffidence produced by his negative idealism makes Shelley refrain from concluding TL. Instead of presenting one limited ending, he lets readers imagine unlimited possibility of the variety of ending. Some may conjecture that "I" the narrator also become one of captives, and others may guess the story comes to a glorious ending like *Divine Comedy*. To leave the poem with open ending is his ideal ending with unspecified expression. This poem is Shelley's terminal of struggle with his negative idealism.

Part I Before “The Triumph of Life”

Chapter 1 Necessity: Growing out of Materialism

The germ of Percy Bysshe Shelley’s negative idealism can be seen in how the idea of Necessity shifts between his first and second long poems. His first published poem, *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem* (1813), presents materialism and doctrines of Necessity as its most obvious central idea. But as Shelley goes through severe experiences in his life, he grows out of materialism and develops a sense of Necessity, which is mingled with Platonic idealism. When he began his life as a poet, the source of world order for him was not God but Necessity, which was deeply influenced by eighteenth-century thought. But later in his career, the absolute quality of Necessity is negated. In *Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude* (1815) Shelley depicts Necessity as not the being that guides a stray poet to the right path, but as one that punishes him for selfishness. And the poem’s protagonist accepts the punishment; Shelley’s negative idealism led him to shift the idea of Necessity from a God that brings about an ideal world to a system of cause and effect that forces a person to realize his fate.

Queen Mab was written in 1812 and published in 1813. It is a long poem containing nine cantos and 2289 lines, accompanied by abundant notes almost as extensive as the poem itself. The story is rather simple. Queen Mab recalls the spirit of a sleeping girl, Ianthé, to show the misery of the world, past and present, then inspires her to become a

reformer of the world. The theme is to criticize the evil of tyranny, religion and commerce that controls the wealth of the world and exploits the world's people. The measure proposed to reform such a wretched world is based on two concepts: the chain of being and Necessity, which were the most adopted ideas in the eighteenth century.

Arthur O. Lovejoy explains that the idea of the chain of being has its origin in ancient Greece, continued through the middle ages, and survived into or was revived in the eighteenth century.¹⁰ In a letter to his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg on January 3, 1811, Shelley mentions the influence of Alexander Pope:

...but I think that the leaf of a tree, the meanest insect on wh.[sic] we trample are in themselves arguments more conclusive than any which can be adduced that some vast intellect animates Infinity— If we disbelieve this, the strongest argument in support of the existence of a future state instantly becomes annihilated. I confess that I think Pope's All are but parts of one stupendous whole, something more than Poetry.¹¹

In *Queen Mab*, the chain of being is depicted as follows:

Let every part depending on the chain

¹⁰ See Lovejoy.

¹¹ Jones I 35.

That links it to the whole, point to the hand

That grasps its term! (VII, 17-19)

These lines correspond to Pope's phrase, "the great chain, that draws all to agree, / And drawn supports." (*An Essay on Man*, I, 33-34)

Concerning Necessity, Shelley acquired much knowledge and theory from Paul-Henri Thiry d'Holbach and William Godwin. In *Le Système de la Nature* (1770), d'Holbach argues that all of human misery is caused by their mistaken understanding of natural law. D'Holbach's strict materialism explains that each material composing the universe works together, organizing the great chain. In the notes of *Queen Mab*, Shelley often quotes d'Holbach directly; one of the passages that shows this influence strongly is the note on Necessity:

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place that it does act.¹²

Shelley regards Necessity as the being that organizes all the laws of nature. In the lines to which the above note is attached, Shelley considers Necessity as a "Spirit of Nature:"

¹² Matthews and Everest Vol.1. 375.

Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
Necessity! thou mother of the world! (VI, 197-98)

These lines show Shelley's absolute trust in Necessity. As David Lee Clark comments about these lines and the accompanying notes, the influence of Spinoza, who asserts that Necessity is another name for the power of God, can also be found.¹³ So Shelley regards Necessity as an alternative God. As for the God forced on people by Christianity, Shelley argues in the notes to the poem:

There is no God. This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe remains unshaken.¹⁴

Although Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for publishing *The Necessity of Atheism* in 1811 and was regarded by people as an atheist, he seemed to accept what his friend Southey had said, that Shelley was not an atheist but a pantheist.¹⁵ In the letter to Hogg, Shelley develops his own discussion on God and said "Oh, that this Deity were the Soul of the Universe, the spirit of universal imperishable love.—Indeed I believe it" (Jan 12, 1811). Shelley has faith in the Necessity that regulates the world.

¹³ Clark 109–112.

¹⁴ Matthews and Everest Vol.1. 381

¹⁵ Jones I 219.

Shelley's Necessity provides the solution to the misery of contemporary society; this misery is caused by selfishness, which is the root of all evil. So, if human beings abandon selfishness and return to nature, they will be able to live happily interacting together under the laws of Necessity. This renunciation of selfishness is one of the main ideas of William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793).

Godwin was another mentor of Shelley's faith in Necessity. Like other contemporary students who have critical feelings about society, Shelley read *Political Justice* so enthusiastically that he became totally convinced of the power of reason, which necessarily brings a better world. Godwin advocates that as Necessity prepares the right connections for everything, we should acquire knowledge and refine our reason so that we understand the right connections of things and are able to make the right choices, for a better world. With such a refined faculty of reason, a man can think about the prosperity not only of himself but of the whole of human beings. From the perspective of human beings as a whole, private property loses its meaning and wealth must be redistributed, bringing about a truly equitable society. Godwin expounds such a pantisocracy:

If every man could with perfect facility obtain the necessaries of life, and, obtaining them, feel no uneasy craving after its superfluities, temptation would lose its power. Private interest would visibly accord with public good; and civil society become what poetry has feigned of the golden age.

(*Political Justice*. Vol.1, Ch.3)

Undoubtedly, these lines were intoxicating for Shelley and Godwin's criticism of the monopoly of wealth produced by selfishness directly can be found in *Queen Mab*:

Commerce has set the mark of selfishness,
 The signet of its all-enslaving power
 Upon a shining ore, and called it gold: (V, 53-55)

Shelley is aware of his mission to emancipate the people who are oppressed by power, money, and religion.

Shelley went to Dublin with his first wife Harriet and her sister Eliza in February, 1812. He wrote two pamphlets there: *An Address to the Irish people*, and *Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists*. The former is targeted at the poor majority of people, recommending them to transform their spiritless, hopeless life and by cultivating their intelligence. The latter is addressed to educated people, suggesting the need to establish an association of philanthropists to bring Catholic emancipation (a key political issue in Ireland) and the abolition of the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, which was enacted in 1800. 1500 copies of his pamphlets were printed and delivered to people in the streets of Dublin or sent to some publishers and related people. Shelley also made a public speech to a meeting of Irish Catholics. At the same time, Shelley's arguments in pamphlets and public speeches

were too abstract and too idealistic for the Irish nobility, gentry, and general public to accept. Shelley expressed his elated feelings toward Catholic cause in *An Address*:

And I have opened to your view a new scene—does not your heart bound at the bare possibility of your posterity possessing that liberty and happiness of which during our lives powerful exertions and habitual abstinence may give us a foretaste. Oh! if your hearts do not vibrate as such as this; then ye are dead and cold—ye are not men.¹⁶

Such a fanciful, idealistic remark by a noble Englishman of nineteen years old could not be well-received by the nobility and gentry who seek expediency, nor by the poor majority, toiling for their daily bread. Of necessity, Shelley had to go back to his country without having accomplished anything. He wrote about this feeling to Godwin in the letter on March 8, 1812.

I had no conception of the depth of human misery until now. The poor of Dublin are assuredly the meanest and most miserable of all. In their narrow streets thousands seem huddled together,—one mass of animated filth. With what eagerness do such scenes as these inspire me! How self confident, too, do I feel in my assumption to teach the lessons of virtue to those who grind their

¹⁶ Murray 35.

fellow beings into worse than annihilation. These were the persons to whom, in my fancy, I had addressed myself: how quickly were my views on this subject changed; yet how deeply has this very change rooted the conviction on which I came hither.¹⁷

Having experienced this discouragement with political action, Shelley began to write *Queen Mab*. This philosophical poem is the vent for his anger, his frustration, and his convictions. He feels the need to prove that his appeal in Ireland was right because he strongly believes in Necessity, as Godwin definitely insists in *Political Justice*:

The doctrine of moral necessity, includes in it consequences of the highest moment, and leads to a more bold and comprehensive view of man in society, than can possibly be entertained by him who has embraced the opposite opinion. (Vol.1, Ch.7)

As Newman Ivey White says, Shelley is “the immature reformer and the mature poet.”¹⁸ Though his two pamphlets were completely ignored not only by people in Ireland, rich and poor alike, but also by his contemporaries in England, *Queen Mab* became “an important weapon in the arsenal of British working-class radicalism” in 1821, with more than fourteen unauthorized editions published after that date.¹⁹ Later, as Cameron points out, the poem became “the Chartist’s Bible,” famous

¹⁷ Jones I 268.

¹⁸ White I 214.

¹⁹ White II 304.

enough to be mentioned by George Bernard Shaw, Karl Marx, and Frederick Engels, long after Shelley's death.²⁰

During this period, Shelley's *Necessity* represented his hope that what he aimed to achieve would surely be realized in the future and offers proof that what he is doing is absolutely right for the people and the society and will finally be vindicated.

The year 1813 passed calmly for Shelley, with Harriet and a newborn child, Ianthe, though a second campaign in Ireland from March to April also ended in vain. The following year was anything but calm: in June Harriet and Ianthe left Shelley, while in July he left for the Continent accompanied with Mary Godwin and her step-sister Claire Clairmont. Harriet was pregnant when she left him and gave birth to Charles Bysshe in November. The next year, 1815, was even more difficult: in January, Shelley's grandfather Sir Bysshe died, which brought him an annual pension for 1000 pounds so long as he renounced his right of succession. In February, Mary Godwin had a baby prematurely who survived for only two weeks. Such a series of unhappy events ruined Shelley, mind and body. In the note on *Alastor*, Mary wrote about her new husband's poor condition:

In the Spring of 1815 an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took

²⁰ Cameron, *The Young Shelley*, 274, 407.

place; and, though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.²¹

After recovering from the worst of this condition, Shelley composed *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude*. The poem depicts a young poet who travels the world seeking an ideal woman. He goes through a difficult journey wandering over high mountains, through deep valleys and across rapid rivers, and finally dies without ever finding her. The poem is dedicated to the “Mother of this unfathomable world” (18) who gave birth to earth, ocean, and air. Most interpreters agree that this “Mother” is indeed the same as “Necessity, thou mother of the world” (VI, 198) in *Queen Mab*.²² So it can be said that *Alastor* is also administered by Necessity.

As *memento mori* is one of the most pervasive phrases revived by the early Romantics, Shelley often mentions or describes death or dying. When death is treated in arts and literature, a kind of beautification or adoration often takes place. Some interpret death in *Alastor* as depicting the idealized ending of a poet’s life.²³ I cannot agree with this view, because it hardly seems possible that a person who has scarcely escaped from death would beautify or adore it. Moreover, praise or worship of death, or an afterlife, cannot be found at all in the

²¹ Hutchinson 30.

²² Baker 56; Cameron *Golden Years*, 221.

²³ Murphy 97; Butter 55.

protagonist's death scene. Nor can I agree with Cameron who insists that "Shelley's view of death is one of pessimistic skepticism," because if Shelley were condemning the protagonist for a capital crime, he would severely attack and criticize the egoist, the way he treated tyranny, commerce, and religion in *Queen Mab*.²⁴ Shelley depicts death as a strange, unknown thing, which the young poet in the poem first fears death, gradually becomes aware of its approach, and finally accepts it in the end. So, this poem offers readers no catharsis, neither glory nor despair. Instead it has something more, and something different from that.

The protagonist is a person who prefers loneliness. In the preface of the poem, Shelley explains that "The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him speedy ruin."²⁵ According to the summary by Matthews and Everest, many critical discussions have identified a contradiction between the Preface's judgement concerning the protagonist and the sympathetic attitude suggested by the poem itself.²⁶ The young poet is loved by all those he meets, everywhere he visits on his journey, and they willingly take care of him, especially an Arab maiden. Overall, he is depicted as existing alone: "He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude" (60). Though this solitude drives the protagonist to his death, it is not depicted as a defect of the protagonist, nor is he accused or found fault with in the poem itself. This sympathy for solitude is the same one portrayed by

²⁴ Cameron *Golden Years*, 229.

²⁵ Reiman and Fraistat 463.

²⁶ Matthews and Everest 459.

Wordsworth when a poet is creating a poem in “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”—a poet necessarily needs a time by himself. However, when loneliness becomes extreme and prevents a person from caring for others, it becomes “self-centered seclusion,” which can lead the affected person to ruin.

The reason the protagonist lets his loneliness, necessary to a poet’s life, lead to the excess of self-centered seclusion, is love for the veiled maiden he met in his dream. In the essay “On Love” (1814-5/1818?), Shelley explains what he understands love to be.

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 heart’s best blood. This is love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with every thing which exists.²⁷

He provides an explanation, which accords with argument in the preface of *Alastor*:

The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of

²⁷ Reiman and Fraistat 503.

corresponding powers in other human beings.²⁸

These two passages mean that Shelley's love is very close to self-love. If self-love is regarded the same as selfishness, Shelley should criticize and condemn it. But from the tone of the poem as a whole, we cannot expect Shelley to criticize or condemn the protagonist of *Alastor*; we should therefore not understand Shelley's self-love to be the same as selfishness. What makes self-love slightly different from selfishness, for him, is the object of love. The object of Shelley's self-love is another person (or thing), not himself. In contrast, a selfish person looks only at himself; the object of love is the self without caring for other people. Shelley cares about the other person (who mirrors himself). Shelley's love is self-love incorporating an outer object, or a significant other, whereas selfishness is self-love without an outer object.

Another definition is also offered in "On Love":

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 every thing excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man. ...To this we eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it.²⁹

²⁸ Reiman and Fraistat 73.

²⁹ Ibid 504.

Thus, Shelley interprets love as both sympathetic and ideal.

The veiled maid is described as the one who possesses these elements. She mirrors the protagonist in phrases like, “Her voice was just like the voice of his own soul” (153), and “Herself a poet” (161). She is ideal because he can share his thoughts, which he has never done with others in the real world (which is why he has chosen to be alone thus far), for “Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme, / And lofty hopes of divine liberty, / Thoughts the most dear to him,” (158-60). When he wakes up in the morning, he realizes that she is gone forever. He cries, “Lost, lost, for ever lost, / In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep, / That beautiful shape!” (209–11) Though he fully understands that what he saw was not real, but only a dream, he starts his wandering driven “By the bright shadow of that lovely dream” (233).

This wandering journey is the main element of this poem; in fact, this sequence is assigned more than half of the poem’s total lines: from line 223 to 624 out of 720. The journey to seek the ideal in the real world necessarily does not achieve its goal, so the protagonist keeps on traveling. The journey to pursue his ideal is also a journey to experience every aspect of nature: mountains, plains, valleys, and rivers. The journey can be relaxing at times, and stressful at other times. As it is Mother Nature who governs this poem, the protagonist may experience nature until he knows more than enough.

One scene near the end of the poet’s journey carries striking symbolism. Blown by the ghastly wind, the boat of the protagonist has reached a cove. In a little bower, “yellow flowers / For ever gaze on their

own drooping eyes, / Reflected in the crystal calm” (406-8). Reiman and Fraistat provide the commentary, “The narcissi recall the legend of the Greek youth who pined away for self-love,” but most readers would already recognize the flowers as narcissus, or daffodils.³⁰ The protagonist-poet responds as follows:

The Poet longed
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
 But on his heart its solitude returned,
 And he forbore. (412-15)

Timothy Clark concludes his essay on *Alastor* with a comment on this scene: “There is no question here of the poet’s solitude being a selfish moral choice receiving just requital.”³¹ This view, however, ignores the sympathetic tone of the poem and does not explain the final smile of the protagonist because if this poem is the story of just punishment, the long scene of journey must represent vengeance by Mother Nature. By contrast, Harold Leroy Hoffman explains this scene as follows: “The poet had lost not only his physical strength but his power to find in nature a satisfying response to the soul within his soul.”³² However, I cannot agree with Hoffman, because I interpret the last scene as reconciliation between the poet and nature.

³⁰ Reiman and Fraistat 83.

³¹ Timothy Clark 39.

³² Hoffman 46.

Close examination of this scene supports this interpretation. Three actions take place: (1) the protagonist wants to pick the flower up to decorate his hair, (2) his feeling of solitude returns, and (3) he forbears from picking it up. The first action indicates selfishness, because he is only thinking of himself. However, in the second action, when his solitude returns, the object of his love shifts. In "On Love" Shelley explains the relationship between love and solitude as "Hence in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings and yet they sympathise not with us, we love flowers," (504). Though in this scene the protagonist is not surrounded by people, he is surely in solitude. This means, at the same time, the object of his love is shifted to the flower. As the outer object of love is Shelley's self-love, as seen above, the protagonist refrains from depriving the flower of its life in his final action. This scene of so few lines symbolizes a great deal. First, of course, the yellow flowers refer to the narcissus and self-love. But self-love here is not the traditional understanding, but Shelley's own love and has an outer object, the flowers. Second, the fate of Narcissus foretells the death of the protagonist. Death signifies cause and effect more than punishment because death is anticipated and predicable. If death were intended only as punishment, it should be unexpected and jarring for the protagonist. Although the yellow flowers, or Narcissus, have predicted his death, the protagonist does not abandon his quest. The protagonist understands what is waiting for him at the end of his journey, by the law of cause and effect, so that this scene symbolizes the existence of Necessity.

In his death scene he is connected with nature at last. The moon sinks as his life fades away, as if the two points of the crescent moon are eyes watching over his death. His final smile in the scene shows him reconciled with nature and accepting death.

Reading the story, and its last scene in particular, makes us aware that the poem is ruled by a different kind of Necessity from that exhibited in *Queen Mab*. In *Queen Mab*, Necessity is based on philanthropism. The reformation of the world will necessarily be achieved if we abandon selfishness and adopt love for all people instead. In *Alastor*, the protagonist is punished for his excessive pursuit of an ideal that develops into self-centered seclusion without caring for others. This is consistent with *Queen Mab*. On the other hand, possessing loneliness and pursuing the ideal are necessary for a poet. Dying is inevitable, to accomplish his purpose, because the search for the ideal in the real world can never be completed. Of necessity, the more a poet pursues the ideal, the more he becomes lonely. Though he knows that the ultimate ideal cannot be found in the real world, the poet's spirit never allows him abandon the pursuit, so he is destined to die to end his journey. This Necessity, mingled with Platonic idealism, is different from eighteenth-century conceptions, and apparently shows Shelley growing out of materialism.

The difference between Shelley's depictions of Necessity between *Queen Mab* and *Alastor* is clear. Necessity in *Queen Mab* shows deep influence from eighteenth-century thinkers, is referred to in the poem and explained minutely in the notes to the poem, and displays an

optimistic hope, promising reformation to the real world, which shows Shelley's perspective. *Queen Mab* is written to share Shelley's reform perspective and to enlighten people on the necessity of reforming the world. Necessity is equivalent to a God who rules the universe and invariably brings happiness to those who obey its requirements.

On the contrary, *Alastor* does not mention Necessity explicitly in the poem, and does not explain its relationship to the protagonist, but works in the inner world of an individual; the protagonist senses the existence of Necessity and finally accepts it. Also, Necessity in this worldview is neither optimistic nor pessimistic; Shelley does not apparently express a subjective evaluation. *Alastor* depicts the life and destiny of a poet, into whom Shelley projects himself. Necessity, the system of cause and effect, becomes destiny.

These distinct differences in ideas of Necessity between the two poems indicate a considerable change of over three years. Around 1812, Shelley was very ambitious to define for himself a God-like Necessity, challenging its prior history and aspiring to enlighten people and to reform the world. After three years, this arrogant attitude is gone. Expressions in *Alastor* are symbolic, indicating the character of Necessity through the protagonist's life, so that the interpretation is totally entrusted to readers. The simple and conclusive optimism that Necessity brings about a meaningful purpose has disappeared. Necessity in *Alastor* is only cause and effect, whereas Necessity in *Queen Mab* is God-like, distinguishing good from evil or right from wrong. By contrast, Necessity in *Alastor* is a law of nature that suggests

cause and effect. This shift in Necessity makes us realize that the purpose of poem has also changed, from enlightening people to entertaining readers. In this shift, the germ of Shelley's negative idealism, to negate his own work to create more ideal one, can be found.

As we see above, these three years brought Shelley through a series of life-changing events. Once he was a young reformer hoping to change the world. Several failures, setbacks and discouragements in political and private life made him reconsider his hopes, his beliefs and his sense of self. He kept on searching for a role to play, and found the role where he could make the most of his talent, as a poet. Necessity was the only basis for Shelley to convince himself why those failures and discouragements had occurred. Shelley's life was filled with difficulties, despite a constant quest for goodness throughout his life: bullying at Eton, expulsion from Oxford, failure in Dublin, alienation from his first wife, and disinheritance by his father. As Shelley himself wrote later, in *Julian and Maddalo* (1818), "Most wretched men / Are cradled into poetry by wrong, / They learn in suffering what they teach in song" (544-46). Shelley has to convince himself that it is Necessity that brought all the failures upon him, and made him a poet, by composing *Alastor*.

From this period Shelley began to develop his negative idealism. Shelley often expressed his diffidence about his own works in letters to friends. Even *Prometheus Unbound*, his masterpiece, did not inspire him with confidence. He poured out his anxiety in the letter to Leigh Hunt, May 26, 1820: "Have you read my Prometheus yet? but that will

not sell—it is written only for the elect. I confess I am vain enough to like it.”³³ But on each occasion, this diffidence was his motive to create the next poetical work. He kept on trying to apply the words correctly to his ideal inspiration, though he knew that the ultimate, true, limitless idea cannot be expressed by the limited human language. But a poet must keep on negating and creating to arrive as close to the ideal as possible for his life. This is his Necessity.

Shelley had once been an ardent student of eighteenth-century thinkers. But he gradually realized that he was growing away of them. D’Holbach never admitted the existence of spirit, but Shelley had been convinced of this since wrote his “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” as a child. Locke never admitted the capacity of imagination—understanding without experience—which Shelley relied on in creating poems. Truth could not be found if Shelley were to doubt everything skeptically, like Hume. Giving enormous financial aid to Godwin, Shelley no longer believed that by developing reason and enriching knowledge Godwin could find the right choice prepared by Necessity. Shelley had been influenced by these eighteenth-century thinkers but could not fulfill his own promise without abandoning their perspectives. Therefore, he created his own, new doctrine of Necessity, an idea of Necessity that would continue to evolve, surviving through *Promethues Unbound* to TL.

³³ Jones II 200.

Chapter 2 Vegetarianism: A Justification by a Carnophobe

Shelley was not merely a theorist, but a practitioner, of vegetarianism. His stance on vegetarianism was aimed at social reform, to fight against the evils of society brought forth by the contamination of the human body and mind by flesh-eating and alcohol-drinking. He believed that humans should refrain from a diet of meat and alcohol to build a better world of citizens with purified and clear minds.

He argued this theme in his essay *A Vindication of Natural Diet* (1813), which most likely stems from *Queen Mab* (1813). *A Vindication of Natural Diet* and the note in *Queen Mab* are almost identical: “No longer now / He slays the lamb that looks him in the face”³⁴ Whether *A Vindication* was written earlier and was added to the *Queen Mab* note or it evolved from *Queen Mab* is not certain. Murray concludes that *A Vindication* must have been printed before the *Queen Mab* note was put into its final form.³⁵ Other essays on vegetarianism that Shelley wrote are *On the Vegetable System of Diet* (1814–15) and a part of *A Refutation of Deism* (1814), both of which have almost the same contents as *A Vindication*.

Shelley learned about vegetarianism from precursors such as Plutarch, Ovid, and Rousseau, as well as from contemporaries at the forefront of science and medicine, like Joseph Ritson, William Lambe, and, especially, John Frank Newton. As William Axon insightfully

³⁴ *Queen Mab* VIII 211–12.

³⁵ Murray 361.

concludes in his essay, Shelley's vegetarianism was "not a mere dietetic whim, but an endeavour ... to bring the universe into sympathetic harmony."³⁶

Though his tone while attacking the practices of meat-eating and alcohol-drinking was severe at the time he wrote these essays, Shelley became less ardent about a vegetable diet later in life; he even sometimes ate meat for the sake of improving his health as I discuss later in this chapter. The topic of vegetarianism does not appear after *On the Vegetable System of Diet* in his essays nor letters, but he did not abandon the idea entirely; the poet abstained from meat and alcohol until his death. His abstinence from meat was not only because of scientific reasons but also because of his extreme way of thinking.

Shelley is a thorough pursuit and thinks anything to the ultimate. Concerning love, he thinks like "we live and move thirsts after its likeness," that is, the idealized-self.³⁷ And when the idea comes to the ultimate, the ideal love becomes incest as he mentions in his letter to Maria Gisborne on November 16, 1819.

Incest is like many other incorrect things a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or of hate. It may be that defiance of everything for the sake of another which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism, or it may be that cynical rage

³⁶ Axon 13.

³⁷ "On Love" Reiman and Fraistat 504.

which confounding the good & bad in existing opinions breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness & antipathy.³⁸

This opposite sides of incest are reflected in his works *Laon and Cythna* and *The Cenci*. The same way of ultimate thinking is applied to meat-eating.

Since childhood, Shelley disliked eating meat, and this dislike collided with other ideas of the times: the modern science that portrayed humans as herbivores, the contemporary philosophy of animal protection, and the doctrines of Pythagoras and Orphism that promoted reincarnation. Animals were friends and companions for humans and eating them would mean eating friends, that is to say, humans. This was how Shelley's carnophobia can be seen as an unconscious fear of cannibalism; this fear, along with his hopes of inciting social reform, justify Shelley's vegetarianism.

In *A Vindication*, Shelley explains that meat-eating is not natural for the human diet from the viewpoint of comparative anatomy, animal protection, and social ethics. He emphasizes that meat-eating is an unnatural diet that has a bad influence on the human mind and body. Killing animals, tearing their flesh, and drinking their blood increase the levels of cruelty in humans, leading to a world filled with fighting and war. Moreover, greed makes people want food excessively both inside and outside the country. Then pursuing profits in the food

³⁸ Jones II 154.

industry becomes one cause of widening the gap between the rich and poor.

As for the influence on the human body and mind, Shelley insists that unnatural meat-eating and alcohol-drinking are the cause of various diseases. In order to be free from illness, humans should revert back to the primary habits of consuming fruits and vegetables and drinking distilled water. When the body becomes healthy, the mind and spirit become peaceful and wholesome, so that desires are restrained. If the desire to rule and exploit others can be obliterated, then oppression, tyranny, and war will vanish, and humans can set their sights on attaining an ideal world. As Timothy Morton argues, for Shelley meat was “metonymic of a social disorder.”³⁹

Since *A Vindication* was issued by a publisher who printed medical books and pamphlets, it was likely that his argument was regarded as scientific and trustworthy, although its contents may be doubtful from the perspective of the modern world.⁴⁰

What influenced Shelley’s perspective about vegetarianism most was John Frank Newton’s *The Return to Nature* (1811). In *A Vindication*, Shelley quotes some views and opinions to justify vegetarianism from Newton’s book. For example, eating meat did not exist in the Garden of Eden before the corruption of Adam and Eve, and fire given by Prometheus allowed humans to cook raw meat, leading to the introduction of meat-eating to humans. Shelley was an earnest reader

³⁹ Morton 138.

⁴⁰ “The Huntington (Library) copy is followed by 24 pages of advertising for medical texts, which were issued with the *Vindication*,” Murray, 360.

of the classics. He may have read Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which tells the story of Pythagoras and their vegetable diet, as well as Plutarch, whose essay, *On the Eating of Flesh*, Shelley translated in 1813. William Lambe was responsible for introducing Shelley to comparative anatomy to explain that humans were herbivores because of a long intestine that digested vegetable matter slowly and the same number of teeth as orangutans. Shelley was influenced by cutting-edge knowledge from medical doctors, like John Abernethy and William Laurence, as well as the viewpoint of natural science from James Burnett Lord Monboddo. Other influential topics were: the harmfulness of alcohol-drinking from Thomas Trotter; comparative economy of farmland and grassland from William Paley; commendation of simple dishes from Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Shelley was affected by Joseph Ritson's opinions on the cruelty of animal slaughter and the impact of meat-eating on the human mind. All of these ideas that supported a vegetarian lifestyle were at the forefront of contemporary thought. Young Shelley was trying to follow in the footsteps of those precursors who, after the century of revolutions, objected openly to the existing government and religion in order to build up the ideal society with a new concept based on modern science. *A Vindication on Natural Diet* is Shelley's manifesto presented to his era.

Shelley's vegetarianism is so famous even in the present time that on the website of the International Vegetarian Union he is introduced as "the first celebrity vegan."⁴¹ Biographies and letters tell us about

⁴¹ <https://ivu.org/index.php/blogs/john-davis/141-shelley-the-first->

Shelley's eating habits. Thomas Jefferson Hogg, a friend since his short Oxford period, describes what and how Shelley ate at that time.

his pockets were generally well-stored with bread

The common fruit of stalls, oranges and apples were always welcome to Shelley; he would crunch the latter as heartily as a schoolboy. Vegetables, and especially salads, and pies and puddings were acceptable; his beverage consisted of copious and frequent draughts of cold water, but tea was ever grateful, cup after cup, and coffee.

Like all persons of simple tastes, he retained his sweet tooth; he would greedily eat cakes, gingerbread, and sugar; honey, preserved or sweetened fruit, with bread, were his favourite delicacies, these he thankfully and joyfully received from others, but he rarely sought for them, or provided them for himself.⁴²

Shelley was fond of vegetables, fruits, sweets, and preferred tea and water to alcohol. There are other episodes. When Shelley felt hungry walking down a street, and he suddenly dropped into a bakery and continued walking with a loaf of bread; in his pocket there were always some raisins to eat with bread. Sometimes Shelley made small balls

celebrity-vegan. Accessed 22 August, 2017.

⁴² Hogg I 87-88.

with bread and shot them at portraits, passengers, and guests at the dinner table like a marksman, Hogg so vividly recollects.⁴³ Shelley seems to especially like bread, and he also liked cooked bread with his favorite bread dish being Panada, a kind of porridge made with stale bread, sugar, and nutmeg.

Hogg sometimes criticizes Shelley as he seemed to be indifferent to foods or dishes. Such indifference by Shelley must have been welcomed by Harriet, Shelley's first wife, who got married at 16 years old with no cooking skills or knowledge. Being so indifferent to food herself, his wife was able to accept and adopt a Pythagorean diet along with Shelley. Dining at the Shelley's was far from enjoyable for Hogg. He recollects one dinner as:

Some considerable time after the appointed hour, a roasted shoulder of mutton, of the coarsest, toughest grain, graced or disgraced, the ill-supplied table.⁴⁴

Shelley adopted a vegetarian diet in 1812 and kept the habit for life, but he was not as strict a vegetarian as was widely regarded. According to some biographies and letters, he sometimes had meat and wine. White found evidence during his Oxford period when Shelley would sometimes meet with classmates over poetry and wine. After being expelled from Oxford on the charge of publishing *Necessity of Atheism*,

⁴³ Hogg II 31-32.

⁴⁴ Hogg II 30.

Shelley and Hogg had a “comfortable dinner of steaks” in London, according to Hogg.⁴⁵ In *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour* (1817), a travel piece of his second Grand tour with Mary Shelley, one description of the couple is: “under the shade of trees, we ate our bread and fruit, and drank our wine”⁴⁶

Aside from these inconsistencies to his dietary ideals, Shelley also sometimes ate meat to improve his health. Carl Gravo described Shelley as being thin, with strong bones, and not born weak. Overall, his physical features seemed adequate, but excessive reading made his eyes weak and his shoulders stooped. Some of his friends talked about Shelley as having a voice that was high and squeaky, especially when he got excited.⁴⁷ Shelley got weaker and weaker as he experienced hardships, such as agony between Harriet and Mary, failures in social works, constant requests for money from Godwin, frequent moving, among other things. As introduced in Chapter 1, Mary described Shelley as being sentenced to death because of diseases that consumed him in the summer of 1815. Crook and Guiton suggest some possible illnesses of Shelley in this period were consumption, elephantiasis, hepatitis, hysteria, and even syphilis, which he got in Oxford.⁴⁸ Whatever diseases hindered him, Thomas Love Peacock, one of his close friends, advised him to eat some mutton because his daily foods at that time

⁴⁵ Hogg I 302.

⁴⁶ *History of a Six Weeks’ Tour* 16.

⁴⁷ Gravo *Shelley’s Eccentricities* 25.

⁴⁸ Crook and Guiton, 103, 119-35.

were too simple and lacking nutrition. Shelley obeyed his advice and recovered as much as he could to go for a boat excursion.

He [Shelley] had been living chiefly on tea and bread and butter, drinking occasionally a sort of spurious lemonade, made of some powder ... He consulted a doctor, who may have done him some good, but it was not apparent. I told him ... Three mutton chops, well peppered. He took the prescription; the success was obvious and immediate. He lived in my way for the rest of our expedition, rowed vigorously, was cheerful, merry, overflowing with animal spirits, and had certainly one week of thorough enjoyment of life.⁴⁹

Many other episodes reveal Shelley eating meat, which indicate that his practice of vegetarianism was not as strict as widely regarded.⁵⁰ He had a strong affinity for bacon that caused him to eat it voraciously, and there was a time that he complained about eating meat which had been recommended by a doctor.

Next, we will look at Shelley's description about foods outside of *Vindication*. Shelley came to know John Frank Newton in 1812 through Godwin and frequently visited him after that. Newton was famous for not only his theory of vegetarianism, but also putting it into practice with his whole family in their daily life. Some cookery episodes at Newton's are described by Hogg as follows:

⁴⁹ Peacock 39.

⁵⁰ Hogg I 86-89, 256; II 30-33, 80-91, 328-31.

Certainly their vegetable dinners were delightful; elegant and excellent repasts; Flesh, fowl, fish, and ‘game’; never appeared—nor eggs, nor butter bodily... We had soups in great variety, that seemed the more delicate from the absence of meat. There were vegetables of every kind, plainly or stewed or scientifically disguised. Puddings, tarts, confections and sweets abounded. Cheese was excluded. Milk and cream might not be taken unreservedly; but they were allowed in puddings, and sparingly in tea. Fruits of every description were welcomed. We luxuriated, in tea and coffee, and sought variety occasionally in cocoa and chocolate.⁵¹

Hogg’s explanations about the food are very detailed and it would seem that Shelley should have written about vegetarian dishes like Hogg because he was far more ardent a vegetarian; however, there are no similar descriptions about food in his essays, letters, poems, and biographies so far. Shelley visited the Newton’s so frequently that he probably had dinner many times at their home, but he never described the foods he had. The only mention of Newton is a note attached to *A Vindication*:

His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor;

⁵¹ Hogg II 84.

their dispositions are also most gentle and conciliating;⁵²

Shelley never mentioned cookery or food in his writing, and these omissions indicate that he was totally indifferent to food itself. He was more interested in the effects of vegetarianism on the body and mind. According to Ellis's *A Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, the number of food-related words that appear in his poems are as follows:

“bread” 10,

“eat” 30,

“food” 75,

“fruit” 47,

“vegetable” *noun* 0, *adj.* 2.⁵³

Particularly surprising is that “bread”, Shelley’s favorite food, is referred to less often than expected, and that “vegetable” as a noun does not even appear once. It may be because these words felt unpoetic to Shelley (except in the Georgics), or “vegetable” may not be a suitable word in verse because of its multiple syllables. The reason that “fruit” appears so many times is that it was used not only as an edible part of a plant or tree that contained seeds and flesh, but also as a product of something, and not a food at all. What is most distinctively used is the

⁵² Clark 90.

⁵³ Ellis 71, 195, 257, 271, 755.

word “food”. Although other words above were used once or twice in one poem, “food” is used many times in certain poems. The poems are: *Laon and Cythna* (1818), 26 times; *The Cyclops* (1819), 7; and *The Cenci* (1820), 7. These three poems have one feature in common: cruelty. Take a look at examples in *Laon and Cythna* first.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food (Canto V, stanza vii, 1-2)

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay (X. xiv. 1-2)

There was no food, the corn was trampled down (X. xviii.1)

Each of these lines appears in miserable scene.

...when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear (V. xxx. 4-5)

But now I took the food that woman offered me; (V. lii. 9)

In these scenes, “food” is used in line with the original meaning of items that people and animals eat to maintain life.

The story of *The Cyclops* revolves around Ulysses stopping at an island to supply food to the Cyclops. The expressions related to food in

this poem revolve around asking for something to eat, like “Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food” (79), and “Provide us food, of which we are in want” (126).

Along with the theme of cruelty, there was also hope in *Laon and Cythna* and humor in *The Cyclops*, but *The Cenci* only has cruelty. In one scene, Count Cenci pleasantly talks about his own cruel acts when he says, “Is my natural food and rest debarred” (I. i. 90). Count Cenci gets angry at his daughter, Beatrice, who would not obey him, and curses at her, “Earth, in the name of God, let her food be / Poison” (IV. i. 128-29). In both scenes, “food” is not used as something that brings nourishment to make a body heathy.

Turning to the word “eat,” it is often seen being applied to a certain meaning: cannibalism.

... and eat

The dead in horrid truce” (*Laon and Cythna*, X. iii. 7-8)

What! Do they eat man’s flesh? (*The Cyclops*, 120)

Till she will eat strange flesh. (*The Cenci*, III. i. 48)

In addition, one of the only two scenes Shelley took part in the translation from *Divine Comedy* of Dante, one of his most favorite works, is the scene of Ugolino in *Inferno* xxx. 22-75. These reflections on his works bring to light another view about why Shelley feared meat-eating.

At this point, the question arises: Did Shelley really love animals? His hatred toward meat-eating was based on animal protection and biology at that time, but he rarely depicts animals in his poems. He has written about a skylark, an aziola (owlet), eagles and snakes, but none of them are viewed as edible animals. He wrote a fragmentary essay on the game law, and its theme was condemnation of the House of Commons rather than animal protection itself.⁵⁴ He never kept pets or companion animals, although he used horses and mules for the carriage or the coach when he traveled. There is one episode concerning Shelley and animals. Harriet explains in a letter that one night when the Shelleys stayed in Tan-yr-allt, Wales in February 1813, someone broke into Shelley's house. Shelley fought him with a gun, and the man left the house shouting. At that time, the assaulter was not identified and was not arrested.⁵⁵ Some say the incident was only Shelley's delusion. Later, a writer investigated the incident and learned that the assaulter was a local sheep farmer who tried to give Shelley a fright because the farmer suspected Shelley of killing his sheep more than once. Miss Crofts, the writer, conjectures:

We know that Shelley was in the habit of carrying pistols, and, in his pity for the helpless creatures' pain, from motives of humanity would be very likely, by a kindly shot, to put an end to their misery.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Clark 341.

⁵⁵ Ingpen and Peck IX 55.

⁵⁶ Grabo *Shelley's Eccentricities*, 41-42.

This article was published in *Century Magazine* in October 1905, and Grabo says is “wholly credible.” Therefore, it is doubtful that Shelley wrote the essay *A Vindication* from the standpoint of a strong faith on animal protection.

The word “vegetarianism” was formed in 1847, when the Vegetarian Society was established. Before then it was called the Pythagorean System, or the Orphic and Pythagoric system of diet, as the practice of prohibiting meat that was made popular by Pythagoras and his followers. They believed in Orphism, which advocates immortality of the soul, reincarnation, and retribution. They respected asceticism and obeyed the precepts to purify their souls. According to Orphism, meat-eating should be avoided because an animal in this life may have been a human in its previous life; so eating an animal could translate into eating a human. Shelley considers his own ability as a poet like “I am formed ... to apprehend minute & remote distinctions of feeling whether relative to external nature, or the living beings which surround us, & to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole.”⁵⁷ As Sharon Ruston suggests, such an ability of Shelley “ironically sets the poet apart from those he can particularly understand and speak to.”⁵⁸

The objects of Shelley’s interests throughout his life and literary career have consistently been human beings. He hoped for the freedom

⁵⁷ Jones I 577.

⁵⁸ Ruston 132.

of humans and criticized tyranny, commerce, and religion that oppressed, exploited, and deprived them of their liberty. With such a tendency in his ideas, his leanings toward animal protection seem to be very abrupt and strange. But if he thinks animals are the same as human friends or brothers, then the attitude seems to be consistent.

Shelley's tendency to think in extremes was a result of his negative idealism. Shelley's vegetarianism is justified by his carnophobia. Shelley was a natural born carnophobe, who hated meat-eating, and sought out convincing arguments to support other philosophies of eating. This led him to acquiring knowledge about the cutting-edge science around humans as herbivores and the current idea of the time about animal protection. Moreover, he learned about the Pythagorean System and Orphism whose ideas about reincarnation spurred on his latent fear of cannibalism. Finally, he arrived at the hypothesis that the purification of mind and body through vegetarianism can bring about societal reform and is the most desired way of eating to strive for an ideal world.

Chapter 3 Aesthetics: From Pursuing Intellectual Beauty to Urging Beauty in Horror

Over the course of his writing career, Shelley's aesthetics changed from his own pursuit of intellect in beauty to persuading the imagination of his readers to find horror in beauty. As represented in the early poem "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1816), Shelley, the Platonist and idealist, once sought truth and goodness in beauty as a source of inspiration for his poetry. Later in life, wandering around art museums and ruins in Italy, he was exposed to Roman and Renaissance art. These exciting and influential experiences, combined with his own study of light and shadow in life and art, led Shelley to produce a new aesthetic of beauty in horror. The ekphrastic poem, "On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci, In Florentine Gallery" (1819), accurately embodied his new sense of beauty. Shelley not only inspires readers to visualize the painting that moved him to write the poem, but also urges them to imagine what is actually not in the picture; one cannot help but conjure up images and stories when encountering something fearful or unreasonable. By shifting his focus, Shelley denied the previous sense of beauty he sought for himself and developed a new aesthetic to share with his readers.

The following lines from "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" represent Shelley's early aesthetic:

The awful shadow of some unseen Power

Floats through unseen among us,—visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
 Like memory of music fled,—
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery. (1–12)

As Forest Pyle indicated, this first stanza of the poem fully explains intellectual beauty because “the aesthetic exists only in the realm of likeness and that its figural model is that of the simile.”⁵⁹ Shelley’s interest in Platonism is evident in this poem. True beauty comes from ideas. Since an idea itself cannot be seen, we must rely on the shadow it casts on the material world; the shadow is beautiful enough to envision the beauty of the idea. Imagining is an operation of the intellect and by seeking intellectual beauty, Shelley was free to imagine.

The fifth stanza of the poem depicts the moment of meeting the shadow of intellectual beauty:

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped

⁵⁹ Reiman and Fraistat 666.

Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
 I was not heard—I saw them not—
 When musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of buds and blooming,—
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in extacy! (49–60)

In this stanza, Angela Leighton considered Shelley's admission of inarticulateness toward the sublime and the idea of beauty by writing: "The 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' thus strains after knowledge of an object which lies beyond the frail appearance of Beauty and after a register which does not avoid but rather seeks the effect of climax and collapse."⁶⁰ This was the type of beauty Shelley sought in the early stages of his career. He pursued extreme beauty, but it could not be obtained because it was the pursuit of an idea. It was during the process of the pursuit, just a hair before catching the idea, that emboldened Shelley to create poetry. The motivation that encouraged Shelley to follow that process was his own quest for intellectual beauty. At this stage, that sense of beauty started and ended with Shelley himself.

⁶⁰ Leighton 57.

A short poem with five stanzas, “On the Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci, In Florentine Gallery”, composed by Shelley in 1819, was a turning point in the aesthetic of his poetry, especially in the depiction of his more grotesque images. At that point, he negated the previous notion of beauty and sought other ideals that supported his new aesthetic of beauty in horror. Before this poem, grotesque images represented evil, wrongdoing, and ugliness; they were used as symbols to criticize and blame people who oppressed and exploited others through tyranny, commerce, and religion. In “On the Medusa”, Shelley’s grotesque images were expressed with more elaborate and complicated descriptions.

The poem was inspired by a painting of Medusa once thought to be created by Leonardo da Vinci, but later attributed to an anonymous painter in Flanders (Figure 1). “The Florentine Gallery” in the title of the poem is Uffizi Gallery. In the painting, Medusa’s head lies face-up surrounded by creatures in the darkness. A smoke-like white shadow wafts from her mouth as if it is her last breath. The poem begins with a depiction of the scenery:

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
 Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine;
Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.
Upon it lips and eyelids seems to lie
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine

Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
 The agonies of anguish and of death. (1–8)

Carol Jacobs pointed out varying and inconsistent viewpoints from different lines within the poem.⁶¹ In the first line, there are two viewpoints: an art observer and the painted image of Medusa. We, the readers of the poem, are told what the watcher is watching, and what “it” is watching. “The mountain-peak” in the second line is actually not part of the picture, so the imagined views of the observer are revealed. The same is expressed in the third line: “far lands are seen” is not evident in the painting, but rather conjured in the watcher’s imagination.

Moreover, what is horrible and beautiful is not depicted in the first three lines, but the fourth line reveals the observer’s feelings produced by viewing the painting. Medusa’s position in the picture is very important given the powers she possesses. According to mythology, anyone looking Medusa in the eyes will become petrified. In this painting, Medusa is looking to the sky, so the watcher is able to observe her without fear of catching her eyes. The second stanza begins with the fear of being petrified:

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
 Which turns the gazer’s spirit into stone, (9–10)

⁶¹ Jacobs 163–79.

It is the averted eyes of Medusa that inspired Shelley to feel more beauty than horror, and more sympathy than antipathy toward the painting. By eliminating the fear of meeting her eyes and avoiding petrification, gazers are able to appreciate the painting to their hearts' content and let their imaginations run wild. The release of fear and tension allows the observers to synesthetically perceive the painting's musical harmony.

'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown
Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
Which humanize and harmonize the strain. (14–16)

In the first and second stanzas, Shelley verbalized the beauty of Medusa from the painting. This type of verbal description of a work of art is known as ekphrasis, as illustrated by M. J. T. Mitchell in a full examination of Shelley's poem, as well as Wallace Stevens' "Anecdote of a Jar" and Williams Carlos Williams' "Portrait of a Lady". Mitchell highly values Shelley's poem by concluding: "If ekphrastic poetry has a 'primal scene,' this is it."⁶²

Mitchell categorizes ekphrasis into three phases.⁶³ The first phase, ekphrastic indifference, refers to a verbal description that is unable to make a work of art reappear. The second phase, ekphrastic hope, shows that a verbal description has some capacity to make a work of art

⁶² Mitchell 709.

⁶³ Ibid. 696–97.

reappear with the help of the reader's imagination. The last phase, ekphrastic fear, refers to a verbal description that excels in creating a visual impression. Mitchell places "On Medusa" in this last phase and explains how the poem excels at expressing the painting's meaning by providing readers with imagery and impressions.⁶⁴ The imagination of Shelley, the gazer, is capable of giving readers a more vivid description than that depicted in the painting.

Contrary to the first and second stanzas that favorably praise Medusa's beauty, the third and fourth stanzas show us the darkness and eerie creatures surrounding the severed head:

And from its head as from one body grow,
 As [sic] grass out of a watery rock,
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
 And their long tangles in each other lock,
 And with unending involutions show
 Their mailed radiance, (17–22)

The repeated use of *and* symbolizes the writhing and twining hair as the snakes get tangled together on Medusa's head. The images of creepy creatures, like "a poisonous eft", "a ghastly bat", and "a moth", paint an image of the underworld so that readers are led to presume that Medusa is dead. The depictions in the third and fourth stanzas are not only precise, but also persuasive. Though some scenes from the poem

⁶⁴ Ibid. 710–11.

were created in Shelley's imagination, readers are led to believe that all images expressed through words and phrases were actually in the painting. The last stanza paints the final image of the poem the poem:

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
 Kindled by that inextricable error,
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
 Becomes a [sic] and ever-shifting mirror
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—
 A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks,
 Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks. (33–40)

One of the most notable phrases in this stanza is “a thrilling vapour of the air” (36). In the painting, a mist-like white shadow is barely visible rising from the mouth of Medusa. Jacobs regarded it as the psyche, “not only as her breath but also, since the mirror appears as an image of poetry, as the spoken word.”⁶⁵ Art, as well as poetry, are the mirrors which reflect nature and humanity. The shadow may symbolize the swan song of Medusa. Even though the vapor is so imperceptible that it may go unnoticed in the painting, Shelley gives it an important role in the poem to make Medusa stand out as an artist and poet.

This interpretation of Medusa as a poet allows for similarities to be made to characters in Shelley's later poems. Barbara Judson pointed

⁶⁵ Jacobs 174.

out the relationship between Medusa and Prometheus, the Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo*, and Beatrice in *The Cenci*. These characters can be seen as the oppressed-resistance. Judson said they are “a symbol of insurrection” and a “self-portrait” of Shelley.⁶⁶ They are oppressed but never conquered in mind, so that they are poetic and create poems as Count Maddalo says “Most wretched men / Are cradled into poetry by wrong, / They learn in suffering what they teach in song.”⁶⁷

According to Greek mythology, Medusa was once a beautiful woman with rich blond hair. In *Metamorphoses* (4.770), Ovid describes that her beauty led Poseidon to abuse her in Athena’s temple. The goddess became so angry that her temple was disgraced that she cursed Medusa to turn into an ugly monster with serpent locks. Medusa, who gained the power to turn onlookers into stone, was to be beheaded by Perseus who needed the power to rescue Andromeda. Athena led Perseus to Medusa so he could kill her. It can be argued that Medusa was a passive victim of abuse by Poseidon, of being cursed by Athena, and of being murdered by Perseus. Her misery was not a punishment through her own fault, but by unilateral intentions of her attackers. This passive agony corresponds with Prometheus who was bound and tortured by Jupiter, the Maniac who was made insane by a selfish and cruel lover, and with Beatrice who was raped and made to be a murderer by her father. Medusa is a symbol of victimization and resistance.

There are some additional lines found in *Mary Shelley’s Copybook*

⁶⁶ Judson 135, 138.

⁶⁷ *Julian and Maddalo* 544–46.

that are regarded as a part of this poem:⁶⁸

It is a trunkless head, and on its feature
 Death has met life, but there is life in death,
 The blood is frozen—but unconquered Nature
 Seems struggling to the last, without a breath—
 The fragment of an uncreated creature. (45-49)

This denotes a motif of life and death, one of the central concepts in Shelley's work. As described in "Ode to the West Wind," which was composed in the same year as "On Medusa", death brings new life, and sacrificial death of a hero brings emancipation and liberty to the oppressed people. According to mythology, Pegasus was born from the blood that Medusa shed, and the winged horse brought Perseus to rescue Andromeda. In short, the death of Medusa bore the life of Pegasus and saved the life of Andromeda. Finally, we can see Shelley's intention of portraying eternity and circulation of life through the poem's words, which is beyond the painting on which he based the poem; this results in the poem being read through the filter of ekphrasis fear.

The influence of this poem on later artists and writers has been expounded by modern critics. Jerome McGann treats Medusa as a symbol of Romantic iconography by examining the works of Walter Pater, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Gabriele D'Annunzio, and William Morris. He analyzes both the dark side and the Apollonian side as they

⁶⁸ *Bodleian Manuscript Shelley Adds*, d.7, 97, 100.

pertained to the life and death of Medusa, and concludes that Shelley's "On Medusa" plays an important role as a source of the portrayal of Romantic Medusa.⁶⁹ Mario Praz cites Shelley's "On Medusa" in its entirety in the introduction of his book, stating that the poem "amounts almost to a manifesto of the conception of Beauty peculiar to the Romantics."⁷⁰ He especially praises the new concept of the beauty of horror Shelley brought to us as "all these give rise to a new sense of beauty, a beauty imperiled and contaminated, a new thrill."⁷¹

Shelley's sense of beauty was drastically polished after he came to Italy. He expressed his concern about Italian art in his letter to Maria Gisborne on October 13 or 14, 1819:

The gallery I have a design of studying piecemeal; one of my chief [aims] in Italy being the observing in statuary & painting the degree in which, & the rules according to which, that ideal beauty of which we have so intense yet so obscure an apprehension is realized in external forms.⁷²

One of the galleries he visited in Italy was the Uffizi Gallery. He made some notes on what he saw and how he felt, especially on many statues in the gallery. Though he never wrote an essay on fine art, he often discussed works of art and artists in his letters. The detailed depictions

⁶⁹ See McGann 3–25.

⁷⁰ Praz 25.

⁷¹ Ibid. 26.

⁷² Jones II 126.

in a letter addressed to Thomas Love Peacock on November 9, 1818 conveys Shelley's excitement and enthusiasm for art and artists. Shelley refers to artists such as Correggio, Franceschini, Raphael, Domenichino, Albano, and Guercino, but lines referring to the works of Guido Reni (1575–1642) occupy most of the letter. He pointed out six specific pieces: *The Rape of Prospine*, *Samson*, *Murder of the Innocents*, *Christ Crucified*, *Fortune*, and *Madonna Lattante*. Among them, what fascinated Shelley most seemed to be *Madonna Lattante*, or *Madonna che allatta il bambino* in its Italian translation.

But perhaps the most interesting of all the pictures of Guido which I saw, was a *Madonna Lattante*. She is leaning over a child and the material feelings with which she is pervaded are shadowed forth on her soft & gentle countenance and in her simple and affectionate gestures. There is what an unfeeling observer would call a dullness in the expression of her face. Her eyes are almost closed, her lip deprest; there is a serious and even a heavy relaxation as it were of all the muscles which are called into action by ordinary emotions. But it is only as if the spirit of a love almost insupportable from its intensity were brooding upon and weighing down the soul, or whatever it is without which the material frame is inanimate and inexpressive.⁷³

Shelley felt a calm presence of mind and deep affection when he

⁷³ Jones II 51.

originally looked at the painting, which may not have been the same reaction felt by all observers.

There is another obvious example of ardent study in a museum that inspired Shelley to compose *The Cenci* (1819). He was struck by the beauty of the portrait of Beatrice Cenci, which was thought to be painted by Reni at that time. In the preface of the drama, Shelley confessed how he was fascinated by the way she looked:

The Portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature.⁷⁴

He crafted his words in such detail that not only is her appearance seen, but her emotions are felt. He admired both the inner and outer beauty of Beatrice, as well as the exquisite skill of the painter. He concluded his appreciation of the painting with this sentence, “In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow are inexpressibly pathetic.”⁷⁵ Shelley’s purpose for composing *The Cenci* and the message of the drama seem to be condensed in this sentence. He loved the painting so much that he wrote about its subject in a letter to Peacock on July 20, 1819 as “the most beautiful creature that you can conceive.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Reiman and Fraistat 144.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 144.

⁷⁶ Jones II 103.

Another painter who inspired Shelley was Raffaello Santi (1483–1520). He admired *St. Cecilia* with the highest compliments by saying “It is of the inspired and ideal kind,” and “There is an [sic] unity & perfection in it of an incommunicable kind.”⁷⁷ John Buxton explained that Shelley’s attraction to Raphael resulted from his neo-classical taste. He asserted: “For Shelley, this neo-classical requirement that a work of art should sustain the comparison with Antiquity was always the basis for aesthetic judgment.”⁷⁸ Among the Renaissance artists, Shelley preferred Raphael’s ideal beauty and embodiment of sacredness to Michelangelo’s vivid exaggerations of the human body. He explained his dislike of Michelangelo’s boldness in his letter to Peacock on February 25, 1819:

I cannot but think the genius of this artist highly overrated. He has not only no temperance no modesty no feeling for the just boundaries of art.⁷⁹

Shelley’s criticism of Michelangelo was more severe in another letter on Aug 20, 1819:

With respect to Michel Angelo I dissent, & I think with astonishment & indignation on the common notion that he equals & in some respects exceeds Raphael. He seems to me to have no

⁷⁷ Ibid. 51.

⁷⁸ Buxton 278.

⁷⁹ Jones II 80.

sense of moral dignity & loveliness; & the energy for which he has been so much praised appears to me to be a certain rude, external, mechanical, quality in comparison with any thing possessed by Raphael. —or even much inferior artists.⁸⁰

Colwell pointed out the influence of Leigh Hunt on Shelley's taste in art. "Shelley's own energetic denunciation of Michelangelo is perhaps to some extent due to Hunt's tutelage," Colwell asserted.⁸¹ As the editor of *The Examiner*, Hunt "busied himself with supplying breathless advice to the exiles in paradise, directing their Italian observations from London."⁸² Answering Hunt's request to report back to him, Shelley's tastes in art gradually became more refined and he expanded his knowledge further by reading Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* (1764), which also had a negative attitude toward Michelangelo. As Edmund Burke indicated in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), the sublime was a trend at that time, and Hunt understood it well as a journalist. He valued Raphael's depiction of the beauty of heaven more than Michelangelo who exposed ugly reality on earth. Shelley, who pursued the sublime and penned many sublime poems, such as "Mont Blanc," "Adonais," and *Prometheus Unbound*, may have tastes similar to those of Hunt. Shelley praised Raphael and Reni, whom Shelley admitted to having the same sublimeness as Raphael, not because he

⁸⁰ Ibid. 112.

⁸¹ Colwell 45.

⁸² Ibid. 44.

blindly followed Hunt and public opinion, but because his poetic and aesthetic credo aligned with what Raphael and Reni portrayed in their paintings.

The expressions of sublimity that Shelley gathered from Italian paintings are reflected in his poems. One example is in Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound*. Compared with other Acts in which the story is developed and ideological conversations are discussed, Act IV can be said to be more pictorial; it has a still and descriptive sense of the scene:

Within it sits a winged Infant, white
 Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
 Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowering folds
 Of its white robe, woof of aetherial pearl.
 Its hair is white, —the brightness of white light
 Scattered in strings, yet its two eyes are Heavens
 Of liquid darkness, (IV 219–26)

These lines fall into Hagstrum's definitions of *pictorial*: "1. A description or an image must be, in its essentials, capable of translation into painting or some other visual art. 2. Visual detail constitutes the pictorial but is not, per se, the pictorial. 3. The pictorial is, of course, not limited to one particular school or method of painting. 4. The pictorial in a verbal medium necessarily involves the reduction of

motion to stasis or something suggesting such a reduction. And 5. The pictorial implies some limitation of meaning. It does not, of course, involve elimination of concept.”⁸³ The lines of Act IV above can be visualized in detail, are not restricted within a particular school or method, imply a sense of stillness, and have very precise meaning. Colwell proposed the picture on the gallery ceiling of the Riccardi-Medici Palace in Florence as the source of the images depicted in *Prometheus Unbound*.⁸⁴ As Weinberg concluded: “In Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound* we see Shelley wholeheartedly applying what he had learnt: casting aside realism, he elevates his poem onto a plane of such ideal refinement.” Shelley was a good learner and skilled enough to create unseen images, not to reconstruct images he had already seen.⁸⁵

Similar writing techniques can be recognized in “On the Medusa”. Shelley gazed at the painting, took in its detail, and created unseen images through the words of the poem. Compared with other ekphrastic poems, Shelley’s stand out as being full of originality. An Italian poet, Giambattista Marino (1569–1625), who is considered the founder of the school of Marinism, wrote a poem on the famous Medusa painting by Caravaggio (Figure 2). The painting was commissioned by Cardinal Francesco Maria Del Monte to be presented as a gift to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinando I, in 1598. Marino, who saw the Medusa’s head painted on convex board vividly screaming and shedding blood,

⁸³ Hagstrum xxi–xxii.

⁸⁴ Colwell 61–66.

⁸⁵ Weinberg 116.

composed a poem dedicated to Ferdinando I:

What foes are these who could not suddenly
 Turn, cold, into marble
 On looking at that Gorgon in your shield,
 Proud, Signor, and cruel,
 For whose locks bundled vipers horribly
 Frame a dreary ornament, and frightful?
 But Oh! the fearsome monster
 Would be of little help to you in war,
 The Medusa being your own valor.⁸⁶

This poem was published in *La Galeria* (1620), a book of collected ekphrastic poems by Marino, which included many poems not only about paintings and sculptures, but also characters in myths and the Bible, as well as traditional heroes and saints. In the first six lines of this poem, Marino described the horrible effect that Medusa had on those who gazed upon her. Although the dreadfulness of this act may be expressed through the painting, the effect on the gazers was not part of the picture, but rather drawn from the Greek myth. The last three lines venerated the courage of the Grand Duke, which was not depicted in the painting either. As a result, this poem was not meant to admire Caravaggio's painting itself, nor describe images inspired by it, but used the painting as a way to complement the Duke's power. According

⁸⁶ Translated from Italian by Hollander 146.

to Mitchell's categories, this poem obviously falls into the category of ekphrastic indifference.

On the other hand, Shelley's "On the Medusa" depicts the painting with such precise detail that a reader could choose the correct picture from among many famous Medusa paintings without seeing it before reading the poem. Shelley took the poem even further by describing the gazer's imagination beyond the painting. The gazer and reader are urged to imagine what is not shown in the painting by having their senses and feelings stimulated. This is all possible because of the horror in beauty that Shelley explores. Horror makes people do things to escape fear. That is to say, Shelley's horror in beauty is inspiring beauty for Shelley and the reader. Shelley's concept of intellectual beauty was creatively inspiring early in his career, but it was a closed relationship between Shelley and idea of beauty. It was the aesthetic change influenced by his experience with Italian art that caused the notion of horror in beauty to lead to an open relationship between Shelley, beauty, and the readers of his poems.



Figure 1. Uffizi Gallery



Figure 2. www.Caravaggio.org

Chapter 4 Religion and Myth: Acceptance by Mythicizing

Christianity

Religion had been an object of criticism for Shelley since his relationship with it began as a student. Publishing *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) provoked the orthodox Oxford University enough to expel him only six months after his enrollment. Even though his Ireland campaign to emancipate the Catholic people by delivering pamphlets and giving speeches ended in vain, his attack on Christianity continued in 1813 with his publication of *Queen Mab*. In 1817, when he wrote "On Christianity", Shelley maintained his critical and untrustworthy attitude toward the Gospels and his skeptical view of a creative God, even while he admired Jesus Christ for his tolerance and nonviolence. Through his lifelong reading of the Bible, Shelley came to regard Christianity as mythology and the Bible as literature. This mythicizing of Christianity gave the poet an objective view of the religion so that he could utilize it in his poems, in the same way he applied Greek myths. He learned to incorporate characters from the Bible into his poems, especially by accepting Jesus as an ideal being. The qualities of the Jesus-like Prometheus show how Shelley tried to create an ideal character by combining Christian and Hellenic personalities. In *The Cenci* (1819), the relationship of an oppressive God and the oppressed human are represented through Count Cenci's cruel treatment of his daughter, Beatrice. This indirect criticism, by objectifying Christianity, resulted in making his works richer and deeper.

So thoroughly has “Shelley the Atheist” prevailed as his true identity that very few investigations have been made concerning Shelley and Christianity, however certain studies do exist. Timothy Webb, for example, examined how Shelley’s view of Jesus as a rebel and revolutionist reflected on characters in his poems, like “Ode to Liberty” and the protagonist from *Prometheus Unbound*. His comparison between Jesus and Cain in *Adonais* was especially evocative of Jesus as an outcast.⁸⁷ Earl Wasserman analyzed Shelley’s projection of Jesus onto Prometheus in detail. The assimilation of Christ and Prometheus helps readers understand Prometheus’ character more clearly. Wasserman explained how “Shelley’s hero is the identity of both these preeminent types of superhuman and self-sacrificing resistance to evil.”⁸⁸ Leslie Brisman discussed Shelley’s language by focusing on three iconic aspects of Christianity in three different poems: *Prometheus Unbound* for love, “Ode to the West Wind” for hope, and “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” for faith.⁸⁹

Two of the most detailed and eminent studies on the subject are *Shelley’s Religion* (1964) by Ellsworth Barnard and *Shelley and Scripture: The Interpreting Angel* (1994) by Bryan Shelley. Barnard discussed Shelley’s transition from skeptical materialism to hopeful idealism and concluded that *Prometheus Unbound* was the work in which Shelley’s assertion of free will and rejection of the doctrine of Necessity were expressed, saying with a sigh “How unnecessary it is to

⁸⁷ Webb 166–67.

⁸⁸ Wasserman 296.

⁸⁹ Brisman 389–417.

read Necessarianism into *Prometheus Unbound*.”⁹⁰ Bryan Shelley investigated the religious history of Shelley’s family and meticulously traced how Shelley’s thoughts about the Bible and Christianity changed throughout his life. The Jacobin Jesus which Bryan claims is so suggestive. Bryan pointed out the originality of Shelley’s Jesus as “the Jesus who is a proponent of the doctrine of equality and of what we would now recognize as a forerunner of liberation theology is a creation of the poet.”⁹¹ Moreover, a biblical reference guide to Shelley’s poetry in the appendix of *The Interpreting Angel* is very useful for researchers.

Although these earlier studies traced Shelley’s life and attitude toward Christianity, as revealed in his bibliography and literary works, the thought process leading to his total rejection of Christianity still needs to be investigated. With the help of these previous studies, this paper will attempt to expose more about that process, starting with his ancestry.

The Shelleys in Sussex had been a family with a spirit of defiance. According to Newman Ivey White, Sussex had been “the resistant county,” and “the last Saxon kingdom to embrace Christianity and the slowest part of England to be affected by the Reformation.”⁹² Bryan Shelley revealed that the Shelleys remained Catholic until the end of the sixteenth century. Shelley’s distant kinsman, Edward Shelley, was hanged in 1588 for assisting a Catholic priest. Another kinsman, Thomas Shelley, “was forced to resign his fellowship at New College,

⁹⁰ Barnard 139.

⁹¹ Bryan Shelley 59.

⁹² White I 4.

Oxford, in 1567 on the ground of recusancy.”⁹³ Moreover, two of the twelve English accusers who testified against Queen Elizabeth’s heresy at the papal court in 1570 were Shelleys.⁹⁴ Thus, a seed of defiance was sown in young Percy Bysshe regardless of whether the poet knew his blood history.

Shelley’s aggressiveness toward Christianity stemmed from his school life. He began to go to a church near his house where he learned Greek and Latin at the age of six. He was brilliant in learning languages and there was no record of Shelley’s defiance in church or toward the parson during this period. It was after he entered the Syon House Academy that his days of “perfect Hell”, as Medwin says, began.⁹⁵ White explained: “At Syon House, where there was no fagging system to allot one a principal bully, all the older and stronger boys bullied all the younger ones.”⁹⁶ This school belonged to the London parish, so a religious education was surely given to the students. It was here that Shelley began to develop doubt about the paternal system of church and school, and it fostered his spirit of defiance by questioning why such atrocities were permitted. The structure of oppression, starting with older students over younger students, expanded into larger concentric circles within the society and the country by way of the government oppressing the people. In the very center of the circles was Christianity.

Shelley enrolled in Eton College in 1804, where the accumulation

⁹³ Bryan Shelley 20.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 20.

⁹⁵ Medwin 4.

⁹⁶ White I 20.

of his extensive knowledge was initiated. His interest in science since his Syon House days was stimulated and developed greatly by meeting with Dr. James Lind, “a semi-retired Edinburgh-trained physician living in nearby Windsor who mentored those Etonians interested in science.”⁹⁷ According to Bieri, Lind contributed to Shelley’s accumulation of knowledge through his readings of Plato, Pliny, Lucretius, Paracelsus, Albertus Magnus, and Condorcet, as well as those who were Lind’s acquaintances and correspondents, like Benjamin Franklin, David Hume, William Herschel, and James Watt.⁹⁸

Shelley’s interest was not limited to science, but extended to ancient and modern philosophy, as well as novels, regardless of being romance or gothic. The influence of French and English Enlightenment philosophers, like Voltaire, d’Holbach, John Locke, and David Hume, was great enough to make Shelley a materialist. While at Eton, he met a crucial book *Political Justice* (1793) written by his future father-in-law, William Godwin.

As a result of such devoted study, Shelley started his career as an author in 1810, the year he finished at Eton and went to Oxford. At this time, he published: two gothic novels, *Zastrozzi* in June and *St. Irvine* in December; *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* in September, which was written with his sister Elizabeth; and *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* in November. Moreover, in the same year, he wrote the long poem *The Wandering Jew* with 1451 lines, which was not

⁹⁷ Bieri 65.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 66.

published in his lifetime. As Bieri commented, “Shelley, at seventeen, had one of the most productive periods of writing in his life in terms of sheer output.”⁹⁹

In 1811, Shelley and his friend, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, anonymously published *The Necessity of Atheism*, which brought Shelley’s atheism to the forefront. The anonymity was inconsequential since their identities soon came to light, causing them to be expelled from the University College of Oxford. In this pamphlet, Shelley insisted that the being known as God who created the universe cannot be acknowledged because the existence of God cannot be proven theoretically. What drove the freshman to such an extreme opinion could have resulted from a condition known only by a young man: lost love.

The object of Shelley’s first love was Harriet Grove, a cousin who was one year older than him. According to White, she was “a striking beautiful girl.”¹⁰⁰ Medwin recollects:

... when I [Medwin] call to mind all the women I have seen and admired, I know of none that surpassed, few that could compare with her in beauty. I think of her as of some picture of Raphael’s, or as one of Shakespeare’s women.¹⁰¹

The Groves were relatives of Shelley’s mother, so the two families

⁹⁹ Bieri 81.

¹⁰⁰ White I 62.

¹⁰¹ Medwin 9.

visited each other. When the families were together at either house, Shelley and Harriet went out for walks with other family members, or sometimes alone. Shelley's name appeared in her diary from early 1809, but disappeared in the fall of 1810. According to Bieri, they exchanged letters frequently in the first nine months of 1809, resulting in forty-four from Shelley and twenty from Harriet.¹⁰² What Shelley sent to Harriet were not only letters, but his works before and after they were published.

During his final year at Eton, Hogg recollected that he was recognized as "Shelley the Atheist" due to his writings and his resistance to school authorities.¹⁰³ Meeting Thomas Jefferson Hogg, his most intimate and lifelong friend, in Oxford was crucial for Shelley's further development of his anti-Christian attitudes. In *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvine*, Shelley expressed his opinions on lust, seduction, abandonment, free love versus marriage, and religion as priestcraft and superstition. Such radical ideas could not be understood by an ordinary local girl and her family, and Harriet may have begun to lose interest around this time. Ultimately, the raw emotions, which were apparently indicative of the love between Shelley and herself, in *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire* could hardly be accepted by Harriet. White surmised: "In the spring of 1810 a decision seems to have been reached by one or both of the families that the idea of a marriage must be abandoned." Although Shelley kept sending letters and presents to

¹⁰² Bieri 74.

¹⁰³ Hogg I 136.

Harriet until autumn of that year,¹⁰⁴ by the end of 1810, Shelley was informed that Harriet was engaged to one of her neighbors.¹⁰⁵

From his letters and works, Harriet had learned of his radical opinions and had reason to be alarmed by the time their informal engagement was broken off. It was Shelley's father who sent the final decision to the Groves, as White uncovered from her diary on September 25, 1810: "My father has a letter from Mr. S which I am sorry for, as it gives more trouble."¹⁰⁶ Shelley knew the break-up was attributed to his atheistic attitude. A letter to Hogg on December 20, 1810 shows that his despair and anger toward Christianity reached its peak:

Oh! I burn with impatience for the moment of Xtianity's dissolution, it has injured me; I swear on the altar of perjured love to revenge myself on the hated cause of the effect which even now I can scarcely help deploring. –Indeed I think it is to the benefit of society to destroy the opinions which can annihilate the dearest of its ties.¹⁰⁷

Shelley's criticism of Christianity became more severe in another letter to Hogg on January 3, 1811:

Yet here I swear, and as I break my oath may Infinity Eternity blast

¹⁰⁴ White I 67.

¹⁰⁵ Jones I 27, n.6.

¹⁰⁶ White I 68.

¹⁰⁷ Jones I 27.

me, here I swear that never will I forgive Christianity! it is the only point on which I allow myself to encourage revenge; every moment shall be devoted to my object which I can spare, & let me hope that it will not be a blow which spends itself & leaves the wretch at rest but lasting long revenge! ... Oh how I wish I were the Antichrist, that it were mine to crush the Demon, to hurl him to his native Hell never to rise again.¹⁰⁸

Such frequent correspondence of emotional and logical arguments with Hogg fostered young Shelley's idea of anti-Christianity and brought *The Necessity of Atheism* to life. In the short essay, Shelley asserted that the existence of a Deity is not logically supported because of the absence of sense, reason, and testimony; we cannot see, feel, nor hear a Deity. We cannot reason out the existence of God, and there have been no testimonies which stand to reason. The influence of eighteenth century thinkers, like Hume and Locke, on this essay has been pointed out by previous major scholars, like Cameron and Baker, and has been supported by modern researchers, like Amjad and Hopps.¹⁰⁹ Bathed in these anti-Christian thoughts of the time, Shelley blamed the source of his lost love on Christianity; those who cancelled his engagement with Harriet were the parents of both families, who were too ordinary to understand his advanced scientific and logical opinion of Christianity. As White explained: "In his view he was the victim of two oppressions,

¹⁰⁸ Jones I 35.

¹⁰⁹ Cameron *The Young Shelley* 70–78, Baker 29, Amjad 103, Hopps 118.

one parental, the other religious,” and “it was Religion that Shelley held to be his principal enemy.”¹¹⁰ So he needed to justify himself as well as to make clear that Christianity, in whose name his oppressors, both the parents and the authorities of his school and society, judged him was totally unreliable. Consequently *The Necessity of Atheism* was produced as proof that Shelley admitted to being an atheist, which he was unwillingly called at Eton.

Judging from *The Necessity of Atheism* and his letters, Shelley's attitude toward Christianity in 1810–11 seemed to be complete denial and hatred, but in the following year, his attitude changed slightly. On February 12, 1812, Shelley went to Dublin and launched his Ireland campaign to emancipate the Catholic people in Ireland where England ruled under the Union Act of 1801. Their political, social, and economic liberty had been restricted under the Penal Laws enacted in 1691, so their miserable condition left them suffering under extreme poverty. Shelley tried to encourage the spiritless people to stand up for themselves by making his speech and delivering his two pamphlets: *An Address to the Irish People* and *Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists*. The former was for the public, written with simple words and filled with sympathetic messages. In the essay, he never denied religion, but contrary to the letters from the previous year, showed his understanding of the Catholic faith that ruled their spiritual lives:

¹¹⁰ White II 425.

You profess the Roman Catholic religion which your fathers professed before you. Whether it is the best religion or not, I will not here inquire: all religions are good which make men good; and the way that a person ought to prove that his method of worshipping God is best, is for himself to be better than all other men.¹¹¹

Shelley's intention was to make them understand that he was not their enemy as an Englishman, but rather a friend supporting them and offering ways to improve themselves through his words. Later, he repeated his objective of promoting companionship by saying a "Protestant is my brother, and a Catholic is my brother."¹¹² Shelley recommended that the problem was not religion, but society's system that could be reformed, not with bloody revolution, but with peace, philanthropy, and wisdom. This pamphlet seemed to show Shelley's growth from a young man full of anger to one with calm objectivity.

Contrary to the gentle, friendly, and sympathetic message in *An Address to the Irish People*, Shelley did not conceal his primary antipathy toward religion in *Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists*. As this pamphlet was written to educate readers in Ireland, Shelley did not compromise his conviction that religion was the source of oppression in society:

¹¹¹ Murray 10.

¹¹² Ibid. 10.

The religionist who agonizes the death-bed of the cottager, and by picturing the hell, which hearts black and narrow as his own alone could have invented, and which exists but in their cores, spreads the uncharitable doctrines which devote *heretics* to eternal torments, and represents heaven to be what earth is a monopoly in the hands of certain favored ones whose merit consists in slavishness, whose success is the reward of sycophancy.¹¹³

Nevertheless, his shift in attitude was obvious in this essay. There were only denunciations in his letters to Hogg and *The Necessity of Atheism* in the previous year, but in this essay, Shelley proposed an alternative: philanthropy. Though most of the argument reflected the influence of Thomas Paine and William Godwin, Shelley passionately proposed egalitarianism based on philanthropy which bestowed virtue and wisdom to all people and consequently cultivated an ideal society. As he wrote to Elizabeth Hitchener on February 14, 1812: "I [may] be a successful apostle of this only true religion, the religion of philanthropy." Shelley's outlook on religion changed from total negation to partial acceptance by accepting this alternative approach.¹¹⁴

In spite of his eagerness, Shelley's Ireland campaign did not succeed. It was a natural reaction for miserable Irish Catholics to not trust, or even listen to, a young Englishman who insisted on plying them with his stories of unrealistic and abstract idealism. Shelley left

¹¹³ Murray 49–50.

¹¹⁴ Jones I 255.

Dublin in disappointment after only two months. This failure brought him to the next phase of how he viewed religion and faith. After coming back to England, Shelley composed *Queen Mab; a Philosophical Poem* and published it in 1813. Under the influence of Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793), Shelley severely criticized the rottenness of contemporary society and asserted the necessity to reform it to release the goodness of all mankind. In *Queen Mab*, he raised three crucial evils responsible for the misery in the world: monarchy, commerce, and religion; among the three, his criticism of religion was most severe and occupied the most lines:

Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
 Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
 And heaven with slaves! (VI 69–70)

The severe hatred toward Christianity from 1811 seemed to come back with the phrase “There is no God!” (VII 13), but it was slightly different from his past view with an additional note appended to it by Shelley:

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity.
 The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe,
 remains unshaken.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Matthews and Everest I 381.

Shelley distinguished God from a pervading Spirit that existed in the universe. This Spirit was the “Spirit of Nature” and it appeared often throughout the poem. In Canto VI it was invoked by other names:

“Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
 Necessity! thou mother of the world!
 Unlike the God of human error, thou
 Requirest no prayers or praises; (VI 197–200)

He denounced the ritualistic, established Christianity he had been forced to obey and accepted Necessity, which did not force anything on anyone. To this concept of Necessity, Shelley attached a note:

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act.¹¹⁶

This explanation of Necessity revealed the influence of Godwin and d’Holbach on Shelley. From their materialistic viewpoint, everything worked according to the law of cause and effect. If the correct cause of our action is chosen, it will inevitably bring the desired effect. To improve our chances of making a correct choice, we should enhance our

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 375.

wisdom and virtue. For Shelley, such a reasonable theory was acceptable, but he did not copy their theory as it was. What made his different from theirs was making Necessity a Spirit, an object to invoke, not just a system or a rule. In other words, Shelley's Necessity at this stage was a substitution for God. In previous years, it was philanthropy that occupied this seat. But philanthropy was hardly accepted by the people whom Shelley wanted to influence. On the other hand, Necessity was not just a principle, so it worked on everyone no matter if one accepted it or not. Shelley's attitude toward religion at this time was a denunciation of the established Christianity and an acceptance of Necessity.

In *A Refutation of Deism*, published in 1814, Shelley injected his pendulating opinions into the dialogue of two characters: Theosophus, a Deist, and Eusebes, a Christian. Murray indicated that the main sources were Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and Cicero's *De natura deorum*, with other possible influences from Paley, Paine, Locke, d'Holbach, etc.¹¹⁷ Attacking each other's credos, the Deist and the Christian ended their dialogue with the question of whether they would choose to be an atheist or not. The answer from Theosophus was ambiguous:

I am willing to promise that if, after mature deliberation, the arguments which you have advanced in favor of Atheism should appear incontrovertible, I will endeavor to adopt so much of the

¹¹⁷ Murray 367.

Christian scheme as is consistent with my persuasion of the
goodness, unity and majesty of God (1018–22).

Hopps saw this as “slyly presented as a matter of fact,” and Wasserman interpreted “the absence of any atheist to argue his own position is a strategic irony that makes atheism all the more insidiously compelling.”¹¹⁸ Whatever is presumed, Theosophus’ last answer can be seen as Shelley’s frank opinion at that time, though it is hardly supposed that a day will come when deliberation matures and the argument appears incontrovertible.

Though Shelley’s attitude toward religion varied year after year, he kept reading the Bible throughout his life. In “On Christianity”, written in 1817, Shelley tackled the Bible and Jesus directly by criticizing the Gospel writers, the miracle stories, and some of the doctrines of Jesus’s teaching. Apart from miracles and unreasonable doctrines, Shelley finally accepted Jesus as a respectable character. To trace the process of how he gained this acceptance of Jesus, let us take a look at what he criticized first.

Concerning the Gospel writers, he was totally skeptical. He doubted that the Gospel writers conveyed the truth, but rather stretched the facts to create fictional stories.

It cannot be precisely ascertained to what degree Jesus Christ accommodated his doctrines to the opinions of his auditors, or in

¹¹⁸ Hopps 121, Wasserman 14.

what degree he really said all that he is related to have said. He has left no written record of himself, and we are compelled to judge from the imperfect and obscure information which his biographers, persons certainly of undisciplined and indiscriminating minds, have transmitted to posterity. ... They insert in the midst of a strain of impassioned eloquence, or sagest exhortation, a sentiment only remarkable for its naked and driveling folly.¹¹⁹

Such suspicion and contempt toward the Gospel writers came partly from the eighteenth century thinkers, especially Holbach. It was widely recognized that Shelley was influenced by *System of the Nature* (1770), but in *Christianity Unveiled* (1761) there were some depictions which show more likeness to Shelley's interpretation above:

What degree of confidence can we place in the testimony of his disciples, who, by their own confession, were ignorant and unlearned men, and, consequently, liable to be imposed upon by the artifices of a dexterous impostor?¹²⁰

Such a radical expression agreed with Shelley's lifelong skepticism toward Christianity. Shelley's interest in religion did not focus on the system of Christianity any longer, but rather on Jesus himself. Shelley commented on some statements attributed to Jesus, but such

¹¹⁹ Murray 260.

¹²⁰ Holbach *Christianity Unveiled* 29.

statements could not be found anywhere in the Gospels. For example, “He [Jesus] had contemplated this name [God] as having been prophanely perverted to the sanctioning of the most enormous and abominable crimes”, “According to Jesus Christ God is neither the Jupiter who sends rain upon the earth, nor the Venus thro’ whom all living things are produced”, and “The doctrine of what some fanatics have termed a peculiar Providence, that is of some power beyond and superior to that which ordinar<il>y guides the operations of the Universe interfering to punish the vicious and reward the virtuous, is explicitly denied by Jesus Christ.”¹²¹ Since these phrases cannot be found in the Gospels, we have to assume that Shelley interpreted them arbitrarily to mean “Jesus may have used words like ...” This way of thinking was similar to how the words of a character in a poem or story were composed. Shelley described Jesus as follows:

He exults in the torturing flames and the insolent mockery of the oppressor. It is a triumph to him beyond all triumphs that the multitude accumulate scorn and execration on his head solely because his heart has known no measure in the love it bore them, and because the zeal which dragged him to his torments is so pure and ardent that it can make their very hatred sweet.¹²²

This character very precisely resembles Prometheus. In other parts of

¹²¹ Murray 250, 252.

¹²² Ibid. 247.

this essay, Shelley admired Jesus' generosity, thoughtfulness, eloquence, nonviolence, and especially, his egalitarianism. This objective view indicated that Shelley's way of thinking about Christianity had shifted from viewing it as the enemy and oppressor of the society to more of a mythology, like Greek myths. As Webb explained in detail, Shelley learned to embrace Jesus' favorable nature and project a curious resemblance onto his own ideal poet-character. For example, the relationship between a poet and his source of inspiration is comparable to the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit.¹²³ Thus, Shelley was able to get a new view of religion by standing at a distance and looking at it objectively. The Bible was only a form of mythology or literature that entertained him with its many characters and episodes. In his later essay *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), Shelley compared the Bible to literature:

It is probable that the astonishing poetry of Moses, Job, David, Solomon and Isaiah had produced a great effect upon the mind of Jesus and his disciples.¹²⁴

By creating a Jesus-like Prometheus, Shelley was merging Christian and Hellenistic personalities to create his ideal character. In *The Cenci* (1819), the relationship between God the oppressor and the oppressed human beings was represented in the relationship between father

¹²³ Webb 182–84.

¹²⁴ Reiman and Fraistat 524.

Count Cenci and his daughter Beatrice. Shelley's criticism of religion was sublimated in his poetry by comparing religion's cruelty toward man to the cruelty that Count Cenci inflicted on Beatrice. After removing the thick glasses of hatred, Shelley acquired a poet's clear vision which inspired his fertile imagination and made his works richer. He expanded his views of religion by using its mythology and characters in his poetry, rather than treating it merely as a subject to be criticized.

Chapter 5 Heroism : Character Development Oscillating Between Hero and Artist

Negative idealism is most obvious in the characters that Shelley develops. Shelley's main characters are always symbolic in relation to the objectives of his poems. In the early stages of his writing, his purpose was to incite social reform. In a letter dated December 10, 1811 to his friend Elizabeth Hitchener, he articulated his inspiration for *Queen Mab* by writing: "I intend it to be by anticipation a picture of the manners, simplicity and delight of a perfect state of society; tho [sic] still earthly."¹²⁵ In a letter dated February 24, 1812, Shelley confides to his new and lifelong tutor William Godwin that "I will publish nothing that shall not conduce to virtue, and therefore my publications so far as they do influence shall influence to good."¹²⁶

Shelley's purpose for composing poetry was to enlighten people by drawing out their goodness and developing their wisdom to make a better society for themselves. Most of his protagonists are depicted as heroes leading, teaching, fighting, and dying for people's rights. But Shelley was regarded as a poet, not a social activist, and his protagonists became more artistic as he matured as a poet. He explained the role of a poet as being both heroic and artistic in *A Defence of Poetry* (1821) as follows:

¹²⁵ Jones I 201.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 259.

... they [poets] are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society and the inventors of the arts of life and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion.¹²⁷

Although his ideal character would integrate both sides, it is difficult to unite both personalities because they are opposite, so his protagonists oscillated between being heroes and artists.

Since he began composing poetry, a heroic protagonist was always his ideal form of character. Although a traditional hero has a brave heart and the extraordinary strength of a warrior, Shelley's heroes were nonviolent revolutionaries. Later in his writing, the protagonists were divided into two types: a hero who sacrifices himself for the emancipation of the oppressed people and society or an artist who pursues his ideals and does not care about others. The protagonist of *Alastor* is the latter type. Athanase is the former at the beginning of the poem, but turns into the latter by the end, just like the Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo*, who once worked idealistically for people but evolved into a hermit. Prometheus follows his pursuits without compromise and brings peace to the world. In *The Cenci*, these conflicting character traits are shared by Beatrice and Lucretia.

¹²⁷ Reiman and Fraistat 512

In *Queen Mab* (1813), Shelley gives Mab a role as a kind of adviser. Mab appears in Ianthe's dream to disclose how misery from her past and present was caused by monarchy, religion, and commerce. Then Mab reveals the ideal future and inspires her to be a reformer to improve society. Although Ianthe is the same name as his daughter's, the poem is not meant to be addressed to one particular person, but rather to each reader. The recognition of individual personalities of both Mab and Ianthe suggests that Shelley regards the poem as propaganda rather than literature.

On the contrary, the young Poet in *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816) has a distinct personality. He is "a lovely youth" (55) and "Gentle, and brave, and generous" (58). Not only his personality, but also his past is described as "By solemn vision, and bright silver dream, / His infancy was nurtured" (67–68) and "When early youth had passed, he left / his cold fireside and alienated home / To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands" (75–77). As White and Cameron mention, the Poet is a projection of Shelley himself.¹²⁸ The Poet's extreme loneliness and carelessness for others are featured in this poem, as explained in the Preface: "The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin."¹²⁹

Shelley regards extreme loneliness as selfish. The Poet does not do anything wrong or harmful to people around him; he is just indifferent to others because his mind is totally occupied with pursuing his ideals.

¹²⁸ Cameron *Golden Years* 221; White I 419.

¹²⁹ Reiman and Fraistat 73.

This complete indifference to others is unacceptable by Shelley's heroic standards and anyone not embracing the viewpoint of a reformer of the society deserves to face death.

On the other hand, the character and appearance of the Poet is very attractively described, and his life is depicted as adventurous and dramatic. Moreover, his dying scene is one of the most beautiful scenes in the poem. After his death, the narrator mournfully moves the readers to tears. Most readers would have a more positive than negative impression of the Poet because of the beautiful description of his life and character. Shelley favors the view of an idealistic artist and describes the solitary destiny of an artist as a commendable way of life.

In this poem, death has another meaning. In the spring of 1815, about half a year before he composed the poem, Shelley's health deteriorated and "an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption."¹³⁰ Although his health miraculously recovered in a few months, death was on Shelley's mind when he was writing this poem. Shelley had to convince himself of his death. As Mary Shelley explained, "*Alastor*, on the contrary [to *Queen Mab*], contains an individual interest only"¹³¹ and readers can view *Alastor* as his most personal poem. In this work, Shelley completely portrays both his real and ideal perspectives of a poet. In Platonism, the ultimate "idea" cannot occupy the real human world, so the Poet in *Alastor* cannot avoid death. Smiling, the Poet accepts death as his destiny in the pursuit of

¹³⁰ Hutchinson 30.

¹³¹ Hutchinson 30.

his ideals, reflecting Shelley's acknowledgement of his own upcoming death. The Poet's self-centered seclusion was punished by death so that his life could be completely purified. Death in this poem has three meanings: punishment, purification, and destiny.

Athanase, the main character of "Prince Athanase" (1817), is apparently not a hero but an artist, because he closes himself off from others and is occupied by a deep grief which nobody could understand. Mary Shelley explained this poem as follows:

The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on *Alastor*. In the first sketch of the poem, he named it *Pandemos and Urania*. Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserves him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. 'On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips' (*The Deathbed of Athanase*).¹³²

The exact reason why Shelley left the poem in fragments cannot be traced, but King-Hele's account seems to be most typical: "Shelley may have abandoned the poem because it was too like Peacock's *Rhododaphne*. Whatever the reason, the loss is no great one, for the

¹³² Hutchinson 158–59.

theme was the same as *Alastor's*.”¹³³ What is different from *Alastor* is worth discussing more than what is common. Unlike the Poet in *Alastor* who does not care for others at all, Athanase “loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,”(26) and “like a steward in honest dealings tried, / With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise, / His riches and his cares he did divide”(40–42). That is to say, Athanase in the early part of the poem is the hero type who works for others with the mind of a philanthropist. Even after grief completely overwhelmed him, he tried to show concern for others.

But on whoe'er might question him he turned
 The light of his frank eyes, as if to show
 He knew not of the grief within that burned,
 But asked forbearance with a mournful look;
 Or spoke in words from which none ever learned
 The cause of disquietude: (77–82)

These lines indicate Athanase's way of communicating. He loves people around him so much that he could “such a glorious consolation find / In others' joy” (24–25). He wants to please others by doing whatever they want him to do. But the more they question the reason for his grief, the quieter he becomes, because he is unable to find accurate words to express his deep feelings. His intense care for others gradually leads to his silence and seclusion from other people. This analysis reveals that

¹³³ King–Hele 95.

Athanase is a heroic type at first, but changes into an artistic type who pursues his own ideals and becomes consumed by solitude in the end. Shelley did not want such a development in his ideal character, so he gave up writing the poem and left it in fragments.

The two opposing types of Shelley's ideal protagonists are integrated in the Maniac of *Julian and Maddalo* (1818) with the help of a dramatic style. The poem mainly consists of either dialogue between Count Maddalo and Julian or the monologue by the Maniac. Count Maddalo is the pessimist who has, according to the preface, "an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life," and Julian is the optimist and idealist who believes in "the power of man over own mind" and improvement of human society.¹³⁴ After the debate on human nature, society, and religion, Maddalo takes Julian to the Maniac. He was once wealthy and his life was full of happiness with a Lady from France, but loss of his fortune and especially his love turned him into a wanderer and maniac.

In the character of the Maniac, the heroic and artistic sides are mixed. He is introduced as follows:

There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully

...

His head was leaning on a music book,

And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook;

His lips were pressed against a folded leaf

¹³⁴ Reiman and Fraistat 120.

In hue too beautiful for health, and grief
 Smiled in their motions as they lay apart—
 As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
 The eloquence of passion, soon he raised
 His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed
 And spoke ...

... his words came each
 Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,—
 But that from one jarred accent you might guess
 It was despair made them so uniform:

(273, 278–86, 291–94)

The phrases “the poor wretch”, “mournfully”, “grief”, and “his sad meek face” indicate the Maniac’s gloomy and depressed mental condition, and “he was muttering” and “his lean limbs shook” express his pathological body conditions. As his monologue goes on, we gradually see that his sweetheart’s misunderstanding and departure have given him a severe shock, deprived him of all emotions, and made him into a monotonous speaker. But his disconnected words and his story are so beautiful that both Julian and Maddalo were moved to tears. Maddalo says, “Most wretched men / Are cradled into poetry by wrong, / They learn in suffering what they teach in song” (544–46). So the Maniac is regarded as a poet. In this regard, he seems to be an artist who secluded himself in his own world, but he does not shut others out entirely. In the last

part of his monologue, he finally forgives his love and even wishes her happiness. Moreover, he has a positive attitude that helps him care for others by saying: “I live to show / How much men bear and die not!” (459–60), or “let death upon despair!” (510). This positivity to contribute to others is endorsed by the introduction of the Maniac in the preface as “a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses.”¹³⁵ Readers of this poem can see both the heroic and artistic sides through the positive and negative qualities in the split character of the Maniac.

Madness as a character trait in literature has been granted citizenship in drama since Greek times. In *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare prefers to use the effect of madness to magnify the tragedy of the drama. In *Hamlet*, he uses two types of madness: true madness in Ophelia and pretend madness in Hamlet. In any of these dramatic examples, medical accuracy is not required. If we look at the Maniac from *Julian and Maddalo* from a medical standpoint, it is doubtful he can be diagnosed as suffering from a mental disease.¹³⁶ Michel Foucault analyses the fusion of madness into the dramatic structure as being “[a]t the heart of the structure, in its mechanical centre, it is at once a feigned conclusion that holds within it the promise of a new beginning, and an initiation to what will be recognized as reconciliation with truth and reason.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Reiman and Fraistat 121.

¹³⁶ Cf. Spence. “The Maniac’s Soliloquy in *Julian and Maddalo*” 81. He concludes that the Maniac cannot be said as a mental disease patient.

¹³⁷ Foucault 40.

In the dramatic structure, personalities are apt to be exaggerated to make distinct characters. So the Maniac's amiableness "in his right senses" is exaggerated in madness to maintain a blind devotion to the ex-lover who deserted him, or his amiableness is transformed into tolerance and honesty to wish her happiness. Moreover, the Maniac was once an idealist like Julian, but turns into more idealistic to show the endurance of the human mind. Such exaggerations are accepted in the dramatic structure.

Of course this poem is not a drama in form, but many researchers interpret the dramatic elements of the poem.¹³⁸ Shelley uses madness in dramatic structure where exaggeration of personality can be expressed without losing reality or naturalness. In this way, mixing the opposing characteristics of pursuing one's own ideals without caring for others and still showing affection for others becomes possible in the single persona of the Maniac by applying dramatic elements that overlook coherence and suspend reality.

Needless to say, Prometheus is not only the hero who gave humans a flame and wisdom in Greek mythology, but also brought a new ideal world in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1819). But that new world would never be possible without the remote collaboration with Demogorgon. Prometheus and Demogorgon have a metonymic relationship and share the hero and artist image of Shelley's protagonists with each other.

¹³⁸ e.g. Hill, Wasserman, Hirsh, Newey, and Brewer

A metonymic relationship between the two means that one is recalled when the other's name is presented. Both Prometheus and Demogorgon are main characters in the poetic drama, but they never appear in the same scenes. Instead, their actions and situations form a counterpart so that they evoke images of each other in each scene, such as the two Ones in Act I. The first One appears in Prometheus' soliloquy:

Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits
 But One, who throng those bright and rolling Worlds
 Which Thou and I alone of living things
 Behold with sleepless eyes! (I. 1–4)

The second One is referred to by Phantasm of Jupiter who repeats Prometheus' curse against Jupiter:

Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Humankind,
 One only being shalt thou not subdue. (I. 264–65)

Although both of the Ones apparently pertain to Prometheus himself, Grabo pointed out that the Ones also suggest the One in Neoplatonism which influenced Shelley at that time.¹³⁹ The One in Neoplatonism is the source of all things in the real world. Wasserman also identified Prometheus as the metaphysical One Mind and

¹³⁹ Grabo *Prometheus Unbound: An Interpretation* 13–14.

interprets this soliloquy scene by applying Berkeleian idealism: “For it the universe is the mass of thought, then it has a continuous existence by virtue of being the unending perception by the One Mind.”¹⁴⁰

On the other hand, Demogorgon can also be regarded as the Neoplatonic One. After briefing about what researchers have demonstrated on Demogorgon’s identity: the unknowable by Yeats and Bloom, deep truth by Kuhn, spirit of life, or spiritual energy by Bawra, and non–allegorical by White, Williams concluded that Demogorgon is “Eternity” (III. i. 51).¹⁴¹ Cameron regards “Demogorgon’s mighty law” (II. ii. 43) as “law of necessity which controls events and actions that individuals believe are matters of personal decision or ‘desires within’.”¹⁴² Cameron widens his interpretation by saying, “He is not only Necessity or Fate in a general sense but Necessity in the special, semi–scientific sense given to the concept by Godwin and Hume.”¹⁴³ These interpretations indicate that Demogorgon is the being outside the realm of Jupiter who dominates all the gods and human beings. If Demogorgon is “the being who is latent in creatures and laws, who is the power of the origin of all the lives and evolution, and who is necessity and freedom himself,” as Ishikawa notes, Demogorgon is the very One in the Neoplatonic sense.¹⁴⁴ Thus the Ones in the poem which refer to Prometheus on the surface also pertain to Demogorgon and his property of Necessity as well.

¹⁴⁰ Wasserman 260.

¹⁴¹ Williams 25–28.

¹⁴² Cameron *Shelley: The Golden Years* 540.

¹⁴³ Cameron “The Political Symbolism of *Prometheus Unbound*” 115.

¹⁴⁴ Ishikawa 273.

In Act IV, Demogorgon is the exact metonymy for Prometheus. Act IV is the ode that praises the new ideal world that Prometheus has brought, but neither Prometheus himself or his name appear in the Act. After telling the story about how the miserable old order ruled by the tyrant Jupiter has ended and describing the beauty of the new order by the Spirits, the Moon, and the Earth, Demogorgon declares that the new ideal world has come.

This is the Day which down the void Abyss
 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. 554-61)

Such a declaration would be expected to be made by the person responsible for the new world. It would make sense as a speech given by Prometheus, but he has already retired into his cave with Asia and does not appear in this scene. The self-sacrificing hero, who endured the torture and brought the new world by driving out his hatred for Jupiter and understanding the truth of love, would never boast himself. This is Shelley's ideal image of a hero.

Demogorgon's declaration of victory ends the poem with these lines:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
 To forgive wrongs darker than Death or Night ;
 To defy Power which seems Omnipotent;
 To love, and bear; to hop, till Hope aerates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
 Neither to change nor falter nor repent:
 This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory. (570–78)

The first six lines of this section are exactly what Prometheus has experienced. All the praises from the Spirits, the Moon, the Earth, and all the constituents of the new world should be dedicated to Prometheus. Demogorgon deflects who is praised so as not to let Prometheus be too proud of his own work, in contrast to Jupiter's boasting in Act III Scene I, which reached a climax and brought about his ruin.

Engelberg suggests that Shelley addresses the failure of the French Revolution and Napoleon in his essays and poems and tries to repeatedly account for true reform. Shelley negates ruling by one person and the concentration of power.¹⁴⁵ In Act IV, if Prometheus were proud himself and praised by all around him, he would just be a post-

¹⁴⁵ Engelberg 124–26.

Jupiter, a new tyrant, which is what Shelley most hates. Instead, Shelley tries to describe the republican peace by making Demogorgon, the metonymy of Prometheus and not the hero himself, receive the praise for the ideal new world.

Prometheus and Demogorgon play the roles of representing each other in other scenes. First, the fall of Jupiter scene shows the contrasting relationship between Prometheus and Demogorgon. In Act I, however importunately Mercury asks him, Prometheus never reveals the secret of Jupiter's fall. It is Demogorgon who actually discloses the fall in front of Jupiter in Act III. Prometheus knows that his understanding of the truth of love necessarily brings the ruin of Jupiter, which alludes to Demogorgon who is identified as Necessity.

The places they stay also expose aspects of their relationship. The first scene Demogorgon enters is the cave to which Asia and her sister Panthea were led. On the other hand, after liberation Prometheus retires to his cave with Asia. The cave is, for Platonic Shelley, the source of knowledge and wisdom. Caves are often described as an important place in Shelley's other poems such as *Alastor*. The cave becoming Prometheus' final destination is suggested in the Demogorgon's entrance scene.

The eloquence and reticence of the characters also emphasize their contrasting personalities. Prometheus is very eloquent in Act I. After a long soliloquy and dialogue with Voices, the Earth, the Furies and Mercury, he declares his conviction about the truth of love. As the Acts and Scenes progress, however, he has fewer words and finally no

appearance at the last Act. On the other hand, Demogorgon is reticent in his first scene (Act II Scene IV). Although he is engaged in dialogue with Asia, he answers with few words, like “God” (8), “He reins” (28), and “Behold!”(128). His words are not only short, but also suggestive. At the scene of Jupiter’s fall in Act III Scene I, his sentences come out in a very logical manner. Moreover, in the last Act, as we have seen already, he praises the new order and the hero sonorously. Thus when Prometheus is eloquent, Demogorgon is reticent, and vice versa.

The most notable point that shows their contrasting relationship is their connection with Asia. Prometheus became unbound internally in the last scene of Act I by convincing himself that a love for Asia could overthrow the domination of evil. On the other hand, it is Demogorgon who convinces Asia of the true power of love in Act II Scene IV. Engelberg also points out that Demogorgon was able to get out from the abyss by Asia’s conviction.¹⁴⁶ By putting Asia between the characters, we see the symmetry between Prometheus and Demogorgon, which indicates they are metonymical by mirroring each other to make readers better understand both of them.

Weinberg regards *Prometheus Unbound* as Shelley’s rebellion against the paternal society in Europe which is symbolized by Jupiter, and Demogorgon is necessary to indicate the outer world because “Demogorgon clearly ‘exists’ outside the system: his law operates outside the framework of motivated action and conflict, and is thus

¹⁴⁶ Engelberg 130.

exempt from Jupiter's rule."¹⁴⁷ The Titan Prometheus, who is semi-god and semi-human, is able to defeat Jupiter because he is absolute god of gods and the Titan is subordinate to him. The cooperation between the heroic Prometheus and the artistic Demogorgon, being outside of Jupiter's realm, brought the new ideal world into existence. Although their collaboration is not evident because they do not appear in the same scenes and do not work together directly, readers can infer their cooperation by their metonymical relationship. Furthermore, as Lysell explains, "Similes and metaphors are constant fundamental devices in the play not in order to make something evident as in a Shakespeare drama, but rather to capture what cannot be directly represented in the dialogue." The hero and artist as Shelley's ideal characters are, although opposite, described respectively and unitedly in *Prometheus Unbound*.

These opposing ideal characters are divided again into Beatrice and Lucretia in *The Cenci*, which was written in summer of 1819, just after finishing Act III of *Prometheus Unbound*. Unlike the obvious main character of Beatrice, Lucretia has been ignored for a long time in most studies of *The Cenci*. Even Curran briefly mentions that "Lucretia is not a compelling figure, and hardly a deep one, but she is sufficient for Shelley's purposes."¹⁴⁸ The assertion in this paper is that Shelley projects a very important role onto Lucretia to play one half of his ideal character, and the poem would not be complete without her.

¹⁴⁷ Weinberg 255.

¹⁴⁸ Curran 65.

Although neglected by critics, Lucretia appears in all five Acts, and nine out of fifteen Scenes in total. She appears with Beatrice in most of her scenes, shares the key events of the drama, and is ultimately executed with Beatrice. In the final scene, which is the most beautiful one in the cruel drama, she and Beatrice symbolically bind their hair together. They share their life, abuse at the hands of Count Cenci, and fate, which means for Shelley that they also share important character ideals.

Their contrast is very clear. Beatrice is a strong lady who criticizes her father in public (I. iii.), gives an order to kill her father (IV. ii.), and defends herself boldly against the judge in court (V. ii, iii). Lucretia is a tender lady who devotedly raises stepchildren (I. ii. 17–18), obeys her arrogant husband meekly, and supports Beatrice at any time. To summarize their characters, Beatrice is an intelligent and eloquent woman with a strong will, who is skeptical of God and critical of others. On the other hand, Lucretia is an emotional, reticent, and pious woman, who is overwhelmed by circumstances and tolerant of others.

One reason Shelley described the two characters so differently is because he referred to an old manuscript he got in 1819 titled *Relation of the Death of the Family of the Cenci*. The document details the incident, along with descriptions of the people involved, especially the contrasts between Beatrice and Lucretia. For example, in the scene when the sentence is read, “Beatrice on hearing it broke into a piercing lamentation, and into passionate gesture, exclaiming, ... Lucretia, as

prepared, and already resigned to her fate, listened without terror to the reading of this terrible sentence.” Beatrice prepared their dresses for execution “with long sleeves of black cotton for Lucretia, and of common silk for herself.” Moreover, in the funeral procession, “Each had in her left hand the holy sign of benediction, and in the right a handkerchief, with which Lucretia wiped her tears, and Beatrice the perspiration from her forehead.”¹⁴⁹ Shelley developed his contrasting images of the two ladies based on the ideas from this document.

Their various contrasting elements organize a perfectly ideal character for Shelley. When Lucretia’s delicate, feminine side was emphasized, Beatrice’s tough, masculine side comes to the surface as well. Compared to the goodness of Lucretia, the evil of Beatrice, which seems to be inherited from her father, becomes clearer. The delicate and weak image of the tragic heroine Beatrice conveyed by the legends, or more visibly by the famous portrait of her by Guido Reni in Colonna Palace, is hardly found in the poetic drama itself, so that readers find difficulty having compassion for her. Those feelings are more fitting for Lucretia. Beatrice is only able to get sympathy from readers as a true heroine of the tragedy because of the shadow of goodness that Lucretia casts on her counterpart.

Thus, Shelley’s two forms of ideal character are combined in Beatrice and Lucretia. Before this poem, Shelley’s hero character was a self-sacrificing leader and reformer who worked for others, and the artist character was a sensitive individual in pursuit of his own ideals

¹⁴⁹ Ingpen and Peck II 163–64.

without caring for others. In *The Cenci*, Beatrice plays the role of a hero in pursuit of her own faith and a leader without caring for others, and Lucretia is the sensitive person who selflessly works for others. These two individuals are acknowledged as one ideal character by being abused by the same person, committing the same crime, binding their hair together, and dying at the same time. Based on a true story, this united but split ideal character overcomes the problem of being out of touch with reality, which was inevitable in Greek mythical Prometheus or the Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo*, and has been known as a defect of Shelley's work up to now. Repeating negation and creation, Shelley's two ideal and opposing character types experienced unity and separation in various ways throughout his work, culminating in *The Cenci*.

Part II: "The Triumph of Life"

Shelley's negative idealism is the most obvious in his last poem "The Triumph of Life" (TL). The TL study experienced a dynamic critical history. After a century's ignorance, it has received a lot of praises and blames. TL is the poem which reflects Shelley's self-revision of all the antecedent works. Though his epistemology was composed of the eighteenth-century philosophies like spiritualism, skepticism, and materialism, his philanthropy, which is the motive of his writing, had never received sympathy from the object. Shelley's old epistemology was negated and revised to get negative sympathy toward the multitude and the chariot in the poem. The doctrine of Necessity which young Shelley believed as the ruler of the world is reinterpreted through his understanding of the first introduced one of the captives, Napoleon. And his historicism acquired the ideal way of learning, that is, to surpass the master. The "shape all light" negates the previous image of Shelley's ideal woman, suggesting the importance of beauty, destructive, and anonymity in his true ideal woman. Negation toward clear expression not only of the protagonist but of the ending of the poem indicates the new possibility of language to express what is indescribable, which Shelley has pursued for all his life. TL is a fugitive zenith of his negative idealism.

Chapter 1 A Critical History of “The Triumph of Life”

This chapter shows the critical history of TL from the time this poem was first published in 1824 to the present time (2019). Specifically, this article focuses on three main factors: Harold Bloom’s contribution, textual studies of TL, and the influence of Paul de Man. My aim is not simply to follow the dynamical change of TL reputation—mystical, monumental, anti-monumental—but also to consider the values of TL study, which present us new views of historical persons like Rousseau or Napoleon.

Before Bloom, TL study was barren for a long time. Compared with Shelley’s other major poems like *Prometheus Unbound* or shorter popular lyrics like *To a Skylark*, TL remained relatively unstudied in the years following its publication. However, before the publication of this poem, Mary Shelley, P. B. Shelley’s wife and the editor of his anthology, described TL as “one of the most mystical of his poems.”¹⁵⁰ “Mystical” was a convenient label for readers because it was sufficiently ambiguous in terms of pinpointing the poem’s meaning. Therefore, TL remained conveniently “mystical” and almost totally neglected by academia for nearly a century.

After Shelley’s reputation peaked at the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to praises from William Butler Yeats and George Bernard Shaw, two important studies were presented in 1914: one by

¹⁵⁰ From “Note on Poems of 1822, by Mrs. Shelley,” Hutchinson 676.

A.C. Bradley and the other by F. Melian Stawell. Both investigated the influence of literature by Italian authors such as Petrarch and Dante on Shelley's TL. Soon after, New Critics also made the connection between Shelley's TL and Italian literature, with T. S. Eliot asserting that Shelley penned "some of the greatest and most Dantesque lines in English" (130). In the eyes of critics at least, TL remained a mystical and Dantesque poem that was difficult to interpret. Such vague, varied critical responses toward TL indicate how difficult reading the poem is and how profound Shelley's intentions were when writing it.

1. Bloom's Contribution to Academia

In 1959, Harold Bloom published his first book, entitled *Shelley's Mythmaking*. Applying Martin Buber's theory of religious existentialism symbolized by "I-Thou" and "I-It," Bloom regarded Shelley's poetic creativity as Shelley's own mythmaking, which began with his intimate relationship with nature as described in poems like "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and which ended up with a hopeless disconnection with nature as depicted in TL. His interpretation of the poem and its elements ("The Sun" as being evil, for example) created waves because interpretations of TL had been practically fixed until then. Not surprisingly, Bloom's reading of the poem provoked some objections from Shelley scholars, especially from Kenneth Allott and P. H. Butter. As a result of the controversy he created, Bloom opened the door to the modern study of the poem.

Before Bloom, the harvest of TL study could hardly be considered rich. It was as if critics regarded this poem as unworthy of reading, or as simply an etude by a Dantean student partly because of its fragmented state. Bloom crashed this fixed idea, and as a result led TL studies into a new phase. Indeed, in the last chapter of *Shelley's Mythmaking*, Bloom pointed out that "'TL' has been misread by the few commentators who have written on it at any length." (221) The revisionist Bloom reread the poem line by line and made original interpretations of images, scenes, and phrases.

Bloom's main arguments were summarized in two points: (1) that a man is not a part of nature; and (2) that the chariot symbolizes Shelley's ironic view toward tradition. Bloom explained that TL shows Shelley's skepticism toward nature. For instance, in regard to the sunrise in the opening of the poem, Bloom explained that the scene describes a series of natural acts of worship of the sun by all the natural components of the earth. The sun purges Venus, the symbol of poets, and so is the source of tyranny. And as all things rise in answer to the summons of the sun, the poet does the reverse: he falls in sleep. Bloom contends that with this scene, as is evident in Rousseau's retrospect of the happy life before sleep (308-39), Shelley is demonstrating the change from dependence on nature to a recognition that it is dangerous to depend on nature for too much.

Bloom compared Shelley's chariot in TL with the one in Ezekiel's vision. The chariot, which appears in the early part of TL leads the triumphant procession. The people in the procession are hurrying, but

seem not to know from where they are coming or to where they are going.

The chariot is described as follows:

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendor, and a Shape
So sate within, ... (86-8)

... Upon the chariot-beam
A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume
The guidance of that wonder-winged team; (93-5)

All the four faces of that Charioteer
Had their eyes banded; (99-100)

Bloom interpreted Shelley's chariot as presenting an ironical confrontation with the Christian tradition. Dante, Milton, and Blake all described the chariot as divine transcendence-in-motion, using the traditional images of Christianity. But Shelley's chariot is different, according to Bloom. Though there are many similarities with Ezekiel's chariot (e.g., it comes in the midst of a whirlwind, the charioteer has four faces, and it is filled with light), the charioteer of TL has his eyes on all four faces covered, so that he cannot guide the procession in the right direction. This means that the components of the chariot (the charioteer, the shape in the carriage, and consequently the procession) are not justified.

Bloom was so severe in pointing out the misreadings of the critics who preceded him (e.g., A. C. Bradley, F. Melian Stawell, and Carlos Baker) that objections arose from Shelley academia. Kenneth Allott's "Bloom on 'The Triumph of Life'" (1960) was the representation of such refutations.

In his criticism, Allott denounced Bloom, saying that he ignored the distinction between what was really settled and what was still debatable only to be different from other critics. One example of Allott's rebuttal of Bloom's interpretation revolves around the scene of Rousseau's recollections of the past. Bloom suggested that this scene represented the passageway between childhood and the beginning of manhood, whereas Allott refuted Bloom's disingenuous ambiguity and, quoting past critics like Todhunter, Locock, and Bradley, explained this scene as being symbolic Rousseau's rebirth.

Similarly, Allott also refuted Bloom's interpretation of the "Shape all light" as being deceitful and malevolent. "Shape all light", which appears in Rousseau's reminiscence wearing rainbow, was hitherto regarded as a kind of an ideal woman Shelley often described.¹⁵¹ Instead, Allott proposed that "Shelley is affirming that to attempt to realize the Ideal Vision in human love is to invite disappointment and find oneself involved in life's inevitable corruption" (227). In this way, Allott criticized Bloom's monotonous interpretation that all the visions that appeared in TL are evil.

¹⁵¹ About the reception of "shape all light" by critics, see Marshal.

P. H. Butter was another scholar who refuted Bloom. In "Sun and Shape in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*" (1962), Butter criticized Bloom's revision of the usual reading of the above-mentioned scene of Rousseau's recollections of the past, saying, "This is too literal-minded" (44). Butter's main argument was focused on the interpretation of the "Shape." Bloom regarded the Shape as being associated with the sun, and since the sun in the poem is evil, so must be the Shape. Butter thought this interpretation was rather forced. He insisted that the effect of this poem is ambiguous and paradoxical. Quoting other poems like "The Witch of Atlas" and "Epipsychidion," in which ideal visionary maidens are shown, Butter concluded that natural beauty symbolized by "Shape" seemed to be a reflection of the divine, though he conceded that vision passes and does not protect from the contagion of life.

In response to Bloom's interpretation of the sun as being evil in that it is the source of tyranny, and of "the Shape all Light" as relating to the sun, Butter opposed Bloom and, like prior critics, concluded that "the Shape" is similar to the earlier visionary maidens who represent the ideal beauty of the spirit of nature.

In the 1960s, Bloom seemed to be fighting his battle alone. However, by causing a great many counterarguments, Bloom stimulated future TL study, which has made rapid progress since then.

2. Textual Studies: Matthews' and Reiman's New Texts

The 1960s witnessed the birth of the poem's authoritative text. G. M.

Matthews issued a new text of the poem in the first half of the decade, and in 1965 Donald H. Reiman presented his own new text in his book, *Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'* Both texts were newly edited from Shelley's holograph held in the Bodleian Library. Thanks to Matthews' and Reiman's thorough investigations, textual study of TL was greatly developed, since academia could now obtain the poem's reliable text. The two scholars did disagree on some key points, however, such as whether a jotting on one sheet of the poem can be read as "Julie" or "Jane." This led to the problem of whether Shelley did indeed have a love affair with Jane Williams in his last days.

Shelley's manuscript of TL had already had a long history before it was accessed by scholars, because his wife Mary had the intention of making Shelley a legend. After Mary published Shelley's anthology in 1824, 1839, and 1847, the manuscript was concealed. Matthews pointed out that Mary herself did not consult the manuscript after 1824, and all the editions other than Mary's are derived from her 1824 edition ("A New Text" 272). The editors who followed in Mary's footsteps amended and corrected the text according to their own policies and readings.

Mary intended for many of Shelley's manuscripts to remain concealed. Indeed, she devoted her life as a widow to protecting her only surviving son, Percy Florence Shelley. Though her husband had been disinherited and died prior to her father-in-law, Sir Timothy Shelley, she managed to arrange for Percy Florence to inherit the Shelley Baronetcy, and furthermore she bargained with Sir Timothy not to

reveal her husband's unfavorable deeds.¹⁵² What's more, as a manuscript by nature includes more personal and private information than literary textuality, Mary disliked the idea of the manuscript being open to the public; after all, to make Shelley a legend, she had to carefully control what information about him was available. Mary's effort to make Shelley a legend was taken over by her daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Shelley, who strictly oversaw which of Shelley's letters and manuscripts could be opened and which could not.

So concealed, there came the moment for the manuscript to be revealed. One descendant, Sir John Shelley-Rolls (the son of Percy Florence's cousin), presented many of Shelley's manuscripts (including TL) to the Bodleian Library in 1946. Shelley-Rolls had inherited the Shelley Baronetcy and had become the sixth Baronet. Thanks to his presentation of the manuscripts, scholars were finally able to access Shelley's own holographs.

G. M. Matthews moved first. In his "The Triumph of Life': A New Text" (1960), he compared his new text to Mary's 1824 edition in detail. As this was the first text edited from Shelley's own copy since the publication of the 1824 edition, Matthews' text was greatly appreciated by contemporary Shelley scholars. In Matthews' "The 'Triumph of Life' Apocrypha," issued in the same year, he introduced two more cancelled openings of the poem. These alternate openings show Shelley's labor in terms of his work.

¹⁵² *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, I, 444, 478, 521.

Matthews' third paper concerning TL entitled "Shelley and Jane Williams" (1961), was the most controversial. Introducing a lyric known as "Lines written in the Bay of Lerici," recovered from Shelley's manuscript, Matthews presents Shelley's love affair with Jane Williams (the wife of Edward Williams, who died with Shelley in Bay of Lerici) with some evidence. One of these pieces of evidence is a jotting which appeared on the last leaf of the TL manuscript, which read, "Alas, I kiss you Jane." Observing Mary's journal, Edward Williams' journal, and information about weather conditions at that time, Matthews concluded that "Shelley must have been a good deal in Jane's company" (45).

Furthermore, in "On Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life'" (1962), Matthews laid out his own close reading of the Rousseau scene. As the interlineation "Alas I kiss you Jane" was inserted on the sheet of the scene where Rousseau speaks of having fallen by the wayside, heavy with his awareness and acceptance of defeat, Matthews concluded that, "What gives Jane Williams her overwhelming importance for Shelley and for his last poem is ... that the experience forced him to admit the collapse of his relationship with Mary" (132). Clearly, Matthews' contribution to TL study was not only that he presented the first reliable text since Mary's edition, but also that he proposed a renovated view of this poem with thorough biographical evidence.

In 1965, Donald H. Reiman published *Shelley's "The Triumph of Life": A Critical Study Based on a Text Newly Edited from the Bodleian Manuscript*. This work included not only the new text, but also its history, style, and a detailed reading. His notes on the text presented a

detailed comparison with Mary's 1824 edition and Matthews' more recent textual analysis, and explained the basis of his decisions almost line by line. So strictly accounted for and so reliable was his textual analysis that Reiman's version became the authoritative edition of TL. In this way, Reiman's work greatly contributed to modern-day TL study.

Prior to his textual analysis, Reiman had issued a paper titled "Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life': The Biographical Problem" (1963). This work was Reiman's objection to Matthews' earlier "Shelley and Jane Williams." In it, Reiman refuted Matthews' arguments one by one. For example, Reiman argued that Shelley's confession to Byron about his affair with Jane was unlikely to have happened, because at that time the relationship between Byron and Shelley was not close; in fact, Shelley disliked him so much as to say, "Lord Byron is the nucleus of all that is hateful and tiresome in it" (537). And about the most fatal scribble, "Alas, I kiss you Jane," Reiman interpreted the last word not as "Jane," but as "Julie," derived from Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Heloise*. This reading reflected Shelley's deep inclination toward Rousseau at that time. In the last part of his argument, Reiman pointed out some previously unnoted parallels between the character of "Rousseau" in TL and the real J. J. Rousseau.

So severe and so persuasive was Reiman's refutation of Matthews' work that Matthews did not respond to Reiman for some time, and even then only slightly. This response didn't come until 1968, when he published his paper, "Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life'," in which Matthews supported Kenneth Allott against Bloom and only referred to

Reiman as having been “influenced by Bloom’s interpretation” (354).

Reiman’s contribution to Shelley academia has been influential for many reasons. First among these is that he presented an accurate text, which enables us to reach Shelley more directly than previous texts. Furthermore, he also presented a comprehensive understanding of TL. That his *Shelley’s ‘The Triumph of Life* continues to be repeatedly quoted indicates the greatness of his achievement.

3. De Man’s Influence on TL Study

Paul de Man’s deconstructive “Shelley Disfigured,” published in 1979, was a shock to Shelley academia. In it de Man explained the impossibility of determining any connotative or performative meaning that the language might pose. Basically, de Man was advocating for the rejection of all the interpretations accepted up until that point because they disfigured the language of the poem by interpreting it through existing images. De man deconstructed TL to make a new phase for critics to reconstruct a new TL study.

The widespread influence of de Man’s argument began to be evident in 1983, when Lisa M. Steinman analyzed Shelley’s poetic concern as per de Man’s reading. Since then, many authors have followed de Man’s treatment, including Deborah Esch, Orrin Wang, James O’Rourke, and Ross Woodman. There have also been those scholars who have disagreed with de Man’s far-fetched, language-inclined analysis. For example, Jerrold E. Hogle presented his anti-de Manian leanings sharply.

The articulation of language and the inability to satisfy a desire for self-knowledge were significant in de Man's argument. The structure of TL follows a pattern, when the character repeatedly asks the question "Why?", but the scene suddenly changes into a totally different depiction before the question is answered. De Man called these changes "the articulation of language," where connections are made that allow movement. "How can a positional act, which relates to nothing that comes before and after, become inscribed in a sequential narrative?" de Man asks, and then answers, "...because we impose, in our turn, on the senseless power of positional language the authority of sense and of meaning" (64). To read what was imposed on the poem, de Man argued, is to find what was disfiguring Shelley. De Man concluded, "Reading as disfiguration, to the very extent that it resists historicism, turns out to be historically more reliable than the products of historical archeology" (69).

De Man also analyzed some key phrases in TL like the "Shape" and "the sun," which had already been discussed by many critics. However, for his interpretations, de Man referred only to the scene within which the phrase appears (as opposed to other scholars, who related those key phrases to other parts of the poem or to other poems by Shelley). De Man does so because he believes that "The Triumph of Life warns us that nothing ... ever happens in relation ... to anything that precedes, follows or exists elsewhere, but only as a random event whose power ... is due to the randomness of its occurrence" (69).

According to de Man, that fact that TL's repeated questioning, such as "What is this?" and "Whence camest thou?", is never addressed shows that Shelley's intention was not to provide answers, but rather to present such questions in their own right and to show the failure to satisfy the desire for self-knowledge. Before de Man's work on the subject, there was an assumption shared by academics that Romantics were attempting an "apocalyptic vision" in which the distance between the subject and the object was to be dissolved in a momentary symbolic representation. In contrast to this, de Man insisted that Romantics, in different ways, had developed allegories in which narratives of visionary experience as a momentary achievement of unity were intimated and then deferred, only to be replaced by a new trope again and again. This allegorical device is what de Man called "rhetoric of temporality." So, he argued, Shelley's questioning should not be answered inside or outside of the poem; rather, what readers should do is observe the very language of the poem.

In the end, de Man, who rejected every monumentalization of language, also rejected his own observation being fixed into a method because it "would be to regress from the rigor exhibited by Shelley" (69). Against his wish, however, de Man's argument was monumentalized by later scholars in various ways. For example, Steinman's "From 'Alastor' to 'The Triumph of Life': Shelley on the Nature and Source of Linguistic Pleasure" (1983) discussed the continuity of Shelley's poetic concerns and strategies from "Alastor" to TL in light of de Man's insights. Steinman employed the approach of comparing TL with other Shelley

works—which is the very method avoided by de Man—but her arguments seemed to respond to de Man. The basis of her argument was derived from the statement that “‘The Triumph of Life’ identifies and thematizes the impossibility of defining or abandoning the quest for a stable text,” which was the idea gained from de Man (23). Steinman finally concluded that, in opposition to de Man, she thought it useful to follow the ways in which Shelley’s skepticism about the relationship between the causes and effects of poetry is revealed. Thinking in this way, Steinman seemed to persuade herself to describe how “De Man’s reading thus comes to seem less a threat” (34). This telling statement reveals just how great de Man’s influence was on her—whether she wanted to accept it or not.

Another de Manian study was Deborah Esch’s “A Defence of Rhetoric/the Triumph of Reading: De Man, Shelley and the Rhetoric of Romanticism” (1988), which presented a close examination of de Man in light of Shelley. In it, the author states that de Man’s terminology and his critical procedures are, to a telling extent, prefigured in Shelley’s reflections on the nature and function of poetic language. Esch concluded that de Man’s essay enables us to read both the force and the failings of the de Manian corpus.

Orrin N. C. Wang’s “Disfiguring Monuments: History in Paul de Man’s ‘Shelley Disfigured’ and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s ‘The Triumph of Life’” (1991) claimed that de Man lifted “The Triumph of Life” to the position of a critique of history and revolutionary transformation — a critique that commented upon the uncertainty of deconstruction’s

present role. In another instance, James O'Rourke's "Death and Error in 'Shelley Disfigured'" (1992) detected how de Man was trapped in "Shelley Disfigured," referring to the influences of Derrida and Kant. Ross Woodman's "Figuring Disfiguration: Reading Shelley after De Man" (2001) tried to analyze Shelley's "Adonais" and "Prometheus Unbound" in a de Manian way in the first half of the paper, while in the second half the author focused on de Man's reading of the poet, comparing it with that of other critics like Earl Wasserman, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault.

Jerrold E. Hogle investigated TL in the last chapter of his *Shelley's Process* (1988), in which he argued that the logic and style in all of Shelley's works were governed by a certain movement in every thought, memory, image, or word-pattern whereby each was seen and saw itself in terms of a radically different form. Hogle revealed this revisionary procedure and demonstrated the powerful effects of "radical transference" in Shelley's visions of human possibility. Hogle later appealed his disagreement with de Man, criticizing de Man's conclusion as being focused too exclusively on the tracing-effacing movement of the "Shape all Light." Hogle insisted that he had found the pattern in the late works of Shelley, where killing the previous meanings of the signs also released the human imagination. Hogle convicted de Man as one who does "not consider enough." ("Response")

The monumental volume of criticism *Deconstruction and Criticism* (1979), in which "Shelley Disfigured" was first presented, was

originally conceived as a collection of essays on TL.¹⁵³ The very existence of this volume showed that the deconstructionists succeeded in making Shelley scholars realize that TL was worthy of additional arguments and analyses. In addition to the great significance of de Man's contribution, the fact that so many later critics have quoted or referred to him has made de Man's argument even more significant and indispensable for today's scholars of Shelley's works, particularly the poem TL.

4. 1990s to Present (2019): Eminent Essays

After 1990, a prevailing and dominant article or literary theory cannot be found in TL studies. Instead, essays which apply various literary theories such as the new historicism, psychoanalysis, and especially comparative literature increased. Essays expressing various points of view—not bound by literary theories—has also been produced. Ronald Tetreault analyzed Shelley's poetic style, while Alan M. Weinberg applied a historical and biological view. Bernard Beatty found musical elements in the poem, and David Vallins compared “a person inside a vehicle” with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. John Whatley's view was gothic, and Katherine Singer focused on female roles. The two latest essays were both written by the doyen Michael O'Neill: one was about religion and the other compared with Southey. I will consider three of the above articles: Tetreault, Vallins, and Singer.

¹⁵³ Arditi 125

Ronald Tetreault liberated TL studies which had so far been dominated by de Man's reading. In "Shelley: Style and Substance" (1991) Tetreault argued that de Man's "structure of forgetting"—to present various allegories in order to impose the positing power of language—is too skeptical, and it leads to nihilism. He insisted, "Perhaps there are possibilities in the poem that de Man's rhetoric closes off but which Shelley's allows us to explore" (21). He regarded TL as replete with equivocal richness and the incessant successive replacement of images is not negation by erasure and forgetting, as de Man claims, because "disfiguration is succeeded by constant refiguration in the poem" (24). The play of signifiers generates a multiplicity of signified, and this is the way style modifies substance in Shelley, he concluded.

Articles using a comparative literature approach have increased in this period. Not only Shelley's contemporaries like Keats, Wordsworth, Blake, and Southey were compared, but also later authors like George Eliot and modern authors like Steven Gill. Vallins presented Shelley's influence on the later author, Virginia Woolf, in his article "'Whose Shape Is That within the Car? & Why?': *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'The Triumph of Life'" (2001). Referring to her diary which confessed that when she was twenty she read much of Shelley, he lined up several parallels between the settings and structures of *Mrs. Dalloway* and TL. The events described take place on a single day in June in a crowded city, and later described a figure of authority who is strangely bereft of his customary grandeur or impressiveness, for

example. What Vallins focused on most is the obscurity of being in the car and the excited people surrounding it. Vallins explained the crowd's fascination with the car as a symbol of unthinking obedience to conventional values. And to leave the being inside the car obscure is to satirize the reverence for power and authority. Woolf's negative stance on authority and power is very similar to Shelley's, the author regards. One regrettable thing about this article is that the author should have considered more from a feminist point of view. The shadow of Mary Wollstonecraft in TL could be found in the light of Woolf.

On the other hand, Katherine Singer presented a gynocentric approach. Singer focused on the role of women who bring revolution with some kind of drugs. In "Stoned Shelley: Revolutionary Tactics and Women Under the Influence" (2009) Singer found some similarity of the figure and the role of women between *Prometheus Unbound (PU)* and TL. Asia in *PU* inhales "oracular vapors" and is led to Demogorgon's cave where she finds the secret of gods and humans. After that, she emits liquid light that intoxicates those around her. In TL "shape all light" who came from the East offers nepenthe to Rousseau, who is seeking the secrets of his birth and life. Singer considered that in both cases an eastern woman was related to a kind of drug which brought a dramatic change, a revolution. Using biographical evidence that Shelley took laudanum sometimes when he was in severe situations and needed a refuge, Singer suggested that "Shelley's drugs may pave the way for a liberatory vacancy, the necessary silence and solitude that open up the possibility for new social structures" (698). As Singer indicated, for

Shelley drugs may help usher in political and social changes, but may have the danger for users of losing their mind and being hooked on the medicine. And “the onus of eluding this danger falls on women” (707). From these two works, Singer extracted, I think, two significant roles of women Shelley thought: to bring good or bad with magical powers and to guide male protagonist to a success or a failure. Though Singer did not use or cite other feminist works or theories, this article is valuable because very few feminism studies concerning Shelley’s works have been done so far. Barbara C. Gelpi’s *Shelley’s Goddess* was rich in suggestion from feminism point of view, but rarely referred to TL. Though in *Shelleyan Eros* William A. Ulmer investigated Shelley’s theory of love in detail and analyzed TL in the last chapter, the main arguments were Shelley’s tendency of self-love and the relationship of love and death. So feminism study is one of the most significant and expected viewpoint in Shelley study.

The value of TL study is admitted all the more when we can get a new and fresh perspective in historical persons. On Rousseau in TL, many scholars have studied so far¹⁵⁴, but Cian Duffy presented a new figure of Napoleon in his “‘The Child of a Fierce Hour’: Shelley and Napoleon Bonaparte” (2004). Duffy compared Napoleon with the protagonist-poet in *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude* (1815) and regard Napoleon in TL as “a failed poet” (401). Then Duffy concluded that the use of Napoleon by Shelley in his work means “an important test case

¹⁵⁴ For the study of Rousseau in TL, see Hodgson 595-622.; Wu 119-45.; Edward Duffy 106-51; and also de Man.

for Shelley's developing understanding of 'the relationship of poetical to political power'" (416). In TL Shelley depicted many historical persons. To study those depictions and to learn how he observed and expressed each historical person or event suggest us a new and fresh figure and way of thinking about each historical time, which will be able to reflect our modern times. On this point, TL study has much significance, and it is modern scholars' duty to investigate more thoroughly and more diversely Shelley's works including TL.

As we have seen above, TL study experienced dynamic changes full of vicissitudes. For a century of critical neglect, it was regarded as difficult or worthless to research. But by Bloom's enlightenment on the value of the poem, TL study became active for the first time in 140 years after its publishing. Thanks to Matthews and Reiman, scholars were able to consult an authoritative and reliable text, and then de Man deconstructed the poem to get rid of any conventional images that disfigured the poem itself so that the value of TL as a work of art was exalted. Later critics applied many literary theories to TL, which indicated its profoundness and variety. From now on, the value not only as a literary work but also as a historical text which is profitable to reconsider the present day will be found. Recent approaches from various viewpoints like culture, health, geography, feminism, and eco-criticism will be applied to TL in the future. Shelley's product of creative agony, which was once ignored long by critics, became scholars' own creative agony, and is now inviting them to the history of

interpretive pleasure. And it also leaves the door widely open to further investigations by us later critics.

Chapter 2 Shelley's Epistemology through Multitudes and the Chariot: Negative Sympathy toward the Multitude

Shelley's last unfinished poem, TL, is a work of art based on his essay, "On Life" (1812/20). Almost all of the ideas discussed in "On Life" are reflected in the style, thoughts, images, scenes, characters, and story of TL. In this chapter, I analyze the close relationship between "On Life" and TL and discuss Shelley's epistemology which is brought into clear view by examining the essay and the poem together through his contrasting perception of the multitude and Life in the chariot. I also argue that negative sympathy toward the multitude depicted in TL supports the theory that Shelley's philanthropy has reached its highest point.

Of all Shelley's prose, the first *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) and the last *A Defence of Poetry* (1821) are the most famous works studied by critics and researchers; other essays by him are rarely studied or only partially used to help better understand his poems or thoughts. One reason for this is that his prose has been regarded as difficult to understand because of his peculiar and complex sentences, his pedantic richness of language, and his wide range of knowledge. Shelley separates the roles of poetry and prose by emphasizing that prose is written to open people's eyes to social reform. *A Defence of Poetry* is about the history of poetry and poets, and the essay's ideas are often cited when researching Shelley's methods for creating certain poems. With such a division between prose and poems, "On Life" and

TL share a rare relationship. It is a unique situation that allows TL to become clearer by looking at it through the ideas of “On Life.” This is especially evident through Shelley’s negative idealism, which was the motivation for the creative process from his original epistemology, being responsible for the negative sympathy toward the multitude that he expresses in the poem.

Before comparing the two works, the time period when the essay was written should be considered. There are two opinions on the date of composition. One is 1812–14, and the other is 1819–20. The former was proposed by David Lee Clark, who edited *Shelley’s Prose: Or the Trumpet of a Prophecy* in 1954, on the grounds of consistency with other writings around 1813.¹⁵⁵ The later date was first suggested by Kenneth Neill Cameron who discovered the notebook in which “On Life” was written; this date was later supported by Reiman and Fraistat in the Norton edition of *Shelley’s Poetry and Prose*.¹⁵⁶ Considering the consistency between the prose and the poem, the latter opinion seems more credible. It does not seem prudent, however, to dismiss the earlier date because it reveals a certain coherency of thought of a poet who is often criticized for being ambivalent or ambiguous. Regardless of the composition date, “On Life” shows Shelley moving away from the influence of materialism, which he indulged in when he was younger, even though Clark could not see it in a favorable light by writing

¹⁵⁵ Clark 171.

¹⁵⁶ Cameron *Shelley: the Golden Years*, 599; Reiman and Fraistat 505.

“Shelley is apparently trying to reconcile Berkeleian idealism with the skepticism of Hume but with little success.”¹⁵⁷

“On Life” is a short essay with eleven paragraphs. This next section discusses how the content of the essay is reflected in TL. The first paragraph begins by marveling at the diverse image of life. “We are struck with admiration at some of its transient modifications”¹⁵⁸ applies to the radical and unconnected scene changes in TL, as well as various depictions of life: the people “hurrying to and fro” with no purpose (44–49), the captives in the train of the chariot (209–93), people cheering on the triumphant train with fierce song and dance (110–11, 137–75, 445–60), Life in the chariot (87–93), Rousseau’s life before and after his corruption (308–68), and decaying people like phantoms (477–543).

Shelley asserts that power and authority are worthless compared to the miracle of life: “What are changes of empires, the wreck of dynasties with the opinions which supported them; what is the birth and the extinction of religions and of political systems to life?” This idea is expressed in the poem by drawing on examples of powerful leaders among the captives: Napoleon (224), Frederic (Prussian King, 236), Catherine (Russian Czarina, 236), Leopold (Holy Roman Emperor, 236), Caesar and Constantine (Roman emperors, 284), Gregory and John (Popes, 288), and so on.

¹⁵⁷ Clark 171.

¹⁵⁸ Reiman and Fraistat 505. (All quotes from “On Life” and TL are from this edition.)

The logic in the statement “Life, the great miracle, we admire not, because it is so miraculous” in “On Life” fits the negative theological manner—to express indescribable God by the negatives. I assert this is a feature of this poem—to express indescribable Life by the negatives. This manner is the apophasis, which has the effect that the object is emphasized by negation.

In the second paragraph, Shelley argues that existence and perception, influenced by Berkeley, can be obtained by individuals. Shelley paradoxically explains spiritualism as “anything cannot exist without being perceived.”

If any artist ... but had merely conceived in his mind the system of the sun and stars and planets, they not existing, and had painted to us in words or upon canvas, the spectacle now afforded by the nightly cope of Heaven and illustrated it by the wisdom of astronomy, great would be our admiration. (505)

Superiority of perception over existence is the basis of the multiple nested structure of TL. The readers of the poem admit the existence of the scene only when the narrator/perceiver depicts the scene, and by accepting this claim can follow the drastic and unconnected scene changes with some level of understanding.

Concerning the powers of perception, Shelley identifies the ignorance of people as “The multitude of those men care not for them. It is thus with Life” (506). This view of ignorant people reflects on the

multitude in some scenes in TL; some wander like dust in the air and others make a huge fuss at the triumphant procession without knowing why and what they are doing.

In the third paragraph of “On Life”, Shelley identifies how difficult it is to define life by stating: “We live on, and in living we lose the apprehension of life.” Shelley’s negative theological rationale is revealed in the passage: “How vain is it to think that words can penetrate the mystery of our being. Rightly used they may make evident our ignorance to ourselves, and this is much.” Shelley depicts Life, which should be the main character, most vaguely in TL.

and a Shape

So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,

Crouching within the shadow of a tomb,

And o’er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom

Tempering the light. (87–93)

Realizing the limitations of language, Shelley avoids fixing the image of Life by applying words to it, and instead makes the most of his readers’ unlimited imaginations.

The questions “For what are we? Whence do we come, and whither do we go?” conclude the third paragraph. Those questions are, though slightly changed according to the scene, the key phrases that bring drastic scene changes in TL. When the narrator of the scene utters the question, “Whence comest thou and whither goest thou? / How did thy course begin, ... and why?” (296–97), and is unable to recognize what is happening in front of him, the scene suddenly changes into the next unconnected scene before answers are provided. This disconnection between scenes hinders a clear storyline from developing and is one of the most distinct features of the poem, which has confused critics since it was first published. By inserting those key phrases in the scene changes, Shelley unifies the scenes and provides coherence throughout the poem.

The opening sentence of the fourth paragraph – “The most refined abstractions of logic conduct to a view of life” – is seemingly the answer to the questions posed in the previous paragraph. “The most refined abstractions of logic” is regarded as the same as “nothing exists but as it is perceived” which concludes the paragraph. According to Berkeley, these ideas may be linked to spiritualism, but strictly speaking, the sentences do not answer the questions. As perception is personal, existence by perception is not inevitably universal. Since universal answers cannot exist, the questions for scene changes in TL appear to be unanswered.

In the fifth paragraph, Shelley deepens his ontology. Citing *The Tempest* (IV.i.156–7), Shelley asserts that “the solid universe of

external things is ‘such stuff as dreams are made of.’” This ambiguity between reality and reverie is the nesting structure of TL. At the beginning of the poem, the narrator sees his “waking dream” (42) and then the scene changes by moving into the dream of the narrator. Confused about seeing the triumphant procession and raving multitude, the narrator finds Rousseau at first wrongly seeing “what I thought an old root” (182). The next scene is Rousseau’s recollection of his youth, and at the end of the scene suddenly Rousseau’s “brain became as sand” (405) and a new vision bursts forth. These scenes in TL are all ambiguous, making it difficult to recognize what is real and what are dreams.

In such ambiguity, Shelley tries to find one possible answer like “there is a spirit within him at enmity with change and extinction [nothingness and dissolution]. This is the character of all life and being.” This may be the essential meaning of TL by not depicting nothingness or death, but only the visions passing by.

One particular passage – “Examined point by point and word by word, the most discriminating intellects have been able to discover no train of thoughts in the process of its reasoning, which does not conduct inevitably to the conclusion which has been stated” – foresees the fate of TL, which was left unfinished by the sudden death of Shelley. More accurately, Shelley stopped writing TL about three weeks before his accidental drowning.¹⁵⁹ Why Shelley turned away from the poem and

¹⁵⁹ Cameron asserts that Shelley was thinking about TL from February–March, 1822 and mainly writing it from May to the middle of June (*Golden Years* 445, 647–48).

left it fragmented at that time without finishing it may be partly explained by his psychology of diffidence. (The ending will be examined in further detail in Part II, Chapter IV.)

In the seventh paragraph, influenced by Hume, Shelley turns to philosophy to solve the stagnating situation described in the previous paragraph. Many researchers have adopted skepticism as the prevailing approach to explain the poem,¹⁶⁰ as Shelley's skeptical views become evident when he states, "It makes one step towards this object however; it destroys error, and the roots of error."

"Let us recollect our sensations as children ... We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt from ourselves." This statement from the eighth paragraph corresponds to the scene in which a young and innocent Rousseau was united with beautiful and calm scenes of nature (308–57). And "these are states which precede or accompany or follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension of life" is realized in the same scene above where pure Rousseau meets "a shape all light".

—there stood

Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze

Of his own glory, on the vibrating

Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

A shape all light, (348–52)

¹⁶⁰ cf. Rubin, Abbey, Pulos, Curran, and Rajan.

After the conversation with “a shape all light,” more intense light brings the chariot of Life. As De Man says, “Shelley’s imagery, often assumed to be incoherent and erratic, is instead extraordinarily systematic whenever light is being thematized.”¹⁶¹ Various forms of light express various lives, and the most intense light brings Life itself. It is Rousseau’s pure childish state which allows light and Life to be transposed.

The philosophy that unfolds in “On Life” can be condensed into a statement from the ninth paragraph: “The view of life presented by the most refined deductions of the intellectual philosophy, is that of unity. Nothing exists but as it is perceived.” This is the *terminus ad quem* of Shelley’s epistemology and is the basis on which I will discuss the originality of TL later.

In the last sentence of the ninth paragraph, the limits of language, which I regard as negatively theological, are articulated by, “We are on that verge where words abandon us.” If this essay was written around 1813, when Shelley was only 21 years old, the fledgling poet’s precocious thoughts and talents would be deemed to be astonishing. If it was closer to 1820, it was near a time when the despair of the poet was unmeasurable even though he continued creating works. This endorses his ultimate pursuit of negative idealism which motivated him for further creations, including TL, which is the most distinct verse from any of his other poems. As seen above, almost all of the ideas in

¹⁶¹ De Man 57.

“On Life” are represented in TL. The two works have a rare prose and poem relationship that cannot be found in any other works by Shelley.

Next, I would like to focus on Shelley’s epistemology. Since he was young, Shelley was an ardent student of various thoughts: materialism of D’Holbach, empiricism of Locke, and Necessity of Godwin. By experiencing ups and downs throughout life, he learns that there are areas of life that philosophy cannot solve. This leads him to become more skeptical and turn to the concept of Berkeley’s spiritualism to look for answers within himself. As a matter of course, any one theory cannot be the true philosophy that solves every problem, so Shelley formed his own philosophy by piecing together ideas from what he learned.

Fazel A. Amjad stated that Necessity was consistently the foundation of Shelley’s thoughts in any stage of his life. According to Amjad, Shelley’s Necessity depended on two types of epistemology: Reason and Imagination. Amjad explained, “The former works on the literal objects and concepts, or in Shelley’s terminology on dead metaphors, whereas the latter has metaphors and their unapprehended relationships as the subject of its investigation.”¹⁶² He expanded the two epistemologies into the unified concept of creativity. Reason actively perceives what is literal, then is limited by causality so that it does not lead to creation. On the other hand, similar to the concept of instinct, imagination passively and non-linguistically expands on the ability to freely create. Shelley utilizes the perception based on rational causality learned from Godwin and D’Holbach into his prose works,

¹⁶² Amjad 104.

whereas he sharpens the passive perception, as described in “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, to reflect the perception for creating poems.

Generally, most readers of Shelley’s poems regard the poet as an idealist. There are a few critics who see Shelley as a skeptic, especially when studying TL; Lloyd Abbey and Merle R. Rubin regard despair or eschatology as the feature of this poem in the same vein as the preceding study. Although Shelley once indulged in skepticism, he later criticized the Enlightenment thinkers, including Hume, as “mere reasoners” in *A Defence of Poetry* ¹⁶³; however, he was not willing to abandon skepticism completely and continued to use truths that passed through the sieve of skepticism in his poems. Abbey asserted, “‘The Triumph of Life’ is the poetic portrayal of total Humean skepticism.” ¹⁶⁴ This was also pointed out by Cameron who wrote, “Although the statement ... gives the impression that Shelley is advocating immaterialism, a comparison with other passages shows that he is really advancing a skeptical position.” ¹⁶⁵

Considering the superiority of imagination over reason, one question arises: Is it possible to express by the perception based on imagination, which is passive and non-linguistic? It is natural to think skeptically that it is impossible to express inspiration as it is. Because what is presented non-linguistically becomes “a fading coal” as soon as the inspiration is made as a poem. ¹⁶⁶ Ross Wilson explained, “the

¹⁶³ Reiman and Fraistat 530 n.

¹⁶⁴ Abbey 70.

¹⁶⁵ Cameron *Golden Years* 153.

¹⁶⁶ *A Defence of Poetry*, Reiman and Fraistat 531.

achievement of the artist would be to bring everything suddenly and wonderfully before people once more.”¹⁶⁷ Epistemology is generally examined by how one perceives (input), but Shelley does not only use his own perceptions, but also aims to present himself as a poet (output) to readers. This view of output as a performer distinguishes Shelley’s epistemology from other theories. As Paul Whickman pointed out, Shelley acquired his own epistemology “from reading of Enlightenment-era philosophy” and “By determining the ‘problem’ of the Christian God to be deficiency of language.”¹⁶⁸ It has both perception which makes free use of instinctive imagination (input), which only a poet can do, and expression which surpasses existing knowledge (output), which only an artist can do.

The contrast of clear, detailed depictions of the various multitudes to extremely ambiguous descriptions of the chariot and Life in TL shows Shelley’s own epistemology that grew out of the influence from the eighteenth century thinkers like Hume and Godwin. Moreover, Shelley’s philanthropic ways, which he had since he was young, were completed by expressing negative sympathy towards the multitude.

Both in prose and poetry before TL, the multitude was always viewed as an entity requiring saving; the multitude was miserably exploited and abused by the tyranny of government because they were ignorant and non-cultural, having neither the methods nor the will to fight for themselves. Shelley belonged to the aristocracy, was educated

¹⁶⁷ Wilson 93.

¹⁶⁸ Whickman 154.

in prestigious schools, and never had to work for money, so the multitude was not a collective of real people he frequently convened with, but an entity that existed only on paper and he could not realistically have practical sympathy for them.

In 1811, Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for publishing *The Necessity of Atheism*. To prove his belief in his own faith and translate it into action, Shelley went to Dublin in February 1812, where his true involvement with the multitude began. He delivered his pamphlets, *An Address to the Irish People* and *Proposals for an Association of Philanthropists*, and made a speech about the emancipation of Catholics in Ireland. However, few Irish people would listen to a young Englishman who suddenly appeared to expound his abstract idealism. Shelley left Ireland disappointed two months later. Two reasons can be attributed to his failure. One was that his atheistic tendencies were hardly acceptable to the faithful Catholic people. The other was his lack of knowledge and sympathy of the current state of the Irish people. In a letter to Godwin on March 8, 1812, Shelley reported on his Ireland campaign, complaining about the Irish people without hiding his aversion to them.

I had no conception of the depth of human misery until now.— The poor of Dublin are assuredly the meanest & most miserable of all.— In their narrow streets thousands seem huddled together—one mass of animated filth!¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Jones I 268.

In *Queen Mab*, which he wrote after the Ireland campaign, the multitude was reduced to a group who blindly obeyed power, whose talent, virtue, liberty, and truth were deprived because they worked as machine-like slaves. Such views coming from Shelley indicated that he had a lack of sympathy toward the multitude. In both *Alastor* (1815) and “Prince Athanase” (1817), people surrounding the protagonist do not understand him, conjecture as they like, and stay away from him. These protagonists, considered to be a projection of Shelley, cannot have sympathy for people, but only deepen their lack of understanding.

Thus, Shelley’s philanthropy has never been approved by the object of his sympathy. This indicates discordance of Shelley’s perception. According to the doctrine of Necessity, the right choice which agrees with causality always brings the best result, but for Shelley his decision which he thinks as the right choice does not always bring the best result. In spiritualism what one perceives rightly is to become the existence, but Shelley’s perception does not result in existence: there is no multitude as Shelley supposes and Shelley’s sympathy is not approved by the object of sympathy.

Experiencing such discord, Shelley’s epistemology was developed in his essay “On Life” and reflected poetically in TL. In the poem, the multitude acts without understanding what they are doing, where they are going, and why they are doing it. Even the main character observing them does not understand what he is observing. In this unselfconscious action, the observer is equal to the observed. Rousseau, who is another

main character in the poem and the guide of the protagonist, also becomes a questioner asking what, where, and why. So the multitude, the protagonist, and Rousseau are, though different characters, equal in being unselfconscious. At this point, true sympathy is formed with the common negative element of unselfconsciousness; therefore Shelley's belief in philanthropy, which he has pursued since youth, has been completed. Moreover, readers of this text are also self-conscious about how to interpret what is being read, so that they share negative sympathy with characters in the text. As De Man points out, "the text serves as a mirror of our own knowledge and our knowledge mirrors in its turn the text's signification."¹⁷⁰ The negative sympathy in "On Life" and TL are based on Shelley's original epistemology which he developed throughout his life over 200 years ago and has left with us in his poetry and prose.

¹⁷⁰ De Man 58.

Chapter 3 The Captives: Reinterpretation Necessity and Surpassing the Master

This chapter discusses Shelley's reinterpretation of Necessity and his pursuit of ideal truth and wisdom by surpassing the master. Shelley's Necessity transforms as his dramatic life progresses. The motif of "The Future must become the Past" in *Hellas* shows Shelley's modified Necessity and attention to historicism. Although Shelley hated Napoleon from a young age and expressed that hatred in many letters, essays, and poems, seen in the light of negative idealistic Necessity in *Hellas*, some alleviation of those feelings can be seen in the portrayal of Napoleon in TL.

The negative depiction of Rousseau in TL implies that the great master should be surpassed by his pupil, so that the pupil can strive for the ideal.¹⁷¹ Shelley's ideal of a great mentor is one who fills him with all the knowledge and philosophic wisdom like Zonoras in "Prince Athanase," who guides him to deep understanding by colloquy like Demogorgon in *Prometheus Unbound*, who enlightens him with radical ideas like William Godwin, and moreover, who has absolute ideality. To deny and surpass such a great master is the best way to attain the role of an ideal sage.

Hellas, written in 1821 at the outbreak of the Greek revolutionary war, is Shelley's last published work in his lifetime. The interpretation of the work by critics is argued mainly in two ways: to control social

¹⁷¹ For interpretation of Rousseau, see de Man 39–73.

opinion with the purpose of supporting Greece's independence and to express Shelley's idealism.¹⁷² This drama was written just before TL, and Kasahara points out that "the key which opens the door of mystery of the sudden change from *Adonais* to 'The Triumph of Life' can be found in *Hellas*."¹⁷³ By comparing it to *Sardanaparas* by Byron, which was written about the same time as *Hellas*, I would like to argue how the originality of Shelley's Necessity in his final years leads to Necessity in TL.

Shelley's Necessity is distinct in *Queen Mab*, in which the influence of *Political Justice* by Godwin can be observed. The idea of the Chain of Being and the doctrine of Necessity discussed actively in the eighteenth century repeatedly appear in *Queen Mab*. Strictly speaking, they are each distinct ideas, but Shelley seems to think they are connected or even the same. Moreover, Lovejoy mentions that not only Voltaire but Pope himself had such a connecting view, so it was not rare to think of two ideas as one in Shelley's time.¹⁷⁴

The verses in *Queen Mab* "Let every part depending on the chain / That links it to the whole, point to the hand / That grasps its term!" (VII, 17–19) come under "Is the great chain, that draws all to agree, / And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?"¹⁷⁵ In a letter to his friend Hogg, Shelley's mention of "I confess that I think Pope's 'all are but parts of one tremendous whole' something more than Poetry, it has ever

¹⁷² See Cameron *Golden Years* 379 for the former, and Wasserman 374, and Scrivener 287 for the latter.

¹⁷³ Kasahara, 60.

¹⁷⁴ Lovejoy 365, n.15.

¹⁷⁵ *Essay on Man* Epistle I 33–34.

been my favourite theory” (Jan. 3, 1811) reveals his interest in the Chain of Being. Even though Pope’s direct words were “All are but parts of one stupendous whole” (I, 267), it is clear that Pope had an influence on Shelley.

In *The System of Nature*, D’Holbach asserts that human unhappiness comes from misunderstanding nature, everything of which works together according to the law of Necessity. The influence of D’Holbach was strong for young Shelley; he explains the doctrine of Necessity in *Queen Mab* as follows:

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of cause and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does act.¹⁷⁶

Another letter to Hogg conveys Necessity as God, as Shelley writes, “Oh! that this Deity were the Soul of the Universe, the spirit of universal imperishable love.—Indeed I believe it” (Jan. 12, 1811). Young Shelley thinks that humans should abandon the essential evil of their selfishness and return to being a part of the Great Nature in order to break through the miserable condition of society.

Although Shelley’s hope for Necessity was so great that *Queen Mab* should have inspired people to engage in social reform, the reality

¹⁷⁶ Hutchinson 809.

was not as he expected. This caused Necessity in *Alastor* to become less absolute than in *Queen Mab*. Although Shelley explains in the Preface that it was self-centered seclusion that drove the protagonist Poet to his deadly punishment, the life of the protagonist does not seem to be negative. Pursuing his own ideal makes the young Poet lonely, and since an absolute ideal cannot be acquired in the real world, the Poet's pursuit results in death. Thus, the life of the protagonist is accompanied by causality, so that Necessity plays an important role in this poem. However, Necessity in *Alastor* is not the God-like Necessity in *Queen Mab* which decides right and wrong and controls everything, but only a system which is used to clarify the cause and effect of events.

Shelley's Necessity can also be found in *Hellas*. This dramatic poem portrays negative idealism because it depicts only the coming ruin of the Turks without describing the victory of Greece. By negating the Turks, the ideal notion that Greece would be released from Turkish rule to take back their glory is necessarily suggested. Shelley explains how he uses suggestion instead of clear expression in the preface of the drama.

I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity which falls upon the unfinished scene such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek

cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.¹⁷⁷

Historically, the victory of Greece was not definitive at the time when Shelley composed this drama (October to November in 1821). The Declaration of Independence was issued in January 1822, and independence was completed in September 1829. Although fictional, it is not appropriate to draw a conclusion about what was happening in real time at the artist's discretion. Shelley uses the negative theological method to suggest the victory of Greece by negating the Turks and employs Necessity as an authority ushering in the victory.

It is the key phrase "The Future must become the Past" that expresses the Necessity in this drama. To Mahmud, the sultan of Turkey, who suffers a nightmare, the Jewish Ahasuerus states that key phrase repeatedly, solving the mystery of the nightmare.

The coming age is shadowed on the past (805)

The Past

Now stands before thee like an Incarnation

Of the To-come. (852-54)

Upon hearing the messengers report that the war situation of the Turks was getting worse, Mahmud realizes his ruin and that of his country is

¹⁷⁷ Reiman and Fraistat 430.

near. Then he leaves with the words:

The Future must become the Past. (904)

He is convinced what is going to happen will have the same result as the past, but what is “the Past”?

The key to solving this question is in the dream brought on by the chorus’ singing voices beside the sleeping Mahmud in the beginning of the dramatic poem. The contents of the songs sung by the captured Greek ladies pertain to the liberty and glory of Greece, especially in the battles of Thermopylae and Marathon in which the Athenians and the Greeks achieved the historical victory against Persia. Mahmud, who is in REM sleep, has the victory of Greece imprinted in his mind through sleep-learning by the chorus. When he wakes, the memory of the imprint is not clear, so he asks Ahasuerus to explain the dream. The repeated key phrase, “The Future must become the Past”, recalls the victory of Greece which was impressed upon him in his sleep, so that he understands the ruin of Turkey. “The Future must become the Past” is negative idealistic because it tells of an ideal victory of Greece negatively utilizing Necessity. Shelley’s Necessity, which was created in *Queen Mab* and was made into a system in *Alastor*, plays an important role in bringing development to the story in *Hellas* by utilizing negative idealism.

Now I would like to inspect Shelley’s negative idealistic Necessity from another view by comparing to another dramatic poem, Byron’s

Sardanapalus, which has many common points with *Hellas*. This work was composed about the same time as *Hellas* (January to May, 1821), and the story which depicts the ruin of the ruler of the Orient is also similar to that of *Hellas*.

The reason or necessity of this story, especially the sudden change of Sardanapalus' attitude is quite uncertain. Sardanapalus, who led a life of indulgence and luxury dressing like a lady with a garland, turns into a masculine king suited with armor upon hearing a report of rebellion by his men. Although he fights bravely, it is too late; he sees his fall is coming and casts himself on the funeral pyre. Hijiya explains that this sudden change was caused by the warlike blood of his ancestors, like Nimrod and Semiramis, which he became aware of in the nightmare he had just before his change.¹⁷⁸ Brewer explains how not only the idealistic character of Sardanapalus, but also Assyrian politics which has no middle ground, made him so extreme: from feminine peace-lover to virile fight-lover.¹⁷⁹ As the change and fate of the protagonist is based on blood and character, Byron's *Necessity* can be rather humane and personal.

On the contrary, Shelley's negative idealistic *Necessity* is very objective because it is based on causality. Mahmud's understanding of the fall comes from the review of the past and from the generalization that history repeats itself, in which not only Shelley's, but also Europe's, wishful thinking was woven. At that time, philhellenism spread in

¹⁷⁸ Hijiya 16.

¹⁷⁹ Brewer 81–85.

Europe and many movements to support the Greeks surfaced after the Greek war broke out as Cameron depicts by writing: “Liberals and revolutionaries everywhere rallied to the Greek cause, writing poems and manifestoes, holding meetings and organizing committees, collecting funds and arms.”¹⁸⁰ Byron’s Orientalism is “vogue” – Said names him one of the popular leaders of Orientalism – which cannot be found in Shelley’s.¹⁸¹ But the “vogue” leads Byron to fame, which caused Shelley to envy Byron, Robinson argues.¹⁸² Comparing *Sardanapalus* and *Hellas*, which were written at the same period, with similar themes, and in the same dramatic style, Byron’s humane, personal, and vogue Necessity contrasts Shelley’s negative idealistic Necessity based on objective causality.

Next I would like to focus on how the motif in *Hellas* works as a bridge to TL. “The Future must become the Past” is very symbolic by not simply meaning the flow of time, but also a contradictory state and a circular structure. The chorus in *Hellas*, which play important roles during scene changes and briefings, sings while looking back at the past, abstracting the present, and predicting the future. In the early stage of the drama, where the chorus sings about the mutability of the world, there are mysterious and contradictory phrases.

But they are still immortal

Who through Birth’s orient portal

¹⁸⁰ Cameron *Golden Years* 376.

¹⁸¹ Said 118.

¹⁸² Robinson 212.

And Death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light
 Gathered around their chariots as they go; (201–206)

This vagueness of life and death, going and returning, bright but hazy with dust directly leads to the opening scene of TL.

Me thought I sate beside a public way

 Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
 Of people there was hurrying to and fro
 Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam, (43–46)

The chariot which Life is riding on comes “on the silent storm” (86), and it is driven by the charioteer with four faces who “Had their eyes banded” (100). Above all, Life itself has the vaguest image. As the future inevitably becomes the past, the world necessarily repeats birth and death. What leads Necessity is vague, so that people in both poems hurry to and fro without purpose, and the key questions “where, what, and why” in TL will never be answered. Life is Necessity.

The last six lines of *Hellas* are the most controversial. Implying hope by stating “Another Athens will arise” (1084), Shelley never declares the Greek victory.

O cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy.
 The world is weary of the past,
 O might it die or rest at last! (1096–1101)

Such a negative ending by avoiding to depict a definite result (this will be discussed in detail in the last chapter) shows his negative idealism. Once described clearly, the image is fixed within the limited words. The future victory of Greece is necessarily suggested by the past, but the past is what has already happened, so that it cannot become the ultimate ideal Shelley seeks to describe. Shelley negates “the prophecy” and “the past” to describe the limitless image of the ideal future. This negative idealistic Necessity is conveyed in TL.

Of all the captives of Life’s triumphant procession, most of which are mentioned only by name, Napoleon is the first and most argued individual. Asked by the protagonist, Rousseau interprets Napoleon as follows:

“The Child of a fierce hour, He sought to win
 “The world, and lost all it did contain
 Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
 Of fame and peace than Virtue’s self can gain

“Without the opportunity which bore
 Him on its eagle’s pinion to the peak
 From which a thousand climbers have before

“Fall’n as Napoleon fell.” (217–24)

Shelley had hated the violence and tyranny of Napoleon since he was young, but this passage in TL depicts more than a criticism; Shelley had witnessed the rise and fall of Napoleon as a contemporary. Shelley’s earlier opinion of Napoleon changes in TL and shows his historicism derived from the negative idealistic Necessity in *Hellas*.

In an earlier stage, mainly in 1812 or 1813, his dislike of Napoleon was distinct. In his political pamphlet *An Address to the Irish People* (1812), Shelley criticizes England’s conquest of India by comparing it to Napoleon by writing, “The conquests in India, by which England has gained glory indeed, but a glory which is not more honorable than that of Buonaparte, are nothing to them.”¹⁸³ And in an essay, *A Vindication of Natural Diet* (1812), Shelley describes Napoleon as a representation of carnivorous people as “Surely the bile–suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories.”¹⁸⁴ Moreover, in a letter

¹⁸³ Clark 55.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 86.

to Hogg on December 27, 1812, Shelley criticizes severely by writing:

Buonaparte is a personage to whom I have a very great objection. he [*sic*] is to me a hateful & despicable being. He is seduced by the grossest & most vulgar ambition into actions which only differ from those of pirates by virtue of the number of men & the variety of resources under his command.—His talents appear to me altogether contemptible & common place; incapable as he is of comparing connectedly the most obvious propositions; or relishing any pleasure truly enrapturing. —Excepting Lord Castlereagh you could not have mentioned any character but Buonaparte whom I contemn & abhor more vehemently.¹⁸⁵

Shelley's thoroughly critical view of Napoleon holds the line against other Romantics. As Cheeke points out, at that time it was common to compare the French Revolution, from the fall of Bastille to Napoleon's retirement, with the rise and fall of the Roman Empire; sometimes Coleridge, Southey, and Hazlitt ardently praised Napoleon.¹⁸⁶ Bainbridge classifies the influence on the Romantics into two types: those who oppose (or envy) Napoleon's territorial expansion, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, and those who regard Napoleon as a pioneer, like Byron and Hazlitt.¹⁸⁷ Compared to the views of his contemporaries, Shelley's attitude is very distinct; pure and simple dislike.

¹⁸⁵ Jones I 345–46.

¹⁸⁶ Cheeke 212–21.

¹⁸⁷ Bainbridge 2–3, 15–16.

Shelley not only discusses Napoleon in essays and letters, but also in his poems, which bring out some different feelings of Shelley. The earliest poem is “To the Emperors of Russia and Austria who eyed the battle of Austerlitz from the Heights whilst Buonaparte Was Active in the Thickest of the Fight” (1810). This poem criticizes the two cold-blooded emperors as cowards, who stood far away from the battlefield and took no notice of the soldiers shedding blood for them, in contrast to Napoleon who fought alongside his soldiers. Shelley seems to praise Napoleon by saying, “Be sure / The tyrant needs such slaves as you” (44) and predicting the fate of the two emperors and Napoleon. Duffy points out, “Napoleon may be the victor at Austerlitz, and Alexander and Francis consequently his ‘slaves,’ but the larger historical relationship between the three ‘tyrants’ is one of equivalence and—moreover—of *mutual* political dependence.”¹⁸⁸ Unlike Wordsworth or Coleridge who had real-time experience of the French Revolution and the advancement of Napoleon, Shelley can look at the events historically, recognizing the victories of Napoleon not only as political advancement, but as collective action that leads to dictatorship.

Shelley’s disgust of Napoleon is expressed in the perfectly organized sonnet “Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte” written after Napoleon’s Hundred Days. The first three lines express Shelley’s personal feelings, punctuated by, “I hated thee, fallen tyrant!” The proceeding four lines indicate Napoleon’s actions and then Shelley curses him by writing, “Massacre, / For this I prayed, would on thy sleep

¹⁸⁸ Cian Duffy 404.

have crept” in three lines. In the concluding lines, Shelley understands from Napoleon’s life that the true enemy of virtue is not “force or fraud” (12) which Napoleon had fallen but “old Custom, legal Crime, / And bloody Faith” (13–14). At this point we see that Shelley’s view has slightly changed. The misery caused by the French Revolution is ascribed not only to Napoleon, but also the age, all the circumstances of the time produced the monster. This historicism – to learn from the past with the help of imagination – shows Shelley’s growth, as Duffy argues that Shelley’s participation in contemporary debate about Napoleon “was inextricably bound up with Shelley’s growing understanding of the historical and political potency of the imagination.”¹⁸⁹

Shelley’s stance is settled in “Written on Hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon” (1821). In this poem, Mother Earth calls Napoleon one of her sons.

To my bosom I fold
 All my sons when their knell is knolled,
 And so with living motion all are fed
 And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead. (21–24)

In these lines, there is a motif of death and birth, which Shelley uses in many poems, like “Ode to the West Wind”. There is no more blame placed on Napoleon. The last part, “to mold / The metal before it be cold,

¹⁸⁹ Cian Duffy 401.

/ And weave into his shame, which like the dead / Shrouds me, the hopes from his glory fled” (37–40) suggests that he should be remembered throughout history, instead of being wiped away and forgotten forever. This historicist view to learn from the past making the most of imagination is handed down from TL.

Napoleon in TL is described as “The Child of a fierce hour” (217). This means that the age of confusion – the excitement of the Revolution, the Reign of Terror by Robespierre and his circle, and stagnation after their execution – necessarily produced the hero of the time, Napoleon, through self-purification. This is the last phase of Shelley’s doctrine of Necessity. In *Queen Mab*, Shelley argues that everything is organized according to the doctrine of Necessity, and the excessive selfishness of human beings has necessarily produced the great evils of tyranny, religion, and commerce so that a reformer to purify those evils should be born. Therefore, causality made Napoleon evolve into a despot, which mitigates any blame on Napoleon himself.

The mitigation can also be seen in what he did and what he lost. Historically, the damage Napoleon caused to conquered countries was vast and immeasurable, but Shelley condenses it to one phrase, “hope destroyed,” which is the worst transgression in the world, then Shelley does not accuse him needlessly. Napoleon had already paid his price when he lost “more / Of fame and peach than Virtue’s self can gain” (219–20). This means that Shelley admits the existence of what can surely be regarded as virtue in Napoleon: his outstanding campaign strategies, the expedition to Egypt which brought much intellectual and

cultural wealth to France, and Code Napoleon which ordained equality before the law.

Removing personal and emotional bias, Napoleon in TL is depicted in a very objective and balanced light by distinguishing right from wrong. Shelley's negative views around 1812 stemmed from Napoleon's imperialism, violence, and most of all, his considerable ambition, both national ambition aimed at territorial expansion and personal ambition by longing to be an emperor in a republic. We can find the influence of Godwin in this view. In *Political Justice* (1793), Godwin expounds the necessity of rational, non-violent anarchism. Shelley's eyes only see Napoleon's violence and the victims he leaves behind, and his blood boils with righteous indignation.

Stauffer, who sees anger as a motive of creation in Shelley's poetry, points out that Shelley understands that "(satiric) anger always threatens to become another deceptive, or deceived, mask, particularly if indulged too long or too vehemently."¹⁹⁰ In *The Mask of Anarchy* (1819), Shelley realized the "dilemma—how to destroy evil without becoming an evil destroyer." Then Stauffer saw Shelley's "bleak confirmation" in "God made irreconcilable / Good and the means of good" (230–31).¹⁹¹ Napoleon, born as the necessity of the age of confusion, was a good influence on and benefited France, but the benefits were brought on by violence and war, which Shelley can never accept. This composition – good and the means of good as irreconcilable – was made

¹⁹⁰ Stauffer 111–12.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 131.

by God. As God is Necessity for Shelley, it means that good is necessarily irreconcilable with the means of good, so that no human effort can overturn or correct the composition. This argument allows Shelley to find room for Napoleon's atonement.

The master-pupil relationship is also expressed in this scene. After Rousseau's entrance, he explains himself and the procession and the protagonist struggles to understand it. The relationship of Rousseau and the protagonist is like the master and his pupil. But this relationship should be reversed, because Rousseau is a negative example for the protagonist. Rousseau, the intellectual giant, answers the protagonist's questions as long as they concern the captives passing in front of them, but he fails to answer the essential and crucial question "Whence camest thou and whither goest thou? / ... and why?" (296-97). Moreover, Rousseau has been already corrupted when he enters the scene, but the protagonist has not. The pupil is learning lest he should be captured by Life. If he obeys the teachings and does not join the procession of Life, he will surpass the master. Thus, Shelley negatively depicts the true ideal sage.

As Rousseau explains Necessity, Godwin is revealed. On Napoleon, Rousseau can only expound Necessity. It is the protagonist who learns from history by making the most of imagination. As written in *Political Justice*, "It is generally acknowledged that, in the events of the material universe, everything is subjected to this necessity."¹⁹² Godwin's Necessity is causality, and misery is only a result of bad

¹⁹² Godwin 158.

choices in causality. People should increase their knowledge by choosing the correct cause and effect relationship to make society better. He never examines other possibilities or exceptions, but Shelley has projected negative idealism and historicism onto his Necessity. He knows that certain parts of life cannot always be explained by causality; he feels that a poet can create a better world by learning from history through the filter of imagination, which is a poet's best talent. For a young Shelley, Godwin was a hero and master, but he became a fallen idol always asking for money. By establishing the new doctrine of Necessity, as expressed in the scene of the captives in TL, Shelley was able to surpass Godwin, and by negating the master, he can express an ideal image of the true sage.

Chapter 4 “A Shape All Light” from the Realm without a Name:

Anonymity and Destructive Beauty in the Ideal Woman

Shelley's ideal woman surpasses any beauty in nature, stimulates his desire for knowledge, destroys his works to urge him for perfect poetic production, and should be anonymous to be released from the limitations of a name. The depiction of nature before entrance of “a shape all light” in TL shows perfect harmony of the most comfortable place for a pure young Rousseau. The fact that “a shape all light” extinguishes the perfect harmony of nature with more beauty of hers indicates the superiority of Platonic idea over this material world. As this Platonic idea is superior to any material in the world, all of which have names, “a shape all light” should not be limited by a particular name or origin.

Just as the “shape” lets Rousseau ask her questions, Shelley's ideal woman causes him to grow by stimulating his desire for knowledge. Shelley is known for dedicating many poems to a certain woman, and his ideal woman is the source of inspiration. Although this is similar to a traditional Muse for an artist, Shelley's Muse is different in that she is creative and destructive. The “shape” tramples Rousseau's thoughts and deletes his memory, causing him to become intellectually dead. For Shelley, however, death is not the end of it all. Like “Destroyer and Preserver” in “The Ode to the West Wind”, a new creation can arise from destruction. This is the reason why Shelley's ideal woman should be beautiful, stimulating, destructive, and anonymous.

TL is a treasure trove for Shelley to explore new ideas. It does not portray straight social criticism like *Queen Mab* and *Mask of Anarchy*, or lyrical idealism like *Prometheus Unbound* and *Epipsychidion*. There are no heroes to save people nor people to be saved in a logical storyline. His new endeavor is to explore his ideal woman and “a shape all light” in Rousseau’s recollection scene is his new negative idealistic woman.

Many scholars have argued over the identity of “a shape all light.” Bradley and Stawell, who shed light on the work after nearly a century of neglect since the publishing of the poem, recognize the analogy with Intellectual Beauty. Bloom, who created a new image of Shelley in his *Shelley’s Mythmaking*, points out the relationship of “a shape all light” with the Great Whore in Revelations. Yeats regards it as the Venus in the morning sky which symbolizes a poet. Butter and Reiman distinguish the “shape” according to where it is placed: it is ideal in heaven, but when it is contaminated through contact with the world, it becomes harmful. From a feministic view, Brown sees “the eighteenth-century doctrine of sympathy” in Shelley’s opinion of feminism, and Gelpi argues that “the guidance seemingly offered by the Goddess’s ‘star’ is in fact delusory.” Ulmer observes that “the shape acts as Rousseau’s erotic antitype.”¹⁹³ These are mainly the views to distinguish the “shape” between good and evil. Marks categorizes these preceding studies into three types: negative, positive, and ambiguous; he adds his

¹⁹³ Bradley 444; Stawell 127; Bloom 271; Yeats 88; Butter 50; Reiman 69; Brown 3; Gelpi 129; Ulmer 166.

own interpretation into the ambiguity group as “my definition involves the shape’s ultimate alterity” (537).

Classifying the “shape” into either right or wrong, or leaving it as ambiguous, cannot make the nature of the “shape” clear. A one-sided view, either good or evil, may overlook a portion of the other element, and ambiguity does not make anything clear at all, or only indicates a woman who may influence Rousseau both positively and negatively. By looking at Shelley through the lens of negative idealism, the “shape” becomes his ideal woman and the negative methods express his ideal.

The scene of “a shape all light” is the one and only scene in which ideal beauty is expressed in the poem. On the other hand, she is depicted negatively through her name, attributes, and actions. I argue that the zenith of Shelley’s ideal woman, which he has pursued through his poetry since an early age, is described in the negative methods in TL compared to other women in *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude* (1815), “Prince Athanase” (1817), and *Julian and Maddalo* (1818).

It is in *Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude* that Shelley presents the prototypes of his characters for the first time: a young Poet and his femme fatale. One night on a wandering journey “to seek strange truths in undiscovered lands” (77), a young Poet dreams of a veiled maid.

He dreamed a veiled maid
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
 Heard in the calm of thought;

Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,
 Herself a poet. (151–54, 158–61).

The image of the woman described here focuses on analogy to and sympathy for the protagonist, which means self-projection, self-idealization, and a strong sense of self-love. After waking from the dream, the young Poet starts on a wandering journey to seek her out. He wandered all over the world, sailing down the stormy river, and going into dark valleys and caves. But he does not meet her again, before dying. Shelley explains his death by writing, “The Poet’s self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin.”¹⁹⁴ The “veiled maid” is not a subsistent woman, but rather his inner self or a symbol of “self-centered seclusion.” Self-love and death of the protagonist is symbolized by daffodils – “Yellow flowers / For ever gaze on their drooping eyes” (406–407) – which he finds after a torrential journey. Through the punishment of death, the protagonist’s life is purified from the sin of self-love which ignores the needs of others. On his death bed, “two lessing points” (654) of a crescent moon which resemble the eyes of the “veiled maid” watch him die. The moon sinks as if it is fading with his weakening pulse. Looking at the “lessing points” of the moon, he smiles, then dies. At this

¹⁹⁴ Reiman and Fraistat 73.

moment, he sympathizes with nature for the first time, rather than just focusing on himself. This sympathy allows nature to accept him and his final smile shows that he accepted his way of life. The beautiful depiction of his death and the deploring invocation of the narrator at the last part of the poem proves that his sin of “self-centered seclusion” was atoned to justify his life. The “veiled maid” is the ideal woman in nature who leads the Poet to ruin under the mask of sympathy. Seemingly she negates his way of life, but by leading him to death, she purifies him. From the early stages of his career as a poet, Shelley’s ideal woman can be conjured through the method of negation.

“Prince Athanase” or “Athanase” in the recent Longman anthology has two parts: Part I is fairly arranged in 124 lines, and Part II is a compilation of six fragments. Part I only presents the protagonist in distress, but the reason for his distress and a concerned woman are not revealed. In one fragment of Part II, there is a short description of a lady, but it does not expose enough to reveal her character. The only clue to reveal the woman that the protagonist loves is found in a note on the poem by Mary Shelley, the editor of Shelley’s anthology in which this poem is included.

The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on *Alastor*. In the first sketch of the poem, he named it Pandemos and Urania. Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty.

But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. ‘On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips’ (The Deathbed of Athanase). The poet describes her. This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imaged [Mrs. Shelley’s Note].¹⁹⁵

The supposed original title of “Pandemos and Urania” alludes to an evil woman and a heavenly lady. Pandemos is a compound name of *pan* and *demo*, meaning “common to all people,” so she is an earthly and unworthy woman. Urania is one of nine Muses, and another name for Venus, so she is the one who inspires the poesy of the protagonist. We can see the ambivalence in one woman from this title and the way her actions oscillate between love and negation – approaching, leaving, and kissing – is just like “a veiled maid.” Reifying points of ideality is common to *Alastor*: her love and beauty, and most of all, “replying his soul,” that is, sympathy. But the sympathy in “Prince Athanase” is negated by betrayal, which is similar to what a woman does in *Julian and Maddalo*.

The relationship between “Prince Athanase” and TL is very close. I consider that most of the problems in “Prince Athanase” which left the poem fragmented are successfully resolved in TL.¹⁹⁶ The ideal woman

¹⁹⁵ Hutchinson 159

¹⁹⁶ In detail, see Shiraishi 2016.

is similarly treated by having the ambivalence between Pandemos and Urania, ideality and negation, utilized in the “shape all light” in TL.

In *Julian and Maddalo*, a woman appears not as an acting character, but rather in the story told by the Maniac. After the discussion on human nature with the idealist Julian, the pessimist Count Maddalo takes him to the Maniac, who was once a wealthy idealist but turned into the Maniac after a bout of unhappiness. They hear the Maniac’s monologue about the woman who hurt and left him. According to the sequel Julian hears, the woman came back to the Maniac, stayed for a while, but left him again. What actually happened between the two is not revealed in the poem.

The image of the woman here is not ideal or sympathetic, but is described as a being who brings ruin to the Maniac. Ideality is rendered through Julian and the wealthy idealist before becoming the Maniac. In this poem, idealism is seemingly discouraged and negated. But after meeting the Maniac, we are not told that Julian abandoned his idealism. Moreover, after they came back to Maddalo’s place, they talked about being so impressed and moved because his words were “Such as in measure were called poetry” (542). Deep sympathy can be felt in the words as Count Maddalo says,

Most wretched men

Are cradled into poetry by wrong,

They learn in suffering what they teach in song (544–46).

As it turns out, the woman's rejection of the Maniac ultimately caused him to produce poetry. This image is analogous with the "veiled maid" in *Alastor*. We can conclude that clearly demonstrated ideality is not ideal enough, and becomes more ideal once it is negated and then implied beyond words. This is negative idealism.

To summarize the images of women in three works, we can find differences and similarities among them. The women in *Alastor* and "Prince Athanase" are ideal and sympathetic at first, but *Julian and Maddalo* presents a different type of woman who does not have any ideality or sympathy. The common point among the three poems is that a woman is responsible for bringing the ruin and negating the ideal. Negation in these three poems is used to reject the established ideality which can be expressed within the limits of language.

One other similarity between "Prince Athanase" and Julian Maddalo is the negation of telling. Right up to the end of Part I, the reason for the protagonist's grief is not made clear. The last line of Part I of "Prince Athanase" is:

And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold (124).

At the end of *Julian and Maddalo*, Julian revisited Maddalo but he is absent, so his daughter responded to him. He knew what happened between the woman and the Maniac, but it is not revealed to the readers.

I urged and questioned still, she told me how

All happened—but the cold world shall not know (616–17).

It is the negative method that leads readers to imagine the results instead of explicitly explaining them all. This method of negation by telling, which is the main method in TL, is already found in these preceding works.

Negation is distinct in TL. It negates a logical storyline, a hero-protagonist, the intellects, the multitude, the victory, and answers to the significant question, all of which Shelley has depicted positively so far in his career. The negativity of “a shape all light” is expressed as a destroyer of nature, a trampler of Rousseau’s thirst for knowledge, and an anonymous being. Although most of the negation in the preceding poems is used for the rejection of the established ideality which is explainable within the limits of language, negation in “a shape all light” is used to bring the ideality of the “shape” into sharp relief.

First, the “shape” negates the beauty of nature. In Rousseau’s recollection scene, which symbolizes his pureness before corruption, the most beautiful nature in Spring is depicted like “clear air” (315) “soft grass” (316) “sweet flowers” (317) and “sound which all who hear must needs forget / All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love” (318–19). Then the “shape” enters with the intense light which destroys all of the beauty of nature.

there stood

Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
 Of his own glory, on the vibrating
 Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

A shape all light, which with one hand did fling
 Dew on the earth, as if she were the Dawn
 Whose invisible rain forever seemed to sing

A silver music on the mossy lawn,
 And still before her on the dusky grass
 Iris her many colored scarf had drawn.—

In her right hand she bore a crystal glass
 Mantling with bright Nepenthe; —the fierce splendor
 Fell from her as she moved under the mass

Of the deep cavern, (348–61)

By presenting the best beauty in nature first, and then having the “shape” enter as the being who surpasses the best, Shelley expresses transcendence and ideality. This is negative theology, but also very Platonic: idea is superior to any material in the world. The image who surpasses and destroys the ideal reminds us of the woman in *Julian and Maddalo* who leads the Maniac, the ex-idealist, by his nose and destroys his mind to make him insane. But the “shape” is not only a destroyer,

but also a preserver who nurtures nature “with one hand did fling / Dew on the earth, as if she were the Dawn” (352–53). This motif of death and birth is Shelley’s favorite and is applied to famous poems like “Destroyer and Preserver” (14) in “Ode to the West Wind.”

Next, the “shape” negates Rousseau. By treating Rousseau as a guide and interpreter in TL, like Virgil in *Divine Comedy*, Shelley indicates that Rousseau symbolizes knowledge. At first contact, the “shape” makes Rousseau ask a question to satisfy that “thirst of knowledge” (194). This means that the “shape” is an incentive for him, the Muse for a poet, and therefore an ideal woman for Shelley. The ideal woman as an incentive is derived from the “veiled maid” in *Alastor*, who leads the protagonist on a journey. Then the “shape” destroys his knowledge, which means she negates his nature as “thought by thought, / Trampled its fires into the dust of death” (387–88). Finally, instead of answering his question of “Shew whence I came, and where I am, and why—” (398), she gives him a cup of nepenthe. Through this action, she negates his quest for knowledge. The instant his lips touch the cup, his brain melts and “became as sand” (405). By making knowledge incompetent and absent, knowledge itself is more strongly implied and becomes more perceived, as health is perceived more in illness. The negation by the “shape” has the effect of negative emphasis.

The third negation is her anonymity. Not only is her name concealed, but also her place of origin as Rousseau knows “Thou comest from the realm without a name” (396). Negation of name and origin, property in a word, means a rejection of a fixed image of existing

concepts, and has the effect of setting the imagination of readers infinitely free. The negation of name, the rejection of the being who exists in the real world, the denunciation of “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14), is so theologically negative that it increases the sublimity and becomes a very suitable way to express the ideal.

It is often said that “a shape all light” is modelled after Matilda in *Divine Comedy*, but the “shape” is less human and more idealistic. Experiencing some trial and effort, Shelley’s ideal woman reached its zenith in TL playing the role of a destroyer and a preserver, who surpasses the most beautiful nature, stimulates and emphasizes knowledge by negation, and encourages readers’ imaginations into realms of sublimity through her anonymity. Shelley’s ideal woman seeks for absolute ideality so that she can only be expressed by negation.

Chapter 5 Negation of Ending: Absence of the Hero-Protagonist and Limitations and Possibilities of Language

Contrary to previous poems which always had a hero-protagonist, TL has no hero-protagonist and the identity of the protagonist is even uncertain. Shelley tried to portray the hero in a different way by intentionally not describing his or her existence. The “sacred few”, identified as Christ and Socrates, are heroes because they are the only two who were not grouped with the captives. The new and ideal hero for Shelley is not a self-sacrificing hero, a self-centered artist, or proud of personal victories, but rather the ideal hybrid embodying Christianity and Hellenism.

When looking at the ending of TL, it seems that the poetic justice Shelley had long adopted has been negated. For Shelley, pursuing his ideal made him realize the limitations of language. In some of his antecedent poems, Shelley attempted to negate the ending in two ways: by interrupting it or by leaving it open-ended. Although the most agreed upon reason for the fragmentation of TL is Shelley’s accidental death, I argue that it was caused by his willful negligence. The fear and diffidence produced by his negative idealism prevented Shelley from finishing TL. Instead of presenting a defined ending, he permits readers to imagine unlimited possible endings. Shelley intentionally omitted the protagonist, who usually sets the situation, context, and conclusion of the story, to prevent the poem from being restricted in scope. As Shelley’s final struggle with negative idealism, leaving the poem open-

ended consequently enabled the ideas to be released from the limits of language.

In TL, a definitive protagonist is missing, which significantly differs from his other works. As we saw in Part I, Chapter 5 in this paper, Shelley's hero-protagonists have always been depicted as reformers or artists. A reformer sacrifices himself to transform society by challenging tyrants and saving people from misery; an artist, on the other hand, seeks his ideal to the bitter end without caring for others. These character types are depicted in each poem either individually or combined. Queen Mab is the former who foretells Ianthe, a future reformer, what to do. The young Poet in *Alastor* (1815) is the latter and Laon in *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) is the former. Athanase is a reformer at first, but turns into an artist at the end of Part I. The husbands in *Rosalind and Helen* (1818) are both reformers. The Maniac in *Julian and Maddalo* (1818), whom I regard as the actual protagonist, is a converted artist. Prometheus is, of course, the former. Beatrice and Lucretia share elements of a reformer and an artist.

Compared to preceding works, we see how uncertainty around or absence of character development is a new way to describe the protagonist in TL. The background, stream of consciousness, and actions of the protagonist usually make the story progress, but are hardly described in TL and we can presume that the use of "I" may be the most probable character description. (Actually I refer to "the protagonist in TL" as "I" in preceding chapters for the sake of

convenience.) Others argue that Rousseau is the true protagonist because his dialogue occupies about half of the poem.

The type of hero-protagonist in most of Shelley's earlier poems is not evident in TL. The possible heroes in this poem are those who are not among the captives of Life's triumphal procession: Jesus and Socrates. The captives include all kinds of people—those in power, intellectuals, religious chiefs—but Jesus and Socrates are the only two not captured by Life. They are described not by their names, but as “the sacred few who could not tame / Their spirits to the Conqueror” (128–29) and “they of Athens and Jerusalem” (134). This depiction echoes “a shape all light.” Negation of name sets the readers' imaginations free and has the effect of increasing sublimity. To imply these two characters each represent a source of European culture, Shelley presents a new hybrid hero born out of Christianity and Hellenism. As they are ideal forms of character, they are not conquered by the material world of Life, but act as true heroes in this poem.

Although they may be the heroes, they cannot be considered the protagonists. A protagonist has an inevitable role in the story. The background of the protagonist sets the stage for the story and the actions advance the story. Moreover, how the protagonist comes to an end is critical to the story. All of those usual qualities, including the ending, are negated in TL. Omitting the usual ending in TL is generally regarded as an accident, but intentional negation of the ending can be seen in other works. The last sheet of his fair copy of “Prince Athanase” has the following note:

The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or a gainer by this diffidence.¹⁹⁷

Although editors of previous Shelley anthologies prefer the last word to be “difference”, I chose “diffidence” based on a photograph of Shelley’s manuscript printed in *Shelley and his Circle* VII, p.135, along with my interpretation of Shelley’s intention.¹⁹⁸ Shelley’s ultimate pursuit of the ideal sometimes impeded his progress in composing poems.

The same situation occurred in an essay by Mary. The essay titled “Catalogue of the Phenomena of Dreams, as Connecting Sleeping and Waking,” the fifth part of “Speculations on Metaphysics” (1815), describes what is called *déjà vu*, but stops abruptly in mid-sentence: “I suddenly remembered to have seen that exact scene in some dream of long—.” To this, Mary adds her note concerning this interruption.

Here I obliged to leave off, overcome by thrilling horror. This remark closes this fragment, which was written in 1815. I remember well his coming to me from writing it, pale and agitated, to seek refuge in conversation from the fearful emotions it excited.

¹⁹⁷ Locock I 179 n.

¹⁹⁸ On the difference/diffidence question, see Shiraishi 1998.

No man, as these fragments prove, had such keen sensations as Shelley. His nervous temperament was wound up by the delicacy of his health to an intense degree of sensibility, and while his active mind pondered for ever upon, and drew conclusions from his sensations, his reveries increased their vivacity, till they mingled with, and made one with thought, and both became absorbing and tumultuous, even to physical pain.¹⁹⁹

As explained in detail, Shelley's ultimate pursuit of his ideal sometimes bears fearful thoughts and he becomes so skeptical of the work he is writing that he gives up finishing it.

Another negating way of ending a work is to finish it without telling the result. The last line of Part I of "Prince Athanase," as I presented in preceding chapters in this paper, does not explain the reason for Athanase's distress to readers.

And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold (124).

The same method appears in the closing of *Julian and Maddalo*. Julian revisits Maddalo and asks his daughter what happened to the Maniac and his lover. Although he knows, he does not disclose it.

I urged and questioned still, she told me how

All happened—but the cold world shall not know (616–17).

¹⁹⁹ Ingpen and Peck VII 67.

Moreover, despite *Hellas* being written to support the Greeks who initiated the Independent War, the victory of Greece is not described in the drama at all. Instead, the sultan only *realizes* the fall of the Turks through the repeated symbolic phrase “The Future must become the Past”, which implies the past victory of Greece through the vision of an ancestor, an advisor and the chorus in a dream. When the consequences of a story are clearly explained, the work may be confined to a limited scope. An open-endedness leaves readers more possibilities and the pleasure of being able to imagine the ending on their own. Thus, Shelley’s negation of a conclusive ending has two effects: it prevents him from continuing the work to its expected fearful ending and gives readers the freedom to interpret for themselves.

We will now turn to the ending of TL or, more specifically, the lines where the poem is interrupted. After Rousseau touched his lips to the cup, “a shape all light” emerges, his memory is deleted, and the new vision of the chariot and its procession is revealed. When it passed, the frenzied multitude which surrounded and followed the procession grew weak and fall. After hearing Rousseau’s story, “I” ask him a question.

“Then what is Life?” I said . . . the cripple cast
 His eyes upon the car which now had rolled
 Onward, as if that look must be the last,
 And answered. . . . “Happy those for whom the fold

Of (544–48).

Before Reiman presented this version in detail, which is the most precise analysis of Shelley's manuscript in 1965, the last line (544) was:

'Then what is life? I cried.'—²⁰⁰

Bloom, who knew the former version from Garnett's recovery of the poem before Reiman, preferred the latter because it "makes an effective end to the poem."²⁰¹ The reason it is effective is: "The final aspect of Shelley's mythopoeia is that the myth, and the myth's maker, are fully conscious of the myth's necessary defeat."²⁰²

On the other hand, Reiman as a text researcher viewed the poem positively and supposed the reply of Rousseau would be that "he would begin to feel the redeeming force of the love that had nearly destroyed him"²⁰³ because "[e]verywhere in 'The Triumph of Life' the dark side of human experience is balanced by positive alternatives."²⁰⁴ On this basis, he asserted, "'The Triumph of Life' contains something far more meaningful than simply a realistic portrayal of the complexities of phenomenal existence" so that in the poem Shelley "shows himself to be a poet for tough-minded men who are willing to 'see the truth, whatever

²⁰⁰ Hutchinson 520.

²⁰¹ Bloom 274.

²⁰² Bloom 275.

²⁰³ Reiman 85.

²⁰⁴ Reiman 84.

that may be' and yet unwilling to forsake a vision of the possibilities of the human spirit."²⁰⁵

Like Reiman, many other scholars viewed this poem positively. Based on Bradley's suggestion that the poem made use of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, which is composed of a series of six poems, Cameron supposes that "Shelley did intend a 'triumph' of love" similar to the first poem of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, which depicts the triumph of love over man, and concludes that the misery of men can turn into hope when touched by love.²⁰⁶ Takahashi, who agreed with Cameron about love being the theme of the poem, pointed out that this interpretation is supported by the lines in which Dante is introduced:

Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

Of him who from the lowest depths of Hell

Through every Paradise and through all glory

Love led serene, and who returned to tell

In words of hate and awe the wondrous story

How all things are transfigured, except Love; (472–76)

Takahashi argued that Shelley's intention was to show the readers how to find love and imagination, not reason.²⁰⁷ In addition, Ueno assumed positive progress after line 548, like Cameron, because Shelley has been

²⁰⁵ Reiman 116.

²⁰⁶ Cameron, *Golden years* 473.

²⁰⁷ Takahashi 348.

consistent with the role of a poet expressing the reality of the world and offering suggestions for the future. Ueno insisted that Shelley would have intended to describe true happiness and the true life continuing after line 548.²⁰⁸

On the other hand, Baker argued that we should discuss the poem only based on what is written. The poem is explicitly “summarizing the central fear of his last years.”²⁰⁹ Shelley himself is not among the sacred few nor the captives nor the throng, but a spectator pointing out that “worldly life is a corrupting force, a slow stain, a cold light whose effect is to deform.”²¹⁰ On this basis, Baker suggested that existence is emphasized by what is omitted from the writing, quoting from *A Defence of Poetry*: “It is not what the erotic writers have, but what they have not, in which their imperfection consists.”²¹¹ Finally Baker found the secondary role of this poem as “his place beside the roadway he points out to passerby the fields and forests which they might enter if they broke their chains.”²¹²

Similar to Baker, Marks focused on only what was written, and regarded TL as Shelley’s experimental poem describing cultural despair. Presenting two possible endings, Marks presumed that Shelley “would have shown the narrator joining in with the others who engage in their dance of death, thus sealing a radically dim poetic vision.”²¹³

²⁰⁸ Ueno 9.

²⁰⁹ Baker 274.

²¹⁰ Baker 269.

²¹¹ Reiman and Freistat 521–22.

²¹² Baker 274–75.

²¹³ Marks 534.

De Man offered another example of focusing only on what was written. TL is a disjointed poem which has been dug up, edited and reassembled with existing words and images, so its true value can be appreciated through more unconventional views. De Man interpreted the poem as a warning for us that “nothing ... ever happens in relation, ... to anything that precedes, follows or exists elsewhere, but only as a random event whose power, like the power of death, is due to the randomness of its occurrence.”²¹⁴

As explained above, it is very difficult to settle on a collective interpretation of the poem. It contains unlimited possibilities, which are spurred on by the negation of the ending. I argue that Shelley intended for this poem to be a fragment; his intentional, negative composition of the poem and inattentiveness to the protagonist and conclusion can reasonably be explained as *dolus eventualis*, or willful negligence.

To describe a protagonist clearly is to spell out the theme of the poem, and this clarity can bring limitations to the reader’s experience. Similarly, clear endings confine the work to restricted images. The ideal that Shelley pursued was to allow poetic inspiration to break free from the limitations of language. To express this ideal, Shelley applied negative idealism in many ways: absence (negative in existence), ambiguity (negative to definite expression), implication by negation, and apophasis. Shelley intentionally made the protagonist ambiguous,

²¹⁴ De Man 69.

and refrained from finishing the poem before it came to a conclusive ending.²¹⁵

The mysterious final act in Shelley's life also hints at his *dolus eventualis*. Shelley was not able to swim, and Byron once warned him "if you can't swim / Beware of Providence."²¹⁶ Nevertheless, as described in Mary's journals, Shelley embarked on a trip in a small boat on "the afternoon of 8 July, with storm-clouds already gathering on the horizon to the west. The storm broke not long afterwards, but Trelawny and Roberts, who had tried to dissuade Shelley from setting out in such uncertain conditions, looked in vain for the *Don Juan* among the fishing boats running back into Leghorn for shelter."²¹⁷ Shelley's accident was caused by a natural phenomenon, so it cannot be suicide, but if Shelley dared to embark in such conditions, knowing the possibility of TL going unfinished, it can be construed as willful negligence. By not being able to finish the poem, Shelley left unlimited possibilities for the reader; by this negation, Shelley's ideal—to express unlimited poetic inspiration with limited language—was accomplished.

Examining his letters closely, it is evident that Shelley had been negative toward his own works since he started his career as a poet.²¹⁸ Even his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*, he regarded negatively by

²¹⁵ Cameron argued that Shelley should have suspended the poem in the middle of June, 1822. (*Golden Years* 647–48, n. 1); Bieri asserted that Shelley stopped at the end June (Bieri 639).

²¹⁶ *Julian and Maddalo* 117–18.

²¹⁷ Mary Shelley 413–14.

²¹⁸ A lot of negative mentions toward his own works are found: Jones I 239, 348, 439, 517; II 184, 186, 189, 196, 199, 200.

saying, “Not that they will sell.”²¹⁹ In *A Defence of Poetry*, he mentions that composing poetry is “as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness.”²²⁰ He believed that his poems did not express his inspiration through words as well as the feelings inside of him. Though he knows too well the inability of language and negates his poems by himself even in the middle of writing, the reason he kept creating his works is that he kept receiving poetic inspiration; it is clear that he felt compelled to share his ideas when he wrote: “My soul is bursting. Ideas, millions of ideas, are crowding into it.”²²¹ It is his ideal to express the unlimited poetic inspirations as original as possible with limited language, and it is his negative idealism to repeat trial and effort in creation. Knowing the limitations of language all too well, Shelley shows us the new possibility of language expression by the most efficient devices—absence of the protagonist and negation of ending. Although negative idealism is Shelley’s eternal effort to express what is indescribable, TL is his instantaneous zenith of his deal pursuing.

²¹⁹ Jones II 559.

²²⁰ Reiman and Fraistat 531.

²²¹ Jones I 185.

Conclusion

Angela Leighton says in her *Shelley and the Sublime* (1984) that “the language which is used to describe the unbounded landscape or obscure object of the sublime is a language of negatives.”²²² Throughout his life, Shelley sought to negatively express his own ideal through poetry. Young Shelley, who suffered through the absurdity of school and religion, found his own solutions in the rational materialistic doctrine of Necessity. His life experiences, full of disturbances unexplainable by causality, made him negate strict causality and turn his back on materialism. Shelley was an innate carnophobe, and in his study of vegetarianism he not only found justification for his feelings of negation toward meat eating, but also for the ideal society supported by peacemaking vegetarians. Shelley’s intellectual beauty in his youth made him sense inspiration, but his Italian experience aroused feelings of awe which made him negate passiveness; this allowed him to broaden his sense of beauty to perceive a beauty in horror, which urged him to create a new ideal poetry. Although religion had been his enemy since boyhood, Shelley gradually determines what to negate and what to accept. As for the latter, the grown-up Shelley understood the tolerance and sense of equality in Jesus Christ, and regarded him as an ideal person. Similarly, he came to accept the Bible stories and characters by reading them objectively and mythicizing the religion like Greek mythology. Shelley’s heroes are classified as two types: reformer and

²²² Leighton 19.

artist. The former sacrifices himself to save the people who suffer from the exploitation of tyrants, and the latter seeks out his ideal without caring for others. Shelley keeps on grasping for an ideal character by revising previous ones into new characters, sometimes mixing them or sometimes making them independent from each other.

TL is the final exhibition of his negative idealism. He learned that his ideal epistemology, experienced through eighteenth-century philosophies like spiritualism, materialism, and skepticism, was completed by gaining the negative sympathy from and toward his object, the multitude. The depiction of Napoleon, who is the representative of the captives of Life, shows Shelley's revised doctrine of Necessity and creation of the ideal image of sage by negating and surpassing the great master Rousseau/Godwin. In the end, Shelley intentionally negates a distinct protagonist to prevent the poem from being confined to limited imagery. Also, with willful negligence, he left the poem fragmented to avoid a fixed ending to create poetry that is indescribable—to express unlimited poetic inspiration within the limits of language. His struggles in negative idealism gained a temporal rest in TL. Like negative theologians have been seeking for comprehension of God through “language which pivots around denials about God and a rhetoric of absence,” Shelley kept on trying to express his own god, the ultimate ideal shown by inspiration, through his trial and error, that is, creation and negation.²²³ Though his ascetic journey of self-

²²³ Davies and Turner 1.

revisionism has interrupted by his sudden death, Shelley's negative idealism leads scholars to the endless journey of elucidating Shelley.

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**Appendix: An Annotated Bibliography of Percy Bysshe Shelley's
"The Triumph of Life"**

Introduction

The aim of this project is to collect the available critical essays on Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The Triumph of Life" (1822) from 1959 to the present (2019).

Of all the Shelley's poems, "The Triumph of Life" ("TL") is regarded as one of the most difficult poem to interpret or evaluate. So critical responses to the poem have been changing dynamically. Since its publication, two views had been prevailing: mystical and Dantesque. After a century of critical neglect, Harold Bloom made the academia realize in 1959 that this poem was not an illegible, pseudo-*Divine Comedy* but an important piece of art which concludes Shelley's own mythmaking. In 1960s, textual study of the poem made a remarkable progress by G. M. Matthews and Donald H. Reiman. In 1979, the wave of deconstruction surged onto "TL" study. Paul de Man's view to regard "TL" as Shelley's denial to be historical monument has been exerting its influence on "TL" study and producing many de Manians and anti-de Manians since then.

Before Bloom, "TL" study was not active. A few editors of Shelley anthology like C. D. Locock or Richard Garnett made comments, and W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot, poet-critics, referred to the poem in only a few words. So Oscar Kuhns' (1898), A. C. Bradley's (1914), and F. M. Stawell's (1914) studies from the view of Italian literature are very

valuable at that time. The view to regard "TL" as mystical and Dantesque had seemed almost fixed until Bloom broke it. Bloom opened the door to an innovative and precise reading of the poem in his *Shelley's Mythmaking* in 1959. Applying Martin Buber's religious existentialism of "I-Thou" and "I-It," Bloom theorized that Shelley's mythmaking began from "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" in 1816, when Shelley realized the imaginative relation with Nature, and completed in "The Triumph of Life," in which Shelley drove Wordsworth's influence away and evoked the world of experience and separation. Bloom's argument of misreading by authorized reading drew many objections from scholars who supported usual readings like Kenneth Allott and P. H. Butter. So that this stimulated Shelley academia and many arguments were produced in 1960's.

The discovery of Shelley's holograph in 1950's was one of the most shocking and inspiring incident for Shelley academia, and Matthews and Reiman inspected the manuscript of the poem respectively. Matthews presented the result in a journal prior to Reiman in 1960, but Reiman issued a book investigating the poem more in detail and more thoroughly in 1965. This book includes the studies of critical and textual history, poetics, style, and a variorum edition of "TL," which has become the authoritative version of the poem and has been quoted by many scholars until now. After that, Matthews and Reiman competed to find new evidences (of Shelley's love affair with Jane Williams, for example) from Shelley's manuscripts to make new interpretations of some parts of the poem, and provoked controversies many times.

After the revisionists' war in 1960s and 1970s, there came deconstruction. Paul de Man applied Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory to literature. His "Shelley Disfigured" (1979) threw a bomb to academia and crashed the traditional meaning-making reading into pieces. "Shelley Disfigured" offered a new point of view to doubt old and fixed interpretations and to observe carefully what the language in the poem strictly means. And it created many 'de Manians' like Graham Daldry and 'anti-de Mans' like James O'rourke. Combined with the poem's state of fragment, many controversies like whether the poem has significant message¹⁾ or it only shows the mystification with many allegories and cycle system²⁾ have been discussed until now.

In 1990s, as new approaches increased the number instead of a dominant literary theory, the approaches to "TL" began to apply the variations like comparative literature, new historicism, post colonialism, and so on. Ronald Tetreault analyzes Shelley's poetic style, while Alan M. Weinberg applies historical and biological view. Bernard Beatty and Mary Barnard Nunn find musical elements from the poem respectively, and David Vallins compares with Mrs. Dalloway of Virginia Woolf. John Whatley's view is gothic, and Katherine Singer's is feminism. The two latest essays so far are both written by the doyen O'Neill: one is about religion and the other compares with Southey.

There are three books on Shelley's Bibliography published so far: Clement Dunbar (2) and Karsten Klejs Engelberg. Dunbar published the bibliographies 1823-1950, and 1950-1984, though they are not annotated. Engelsberg collected 1822-1860 and this is annotated. There

was only one annotated bibliography (a journal article) on single work: *Prometheus Unbound* (French). “TL” has been said to be one of the best poems of Shelley so that not a few scholars and students have treated and investigated this poem. And more and more of them will do. So my project will surely contribute to P. B. Shelley academia by saving their labor to collect and check all the essays on “TL” one by one.

As I showed above, Bloom triggered the modern reading of the poem and many of the basic and important research articles on the work were issued in '60s, so the scope of this bibliography ranges from 1959 to the present. The resources for this project are *MLA-IB*, *Humanity Abstract*, *Academic Search Premier*, and *ProQuest Dissertation & Thesis*. Materials in languages other than English and items I could not obtain are given only bibliographical information.

Items are listed chronologically. This annotated bibliography was first composed in 2012, and supplemental information was added in 2019.

- 1) cf. John Archer, John Morillo.
- 2) cf. Deborah Esch, Orrin N. C. Wang

List of Abbreviation

- ASP* *Academic Search Premier* (A database by EBSCO Publishing)
- KSJ* *Keats-Shelley Journal: Keats, Shelley, Byron, Hunt, and Their Circles* (A journal by Keats-Shelley Association of America)
- PMLA* *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
(A journal of Modern Language Association of America)
- PQDT* *ProQuest Dissertation & Thesis* (A database by ProQuest)
- SEL* *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* (A journal by
The Johns Hopkins University Press)

—1959—

1. Bloom, Harold. "The Triumph of Life." *Shelley's Mythmaking*, Yale UP, 1959, pp. 220-75.
Regarding Shelley's poetic as mythmaking, Bloom argues that this poem shows the myth's necessary defeat. The author's innovative interpretations, especially the view of 'The Shape all light' and the sun image as the being and source of all tyrannies, have provoked many a controversy until now.

—1960—

2. Allott, Kenneth. "Bloom on 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Essays in Criticism*, no. 10, 1960, pp.222-28.

The interpretation of Harold Bloom's *Shelley's Mythmaking*.

The author points out that Bloom 'badly' misreads a section of Rousseau's corruption by life.

3. Matthews, G. M. "'The Triumph of Life': A New Text." *Studia Neophilologica*, no. 32, 1960, pp. 271-309.

The first thorough manuscript research on the work. No other critics had not been able to access Shelley's MS in Bodleian Library until Matthews. They were only offered the transcripts by Mrs. Shelley. This paper presents whole lines of the poem and detailed notes of comparison with other editions.

4. ---. "The Triumph of Life, Apochrypha." *Times Literary Supplement* 1960, p. 503.

Other versions of manuscript on the work. The author says that there are no fewer than five versions of the opening of the poem. In this paper, he picks up two of them and considers why these were cancelled.

—1961—

Not Found

—1962—

5. Butter, P. H. "Sun and Shape in Shelley's The Triumph of Life." *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English*

Literature and the English Language, vol. 13, no. 49, 1962,
pp. 40-51.

The interpretation of 'The Shape all light'. Objecting Bloom's interpretation of 'The Shape all light' as evil, Butter concludes that Shelley expressed an agonized sense of the contradictions of life, a sense of how pursuit of things which are really good can lead to pain and regret.

6. King-Hele, Desmond. "The Triumph of Life." *Shelley: His Thought and Work*, Macmillan, 1962, pp. 340-60.

A general explanation of the poem, mainly of the influence by Italian literature.

7. Matthews, G. M. "On Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Studia Neophilologica*, no. 34, 1962, pp. 104-34.

The interpretation of the work with biological approach.

The author puts a question on Shelley's integrity of human and poetic. He inquires whether Shelley changed the faith on politics and poetics he had in his early stage or not, which determines the ending of the unfinished poem.

—1963—

8. Reiman, Donald H. "Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life': The Biographical Problem." *PMLA*, vol. 78, no. 5, 1963, pp. 536-50.

The questions to Matthews' interpretation in the previous two papers. To Matthews' argument that Shelley and Jane Williams engaged in a love affair, Reiman objects there are not enough evidences to support such a relation, showing new biological evidences and detailed explanations.

—1964—

Not Found

—1965—

9. Hughes, A. M. D. "The Triumph of Life." *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, no. 16, 1965, pp. 12-20.

A general introduction of the poem, comparing with other Shelley's works like *Hellas*, *Adonais*, and *Prometheus Unbound*.

10. Reiman, Donald H. *Shelley's "The Triumph of Life": A Critical Study Based on a Text Newly Edited from the Bodleian Manuscript*. U of Illinois P, 1965.

A published version of his doctoral dissertation, added and revised. The first half of the book is a critical study, introducing thorough preceding research and detailed analysis of Shelley's style and knowledge. The latter is a textual study. As is shown above, he examines Shelley's holograph to make a newly edited text, and explains the history of the text, editorial

procedures, and variorum editions.

—1966—

Not Found

—1967—

11. Swaminathan, S. R. "Shelley's 'Triumph of Life.'" *Notes and Queries*,
no. 14, 1967, pp. 305-06.

Interprets lines 116-137 of the poem. Introducing preceding editors who corrected Shelley's 'mistakes' of grammar, The author proposes that Shelley arranged his words intentionally.

—1968—

12. Matthews, G. M. "'The Triumph of Life.'" *Essays in Criticism*,
no. 18, 1968, pp. 352-56.

The argument of Allott-Bloom conflict (See item 1 and 2). Matthews support Allot with new evidence about 'A Shape all light.' And the author criticize Reiman's interpretation saying that he is influenced by Bloom.

13. Rogers, Neville. "Life, Thought and Effectuality: Shelley, Goethe, and the Unnoticed Theme of *The Triumph of Life*." *Versdichtung der Englischen Romantik: Interpretationen*,
edited by Teut Andreas Reise and Dieter Riesner, Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1968, pp.317-33.

Examining the influence by Goethe on Shelley, the author insists the theme of this poem is 'Wirksamkeit' (Effectuality).

Like Goethe who were only an idealistic young man became a man of action after coming to Weimar, Shelley was to become an effective poet after coming to Italy. So the main theme of the unfinished poem was to spread the actual thought and to let people act along with it.

—1969—

Not Found

—1970—

Not Found

—1971—

Not Found

—1972—

14. Eggenschwiler, David. "Sexual Parody in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Concerning Poetry*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1972, pp. 28-36.

Compares with other poems like "Epipsychidion," "The Boat on the Serchio," and *Prometheus Unbound*, the author concludes that Shelley's view concerning erotic mingling changed from divine and regenerative act to earthly and therefore inferior

incarnation of the Ideal. So the bacchic dance scene in "TL" is the parody of past works.

15. Story, Patrick. "Pope, Pageantry, and Shelley's Triumph of Life." *KSJ* vol. 21-22, 1972, pp. 145-59.

The influence of Pope on the work. Analyzes the procession scene of the poem in detail, comparing Pope's two demonic parodies of the processional convention of Petrarch and Milton in *The Epilogue to the Satires* and *The Dunciad*. The author also refers to the homiletic emblems of traditional British state and civic pageantry.

—1973—

Not Found

—1974—

16. Shealy, Ann. *Journey Through the Unapparent: A Reading of Shelley's The Triumph of Life*. Exposition, 1974.

Traces the progress of ironies in the poem, which culminate in the failure of the poet to transcend his imaginative vision and contribute to the death of his hopes for reunion with the One, the divine light which in *Adonais* and *A Defence of Poetry* informs and shapes the highest efforts of the poetic imagination.
[Preface]

—1975—

17. Hodgson, John A. "The World's Mysterious Doom: Shelley's The Triumph of Life." *ELH*, vol. 42, no. 4, 1975, pp. 595-622.
- Investigates two Rousseaus; one in the poem and the other in the actual. Then conducts to the answer why Shelley chose Rousseau as a guide: to blame the person who selfishly rejected the gift of life and imagination.

—1976—

Not Found

—1977—

18. D'Avanzo, Mario L. "'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came': The Shelleyan and Shakespearean Context." *SEL*, vol. 17, no. 4, 1977, pp. 695-708.
- Criticizes the poetic narrative 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came,' by Browning. Sources which demonstrated the ideas of Shelley in the narratives "The Triumph of Life" and the "King Lear"; Theme of the narrative; Literary organization of poem. [ASP 4721852]

—1978—

19. Abbey, Lloyd. "Apocalyptic Scepticism: The Imagery of Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *KSJ*, vol. 27, 1978, pp.70-86.
- Shows that this poem is the poetic portrayal of total Humean

skepticism. In this light, the author elucidates Shelley's symbolism in the poem picking up some images like 'native noon', 'the sun', and 'evening and autumn'.

20. Quint, David. "Representation and Ideology in *The Triumph of Life*."

SEL, vol. 18, no. 4, 1978, pp. 639-57.

Insists that the deformation of the imaginative experience into ideology is the subject of the poem. The author regards the procession of 'Life' as ideology and the fall of Rousseau as a defeat of imaginative representation by ideology.

—1979—

21. Man, Paul De. "Shelley Disfigured: 'The Triumph of Life'"

Deconstruction and Criticism, edited by Harold Bloom et al. Continuum, 1979, pp. 39-73.

Through detailed analysis of disfigured Rousseau, de Man explores the delusion of figuration as the erasure of the nonphenomenal positing power of language. He claims the trajectory from erased self-knowledge to disfiguration is the trajectory of "The Triumph of Life."

22. Marshall, Linda E. "The 'Shape All Light' in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *English Studies in Canada*, no. 5, 1979, pp. 49-55.

Analyzes the preceding interpretations of 'the Shape all light', mainly Yeats' one. The author points out that Yeats explains

‘the light’ or ‘the Morning and Evening star’ but avoids interpreting ‘the Shape’ itself. The author regards ‘the Shape’ as ‘the visionary Sun’ formerly and later ‘true Sun’, contrastively representing the world of life and death.

—1980—

23. Mawer, Noel Dorman. “From Relationship to Metaphor: Mind and Language in Shelley.” Diss. Bryn Mawr College, 1980.

Investigates Shelley’s concern about perception and imagination as they evolve and alter with age. In the chapter treating “The Triumph of Life”, the author explains that Shelley points up the paradox that, though the imaginative powers of all individuals are doomed to wither and die, the poetic metaphors that capture the imaginative vision are not: though living metaphor may sink to dead, it is always capable of being revitalized. [PQDT 8103603]

24. Rajan, Tilottama. “Idealism and Skepticism in Shelley’s Poetry [*The Triumph of Life* and *Alastor*].” *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism*, Cornell UP, 1980, pp.58-83.

In this book, the author reviews Shelley’s poetic career in the light of his last fragment, *The Triumph of Life*, which she sees as laying bare tensions concealed within the earlier poetry. The author considers the contradictions within his poetic theory and concludes with a discussion of *Alastor*.

[Introduction by Michael O'Neill in *Shelley* (Longman, 1993)]

25. Rubin, Merle R. "Shelley's Skepticism: A Detachment beyond Despair." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 3, 1980, pp. 353-73.

Explains that Shelley's ambivalence is caused by his skepticism and by the ability of the skeptical poet he can balance as it were the plausible alternatives of hope and despair.

—1981—

26. Milne, Fred L. "The Eclipsed Imagination in Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *SEL*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1981, pp. 681-702.

Insists that this poem reiterates one of the central ideas in *A Defence of Poetry*: the imperative need for imagination as a guiding force against the excessive dominance of reason.

—1982—

27. Allott, Miriam. "The Reworking of a Literary Genre: Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Essays on Shelley*, Barnes & Noble, 1982, pp. 239-78.

Referring to the history of research, influence by other literature like *Faust*, and analysis of poetic qualities, the author concludes that this poem suggests that, though feeling of loss is dominant, hopeful idealism is beginning to be

held to with more arduousness than ardour, and this poem foreshadows that clouding over of the emotional and intellectual climate in the years leading from the socially committed literature of the late 1840s, 1850s and mid-Victorians.

28. Bennett, Betty T. "A Note on the Dating of Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *KSJ*, vol. 31, 1982, pp. 13-5.

From letters, drafts, and circumstances, Bennett concludes the date when Shelley began to write this poem was on or after 27 May 1822.

29. Lindsey, Victor Ewart. "Satire in the Poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley." Diss. U of Arkansas, 1982.

Investigates Shelley's satire as literary attack. The author regards this poem as an ironic satire. And Shelley's satire was not for the sake of lashing out at enemies but rather to promote the visionary regeneration of individuals and ultimately of the entire human race. [PQDT 8305142]

—1983—

30. Katilius-Boydston, Marvin Reed. "Shelley's Belief System: A Study of the Structure of His Thought." Diss. U of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1983.

This dissertation describes a set of interrelated concepts found in Shelley's writing, which incorporates a wide range of

possible ways to construe metaphysical, epistemological, and political principles. The author researches Shelley's belief system and deduces some new ways of reading Shelley's major poems like "The Triumph of Life". [PQDT 8318661]

31. O'Neill, Michael. "Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*: Questioning and Imagining." *An Infinite Complexity: Essays in Romanticism*, edited by F. R. Watson, Edinburgh UP for the U of Durham, 1983, pp. 161-80.

Studies how imagining entails questioning and questioning leads to further imagining, how power and elusiveness co-exist. O'Neill elucidates the structure of this labyrinthine poem and concludes the value of this poem is its 'inconclusiveness', to formulate the questions correctly.

32. Schapiro, Barbara A. *The Romantic Mother: Narcissistic Patterns in Romantic Poetry*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1983.

[Not Available as of Mar. 17, 2012]

33. Steinman, Lisa M. "From 'Alastor' to "The Triumph of Life": Shelley on the Nature and Source of Linguistic Pleasure." *Romanticism Past and Present*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1983, pp. 23-36.

Discusses the continuity of Shelley's poetic concerns and strategies from 'Alastor' to "The Triumph of Life" in light of de Man's insights.

34. West, Jeanne M. "Shelley and the Dance: A Study of 'Queen Mab,' 'Alastor,' 'Prometheus Unbound,' and 'The Triumph of Life.'" Diss. Kent State U, 1983.

Investigates dance images in the four major poems. The author asserts that it is in these poems that an evolution in Shelley's philosophical view toward the power of the imagination becomes apparent. [PQDT 8406154]

—1984—

35. Byrne, Lawrence John. "'Self-Destroying Swiftmess': The Fictions of Language in Shelley's Poetry." Diss. Boston U, 1984.

Treating Shelley's skepticism in language, the author concludes that "The Triumph of Life" is not a palinode but contains within itself evidence that the creative dialectic out of which Shelley's poems arise is as fiercely contended here as ever and that the untameable space between word and experience continues to offer the sense of mystery and hope which are for him the essence of inspiration. [PQDT 8416670]

36. Coyne, Frank Edward. "Nightmare and Escape: Changing Conceptions of the Imagination in Romantic and Victorian Dream Visions." Diss. Indiana U, 1984.

Focuses on dream vision in English Romantic like Coleridge and Wordsworth and Victorian poetry of Morris, Addington,

and Symonds. In the chapter of Romantic age, the author picks up “The Triumph of Life” as one of well-known examples.

[PQDT 8417155]

37. Vargo, Lisa Marie. “The Solitary Reformer: A Reading of Shelley’s Poetry.” Diss. U of Toronto, 1984.

Treating many Shelley’s works, the author explains Shelley’s paradoxical journey as a solitary reformer , who is from the aristocracy but became an exile and spoke loud outside his own country. Vargo argues that “The Triumph of Life” shows the development of the idea of solitary reformer. [PQDT NK62142]

—1985—

38. Fischer, Michael. “Revisionist Criticism in Practice.” *Does Deconstruction Make Any Difference? Poststructuralism and the Defense of Poetry in Modern Criticism*, Indiana UP, 1985, pp. 60-82.

Based on the revisionist criticism, the author studies how three poststructuralist critics—Bloom, de Man, and Rajan—read this poem. He concludes that their imposition of critical will over a text becomes a necessity.

39. Miller, J. Hillis. “Shelley’s ‘The Triumph of Life’” *The Linguistic Moment: From Wordsworth to Stevens*, Princeton UP, 1985, pp. 114-79.

Defining his own deconstruction theory as “not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself,” Miller analyze the poem in detail in order to clarify the roles of Rousseau and Shelley as two mirrors held against each other which reflect images forever.

—1986—

40. Crook, Nora. and Derek Guiton. “Egyptian Bondage: *Charles the First* and *The Triumph of Life*.” *Shelley’s Venomed Melody*, Cambridge UP, 1986, pp. 208-30.

Throuout this book, Crook and Guiton refer to Shelley’s pathological state of mind and body. The authors interpret Rousseau in the poem is an imaginative reworking of the historical Rousseau and a projection of Shelley’ fear of syphilis.

41. Faulk, Ronald Hugh. “Shelley’s Theory of Language.” Diss. Northwestern U, 1986.

Researches Shelley’s system and style of language. By close reading of his major poems like “The Triumph of Life”, Faulk matches Shelley’s theory of poetic language with his practice to show some of the specific consequences in the compositional elements of the poems—in syntax, lexical choice, prosody, and philosophy. [PQDT 8610522]

42. Flesch, William Benjamin. "The Disconsolate: The Poetry of Irreparable Loss." Diss. Cornell U, 1986.

This dissertation seeks to characterize a modality of literary affect; pain, loss, and mourning. In "The Triumph of Life" the author finds moments of inconsolability—a state characterized by its not representing a compromise formation that finally suffices. And Shelley gave up the icy security of the sublime — described as a refusal to mourn — to confront the endlessness of the human capacity to be destroyed. [PQDT 8607202]

43. Isomaki, Richard Allen. "Shelley's Casual Themes." Diss. U of Washington, 1986.

The dissertation studies the evolution of causal themes in Shelley's works. The author sees this poem examines social decay. The extension of poetic effect through history means that Rousseau's evil will be decided by history's response to him. And the imagination's product, though arbitrarily produced, is guided by the principle of sympathy. [PQDT 8626656]

44. Shelley, Bryan Keith. "The Interpreting Angel: Shelley and Scripture." Diss. U of Oxford, 1986.

This study of Shelley's poetic theory and practice deals with the poet's use of Biblical phrasing, imagery, symbols, and concepts. In the last few years of Shelley's life, the

increasingly spiritualized self is refined into the ideal of the Poets as the incarnation of the divine Imagination. Such works as *Hellas*, *Adonais*, and *The Triumph of Life* reveal that the poet's kingdom is not of this world. Apocalypsis is ultimately the governing mode of this final period, as opposed to the prophetic eschatology of the early stage. [PQDT D-88667]

—1987—

45. Archer, John. "Authority in Shelley." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1987, pp. 259-73.

Explains Shelley's authority in verse. The elements for a critique of authority [=a poet] began to be accumulated as early as *Queen Mab* and were almost assembled in *The Triumph of Life*. By tracing them in the mature works, the author finds *The Triumph's* qualification that poets should bear some of the responsibility for the present state of affairs.

46. Warren, David Harris. "‘Fiery Dews,’ ‘Consuming Extacies’: Shelley's Visionary Dewdrops." Diss. U of Missouri - Columbia, 1987.

Considers Shelley's dew images from his juvenilia to his mature poetry. It is a symbol of unity in some works, while it is the power of evil in other works. Also dewdrops from star mean the apparent gap between the heavens and the earth. In

“The Triumph of Life”, vestiges of Shelley’s visionary dewdrops can be found. [PQDT 8728857]

—1988—

47. Daldry, Graham. "Poetry as Question: The Triumph of Life." *Textual Practice*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1988, pp. 261-75.

Supporting de Man’s statement “cycle needs entry, and entry becomes the act of posing or position,” the author clarifies the cycling structure of the poem and several ‘posing’ points in the poem.

48. Esch, Deborah. "A Defence of Rhetoric/the Triumph of Reading: De Man, Shelley and the Rhetoric of Romanticism." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, no. 57, 1988, pp. 484-500.

Close examination of de Man and Shelley. The author states that de Man’s terminology and his critical procedures are to a telling extent prefigured in Shelley’s reflections on the nature and function of poetic language. Esch concludes de Man’s essay enables us to read both the force and the failings of the de Manian corpus.

49. Mulvihill, James. "Hazlitt, Shelley, and The triumph of life." *Notes and Queries*, no. 35, 1988, pp. 305-7.

Insists that William Hazlitt's articles in December 1816 and January 1817 in the *Examiner* may have inspired the central symbol of Shelley's the 'Car of Life' in the poem.

50. Pyle, Forest Barnett, III. "The ideology of imagination: Subject and society in the discourse of romanticism." Diss. U of Texas at Austin, 1988.

Examines the romantic concept of the imagination and its ideological significance for nineteenth century cultural discourse. The author argues that "The Triumph of Life" presents an articulation of poetic language with social history which discloses the connections between the formation thought and the exercise of power. [PQDT 0564768]

51. Schulze, Earl. "Allegory against allegory: The triumph of life." *Studies in Romanticism*, no. 27, 1988, pp. 31-62.

Explains how Shelley created his own allegory out of traditional ones of the Bible, Myths and preceding literature. The author concludes that Shelley's use of allegory makes the poem layered and ambiguous so that it refuses the reduction to any system of meanings.

52. Shelley, Bryan. "The Interpreting Angel in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Review of English Studies*, no. 39, 1988, pp. 386-99.

Examines this poem in the light of the scripture. The author regards "The Triumph of Life" as apocalyptic, which is defined as unveiling, or signifies any vision which features the advent of a new era or better world.

—1989—

Not Found

—1990—

53. Dawson, P. M. S. "'The Mask of Darkness': Metaphor, Myth, and History in Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *History and Myth: Essays on English Romantic Literature*, edited by Stephen C. Behrendt. Wayne State UP, 1990, pp. 235-44.

Regarding this poem as 'a microanalysis of repetition, an investigation of the human being's most intimate relations to time,' Dawson analyzes this poem with historicism and comes to a conclusion that this poem offers that the history of which human beings seem to be the helpless victims is their own creation.

54. Hall, Jean. "Transformability in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Poetry*, MLA, 1990, pp. 107-10.

Recommends how to teach this poem. Using Rousseau, Dante, and *The Defence of Poetry* in appropriate sections of the poem, Hall suggests letting students think what the transformability

means in the poem, and finally making them decide for themselves whether the poem is likely to have ended in despair or in hope.

55. Miner, Marlene Renee. "The problem of evil in the works of Blake and Shelley." Diss. U of Cincinnati, 1990.

Defining that the most outstanding similarity between Blake and Shelley is their commitment to expiring the nature, origin, purpose, and eradication of evil in human existence, the author compares and contrasts the evolution of both poets as they confront the problem of evil. "The Triumph of Life" is treated in the concluding chapter, saying the poem demonstrates his development since *Prometheus Unbound*. [PQDT 9108579]

56. Weisman, Karen Alicia. "Imageless truths: Shelley's poetic fictions." Diss. U of Toronto, 1990.

Traces Shelley's development in the context of his evolving conceptions of poetic fictions. The author argues that "The Triumph of Life" betrays Shelley's guilt over his trouping of concrete, quotidian reality. [PQDT NN73757]

—1991—

57. Ghannoum, Muhammad. "English Romanticism in Contemporary Revisionist Theory." Diss. Columbia U, 1991.

Treats three major Romantic critics: Bloom, Hartman, and de

Man in terms of revisionist theory. In chapter four, the author argues their theories at work. They all study Shelley's "The Triumph of Life" but fail to consider the age in which the poem has been produced, Ghannoum concludes. [PQDT 9127857]

58. Mooney, Jennifer. "The Fathers and the Power of Love: Allen Tate's Modern *Triumph of Life*." *Border States*, no. 8, 1991, pp. 31-6. Web. 15 Aug. 2011.

<http://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/htallant/border/bs8/mooney.htm>

Examines one scene in which "The Triumph of Life" is referred in the novel by anti-Shelley Tate. The author parallel these two works and finds that *The Fathers* bears striking thematic and symbolic resemblance to the poet's Dantean dream vision.

59. Tetreault, Ronald. "Shelley: Style and Substance." *The New Shelley: Later Twentieth-Century Views*, edited by G. Kim Blank, Macmillan, 1991, pp. 15-33.

Argues that deconstruction is not a crucial and pervading method of the study of "The Triumph of Life" but only to conduct the long-supported opinion that Shelley is excellent in style but less in substance. The author objects to this opinion and concludes that in Shelley the play of signifier generates a multiplicity of signified and the style modifies substance in Shelley.

60. Torchin-Kahan, Claudine. "Witnessing Figures." *Boundary 2*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1991, pp. 47-64.

Insists that by reading this poem as the manifestation of the privative nature of cognition: in order to know anything, one must forget that there is a difference between an event or state of affairs and the 'figure' it takes when it becomes an object of thought, de Man unconsciously repeats deleting his own memory of collaboration with the Third Reich.

61. Vassallo, Peter. "From Petrarch to Dante: The Discourse of Disenchantment in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies*, no. 1, 1991, pp. 102-10.

Studies the smooth transition from Petrarch's representational allegory to Dante's surrealistic world in this poem. The author focus on the way Shelley assimilates Dante's poetic effects in terms of the disenchantment efficacy of poetry.

62. Volk-Birke, Sabine. "'A World of Agony': Natur und Geschichte in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch im Auftrage der Görres-Gesellschaft*, no. 32, 1991, pp. 111-28.

[Not Available as of Mar. 17, 2012]

62. Wang, Orrin N. C. "Disfiguring Monuments: History in Paul de Man's 'Shelley Disfigured' and Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *ELH*, vol. 58, no. 3, 1991, pp. 633-55.

Claims that de Man gives "The Triumph of Life" a role of a critique of history and revolutionary transformation, a critique that comments upon the uncertainty of deconstruction's present role.

64. Weinberg, Alan M. "Lerici and the Italian Visionary Epic: The Triumph of Life." *Shelley's Italian Experience*, St. Martin's, 1991, pp. 202-42.

A biological approach to the poem. Introduces generally the influence by the Italian literature on the poem.

—1992—

65. Beatty, Bernard. "Repetition's Music: The Triumph of Life." *Essays and Studies 1992: Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Kelvin Everest. D. S. Brewer, 1992, pp.99-114.

Insists that the repetition in the poem has the same effect as music: repeating the same phrases, slightly changing, and coming to climax. This is a kind of music therapy referred in *Julian and Maddalo*.

66. Lee, Monika H. "The Presence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the Work of Percy Bysshe Shelley." Diss. U of Western Ontario, 1992.

An inquiry into the important but previously unexamined literary relationship of Shelley and Rousseau, as it presents itself historically, intertextually and in relation to language theory. [PQDT NN75321]

67. Marks, Clifford Jay. "Dynamic representations: A theory of ethical transcendence in the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley and George Eliot." Diss. State U of New York at Buffalo, 1992.

Focuses on the poetry of P. B. Shelley, the fiction of George Eliot, and the ethical implications of their art. In "The Triumph of Life" the author claims, Shelley constructs an analysis of human relationships which suggests that language enables viable connections among people. [PQDT 9301883]

68. Nunn, Mary Barnard. "'The Wounded Echo's Melody': Shelley's Myth of Poetic Voice." Diss. U of Virginia, 1992.

Examines the links between Romantic theories of authorship and the specific details of the Narcissus myth. In a world Narcissus himself creates imaginatively through his perception, which is inevitably incomplete, Shelley puts Echo, the speaking voice. In *Alastor* it may be working, but 'The Triumph of Life' finds him trapped, like the Poet, in constrictions not of his own making. [PQDT 9237507]

69. O'Rourke, James. "Death and error in 'Shelley Disfigured.'" *Criticism*, no. 34, 1992, pp.1-25.

Criticism, no. 34, 1992, pp.1-25.

Comparing other essays, the author detects how de Man was trapped in the 'Shelley Disfigured,' referring the influences by Derrida and Kant.

70. Weisman, Karen A. "Shelley's Triumph of Life over Fiction." *Philological Quarterly*, vol. 71, no. 3, 1992, pp. 337-60.

Philological Quarterly, vol. 71, no. 3, 1992, pp. 337-60.

Submits that "The Triumph of Life" takes both metaphysical dualism, and its inevitable epistemological doubt. The author details Shelley's intention that the deep truth is in quotidian existence but cannot be described in words so that life is triumphant over poetic fiction.

—1993—

71. Farnell, Gary. "Rereading Shelley." *ELH*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1993, pp. 625-50.

JSTOR. Web. 12 Aug. 2011.

Examines the autobiographical aspects of Percy Bysshe Shelley's writings. Distinction between 'proper' and 'specular' names of characters; Application of shell imagery in *Laon and Cythna*, *Prometheus Unbound* and "Hymn to Mercury"; Paul de Man's evaluation of "The Triumph of Life." [ASP 9312220854]

—1994—

72. Brewer, William D. "Byron, Goethe, and *The Triumph of Life*," *The Shelley-Byron Conversation*, UP of Florida, 1994, pp. 109-30. Suggests the influence of Byron on the work. Introducing the episode that Byron advised Shelley to translate *Faust*, the author compares *Julian and Maddalo* and "The Triumph of Life" and points out the likeness of Rousseau figures expressed in *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* and in this fragment poem.

73. Morillo, John. "Vegetating Radicals and Imperial Politics: Shelley's Triumph of Life as Revision of Southey's Pilgrimage to Waterloo." *KSJ*, vol. 43, 1994, pp. 117-40.

Regarding this poem as Shelley's ultimate reply to Southey's attack on him, the author explains how Shelley deploys many of the same forms used by Southey in order to critique him. The distorted Rousseau is, Morillo suggests, the connotation of the lamentable state of the England and the laureateship under Southey.

—1995—

74. Harrison, Jeffrey D. "Shelley's Caves: Linguistic Landscape and the Aporetic Gap from Pyrrho to Rorty." Diss. U of Oregon, 1995. A philosophical exploration of Shelley's language, relying on Derrida, de Man, and Richard Rorty. Posing 'the cave image' in the center, the author discusses Shelley's dilemma through

reading his major poems like "The Triumph of Life"

[PQDT 9613376]

75. Jacobs, Kimberly Lynn. "Political aesthetic: Dramatic genre in the work of Shelley." Diss. Miami U, 1995.

Examines Shelley's use of dramatic genre in several different poems including "The Triumph of Life" Shelley made experiments on many kinds of drama searching for an effective voice for his social vision, the author explains.

[PQDT 9613331]

76. Kim, Jae Inn. "Shelley's Reading of Life in 'The Triumph of Life': Deconstruction of Dichotomy." *The Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol. 41, no. 3, 1995, pp. 761-80.

[Korean]

Argues that "The Triumph of Life" presents Shelley as both an idealist and a skeptic because he deconstructs dichotomy in his reading of life. The author regards 'Shape all light' as Shelley's idealistic view and 'Car of life' as the skeptical view.

[Abstract]

77. Swaminathan, S. R. "Vedanta and Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Keats-Shelley Review*, no. 9, 1995, pp. 63-78.

Considering from the point of view of Vedanta, the author analyses such key words as 'The Sun as Brahman', 'The trance

of a Sage', 'The Veil of Life' and so on in this poem and concludes that Shelley is much closer to Hindu symbolism than to Platonic doctrine.

—1996—

78. Epema, Wybren Reynold. "New Figures on the False and Fragile Glass: Poetry and History in Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" Diss. U of Regina, 1996.

Argues that this poem marks a crisis in which Shelley confronts latent fears and doubts about the 'One' and impugns his deepest beliefs about what poetry is. Considering the relationship of Nature and Culture, the author suggests that "The Triumph of Life" shows Shelley's instability of the belief that the experience of poetry is the experience of an Absolute 'One.' [PQDT MM14514]

79. Pagnini, Marcello. "Percy Bysshe Shelley, The Triumph of Life: Un Esercizio di Lettura." *Rivista di Letterature Moderne e Comparate*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1996, pp. 437-57.

[Italian, not available]

—1997—

Not Found

—1998—

80. Wu, Ya-feng. "The Spectre of Rousseau in Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Studies in Language and Literature* 8 (1998): 119-45.

Seeks to prove that the two typical opinions on this poem, to regard it as a retraction or a continuation of his earlier idealism, are both inadequate by showing how Shelley defines his own position through a continuous negotiation between various literary modes and cultural discourses.

81. Arditi, Neil Lucien. "The Uses of Shelley: 'Alastor' to 'The Triumph of Life.'" Diss. of U of Virginia, 1998.

Placing current argument with Wordsworth firmly within the context of our Romantic inheritance, the author aims to reestablish Shelley's credentials as our contemporary examining his major long poems like *Alastor*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and "The Triumph of Life". [PQDT 9916351]

—1999—

82. Marks, Clifford J. "Fragments and Fragility: Permeable Foundations in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *European Romantic Review*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1999, pp. 515-41.

Drawing on recent work in Romantic ethical criticism, the author sees this poem as not only raising the question of what life should be but making the act of asking questions and pursuing answers the highest kinds of ethical gestures in

terms of fragility, which defines the human condition as a dangerous mystery.

—2000—

83. Stroup, William James. "Shelley and the nature of nonviolence." Diss. U of New Hampshire, 2000.
- From the view point of ecocriticism, the author studies Shelley's conception of the role and function of humans in the natural world, and of his influence on later reformers.
- [PQDT 9983721]

—2001—

84. Arditi, Neil. "T. S. Eliot and The Triumph of Life." *KSJ*, vol. 50, 2001, pp. 124-43.
- Examines continuities and discontinuities between Shelley's last poem and Eliot's modernism, and then between modernism and postmodernism. The threshold set between Shelley and Eliot is how to treat the corruption of the multitude: loss of potential divinity for Shelley and religious conversion for Eliot, the author defines.
85. Vallins, David. "'Whose Shape is That within the Car? & Why?': *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Virginia Woolf Out of Bounds: Selected Papers from the Tenth Annual Conference on Virginia Woolf*, Pace UP, 2001, pp. 249-57.

Adding to the detailed parallel of *Mrs. Dalloway's* car and the chariot of "The Triumph of Life" the author examines Shelley's influence on some of Woolf's works like *The Waves* and *The Voyage Out*.

86. Woodman, Ross. "Figuring Disfiguration: Reading Shelley after De Man." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2001, pp. 253-88. ProQuest Research Library. Web. 27 Jul. 2011.

Focuses on the character Shelley in the novel "The Triumph of Life" by Paul de Man. Role of Shelley in the story; Dialogues between Shelley and Rousseau; Details of the story. [ASP 5381897]

—2002—

Not Found

—2003—

87. Whatley, John. "'The Ghost of a Forgotten Form of Sleep': The Gothic in Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Gothic Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2003, pp. 71-93.

Examines the role of the cult in Shelley's poem "The Triumph of Life," composed in mid 1822 and is one of the well known challenges in the Romantic canon. Background of Shelley's interest in the Gothic; Observation on the poem; Reflects on

Shelleyan scholar Ross Woodman's 1967 "The Apocalyptic Vision in The Poetry of Shelley." [ASP 10780768]

—2004—

88. Plotnitsky, Arkady. "Beyond the Inconsumable: The Catastrophic Sublime and the Destruction of Literature in Keats's *The Fall of Hyperion* and Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *Cultures of Taste/Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism*, edited by Timothy Morton, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, pp. 161-80.

In terms of aesthetic ideology and consumption, the author examines poetic and allegorical arguments which concern the possibility of the ultimate destruction of both the sublime and literature from the two poems above.

—2005—

Not Found

—2006—

89. Kuiken, Kir. "Crises of the Imagination: Romanticism at the Limits of Philosophy." Diss. U of California, 2006.

Argues mainly about the crisis of the Subject in Kant. In chapter 3 the author explores the relation between transcendence and the imagination in Shelley's *The Defence of Poetry* and "The Triumph of Life." [PQDT 3198642]

90. Simon, Kristen L. "Words, Ideas, and Revolution: Political Engagement in Shelley's Poetry." Diss. Central Missouri State U, 2006.

Focusing on Shelley's political aspect, the author argues that Shelley challenges ordinary ideas, distinctions, and associations, and reveals this strategy as an effective form of political engagement through such works like *Hellas*, *Prometheus Unbound*, and "The Triumph of Life" [PQDT 1432418]

—2007—

Not Found

—2008—

91. Bode, Christoph. *Selbst-Begründungen: Diskursive Konstruktion von Identität in der britischen Romantik, I: Subjektive Identität*, Wissenschaftlicher, 2008.
[German. Not Available]

92. Lindstrom, Eric. "'To Wordsworth' and the 'White Obi': Slavery, Determination, and Contingency in Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third*." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2008, pp. 549-80.

The article discusses the sonnet "To Wordsworth," written by English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley to his

contemporary William Wordsworth, and the meaning of the images of slavery it contains. Other Shelley works discussed include "Peter Bell the Third" and "Alastor," as well as "The Triumph of Life." [ASP 39461189]

—2009—

93. Faflak, Joel. "The Difficult Education of Shelley's Triumph of Life."

KSJ, vol. 58, 2009, pp. 53-78.

Argues that, written in the traumatic aftermaths of 1790s' revolution and reaction, "The Triumph of Life" reads the excesses of Romantic self-definition via a technology of self-production that came to define the "business" of self-transformation in the Victorian era and beyond using psychoanalysis way.

94. Singer, Katherine. "Stoned Shelley: Revolutionary Tactics and Women under the Influence." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2009, pp. 687-707. ProQuest Research Library. Web. 14 Jul. 2011.

A poetry criticism of the poems "Prometheus Unbound," and "The Triumph of Life," by Percy Bysshe Shelley is presented. Particular focus is given to the depiction of drug use in the works. The depiction of women, gender inequities, and the nature of drug use are examined. The connection between

thinking influenced by drug use and societal change are also explored. [ASP 48954894]

—2010—

95. Coker, William. "Romantic Exteriority the Construction of Literature in Rousseau, Jean Paul and P. B. Shelley." Diss. Yale U, 2010.

Traces in the poetic form of Jean Paul Richter's and P. B. Shelley's writings a response to a crisis in the eighteen century construction of subjectivity most sharply articulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the last chapter treating "The Triumph of Life," the author focuses on reverberations in the poem of the conflict between reason and imagination. [PQDT 3416808]

96. Gautam, G. L. "Triumph of the Flame: A Comparative Study of Shelley's 'Triumph of Life' and Stephen Gill's *The Flame*." *The Flame Unmasked: Stephen Gill's Epic Critically Examined*. Prakash, 2010. 50-62. [Not Available as of Mar. 17, 2012]

—2011—

97. O'Neill, Michael. "'A Double Face of False and True': Poetry and Religion in Shelley." *Literature & Theology*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2011, pp. 32-46. *Academic Search Premier*. EBSCO. Web. 14 Jul. 2011.

Examines Shelley's poetic treatment of religion. The third section explores "The Triumph of Life" as a poem in which Shelley offers one of his most demanding and fascinating investigations of spiritual value. It argues that the poem, like much of Shelley's greatest poetry, never wholly disallows the possibility that what it calls 'the realm without a name' is a potentially numinous space. [Abstract by author ASP 57991256]

- 98.---. "Southey and Shelley Reconsidered." *Romanticism*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2011, pp. 10-24.

The article presents a poetry criticism of various works by English Romantic poets Robert Southey and Percy Bysshe Shelley in light of the relationship between the poets. It examines the form and structure of poems including *Laon and Cythna*, "The Triumph of Life," and *Queen Mab* by Shelley and *The Curse of Kehama* and *Thalaba the Destroyer* by Southey. The author focuses on the epic poetry of Southey and letters written between Shelley and Southey. [ASP 59562705]

99. Meehan, T. A. "The dark abyss: the influence of British empirical philosophy on the poetry and prose of P. B. Shelley." Diss. of University College Cork, 2011.

This thesis represents a reappraisal of the nature and extent of the influence of British Empirical philosophy on the poetry and prose of P. B. Shelley. Meehan observes the obvious influence of the Hume, Drummond, Locke etc. on Shelley's early works like *Alastor, Queen Mab*. Though it is suppressed through the idealizing rhetoric of *Prometheus Unbound* and *A Defence of Poetry*, Shelley's anti-nomological irruption reemerges starkly in "The Triumph of Life" wherein the full implications of the radically disjunctive force of Shelley's empiricist metaphysics becomes manifest. [PQDT U580300]

—2012—

Not Found

—2013—

100. O'Neill, Michael. "Shelley's Pronouns: Lyrics, Hellas, Adonais, and The Triumph of Life." *The Oxford Handbook of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Michael O'Neill et. al., Oxford UP, 2013, pp. 391-407.

Referring to the works indicated in the title, O'Neill analyses Shelley's use of pronouns, especially "I," "you (or thou)," and "they." He points out that Shelley's epistemology, influenced by Berkeley and Hume, shows changeability and uncertainty of "the self." This is expressed most efficiently in "The Triumph of Life," which pivots on the word "I" indicating the

narrator and Rousseau. The transitoriness of the self implies that individuality may be an illusion or the pit all speakers must fall, and finally it is the complex verbal web of Life.

—2014—

Not Found

—2015—

101. Callaghan, Madeleine. "Shelley and the Ambivalence of Idealism." *KSJ*, vol. 64, 2015, 92-104.

This article argues that Shelley's idealism remains from first to last a fraught and questioned goal in his poetic universe, though his skepticism is constant throughout his work. Regarding ambivalence as the hallmark of Shelley's art, Callaghan sees the common point in *Alastor* and "The Triumph of Life": refusing the safety of allegory. As for doubling visions of the narrator's and Rousseau's in "The Triumph of Life," the idea of "incorrect seeing" or perceiving the poem as advocating "the right choice," which has been remarked by previous commentators, suggests correctness that Shelley in fact avoids. With *terza rima*, Shelley expresses ever-shifting interpretive possibilities, and the reader is propelled on the currents of the poetry, as Shelley makes the reading activity replicate the speaker's own perceptive experience through motion.

102. Hoggle, Jerrold E. "The 'Gothic Complex' in Shelley: From *Zastrozzi* to *The Triumph of Life*. *Percy Shelley and the Delimitation of the Gothic*, edited by David Brookshire, U of Maryland P, 2015.

Romantic Circles, https://romantic-circles.org/praxis/gothic_shelley/praxis.gothic_shelley.2015.hogle.html, accessed on May 16, 2019.

This essay argues that Shelley develops, across his career in ways especially visible in *The Triumph*, a "Gothic complex" of connected features that look all the way back to how the "Gothic Story" began in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). By developing these features as he does, Shelley is able to reveal with great power the underlying conflicts at his (and or) time between retrograde belief-systems that people still accept as dominant and true, on the one hand, and, on the other, progressive re-castings of those old shapes that can make them point to revolutionary ideologies that can change the world as his characters and readers perceive it. [From Abstract]

103. Rajan, Tilottama. "The Gothic Matrix: Shelley Between the Symbolic and Romantic." *Percy Shelley and the Delimitation of the Gothic*, edited by David Brookshire, U of Maryland P, 2015.

Romantic Circles, https://romantic-circles.org/praxis/gothic_shelley/praxis.gothic_shelley.2015.rajan.html, accessed on May 16, 2019.

This paper begins with the Gothic, exemplified in Shelley's early Gothic novels as an overdetermined and unprocessed moment that interrupts aesthetic ideology. Given Hegel's association of the Symbolic with the fantastic and monstrous but also the sublime, Rajan insists that we can use his category to think through Shelley's use of the Gothic as a mode whose very disfigurations form part of a creative negativity. The Gothic, Rajan suggests, is a "matrix" for an irresolvable contention and ferment in the work of culture: one to which Shelley comes back again and again. Rajan concludes that in *The Triumph of Life* the Shape in the Car seems to punish the Idealism of the Shape all Light, but their interfolding reconfigures the relation of Gothic and Romantic. [Digested from Abstract]

—2016—

104. Edelman, Lee. "The Pathology of the Future, or the Endless Triumph of Life." *Constellations of a Contemporary Romanticism*, edited by Jacques Khalip and Forest Pyle, Fordham UP, 2016, pp.35-46.

Based on Lacan's notions of the symbolic and the sinthome, Edelman argues the matter of "life" concerns pathology so that

“The Triumph of Life” can be read as suggesting a vital activity of knowledge which forever craves fresh food, produces truths, dies, then is reborn. In the light of the reproductive futurism which the author deploys, the lines in which Plato is depicted as one of the captives of Life because of his homosexuality should be read not as a denunciation of homosexuality or Shelley’s denunciation of homosexuality but as Shelley’s rigorousness on his expression. We should focus on what Shelley would not throw light on.

105. Faflak, Joel. “Dancing in the Dark with Shelley.” *Constellations of a Contemporary Romanticism*, edited by Jacques Khalip and Forest Pyle, Fordham UP, 2016, pp.167-85.

Focusing on the scene of “shape all light,” Faflak explains how “The Triumph of Life” applies those techniques of the cinema. Comparing with Lars von Trier’s *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) and Tim Burton’s *Sweeney Todd* (2007), the author extracts the musical elements which tell more than narration, and the Gothicism which exposes bare life itself in the poem. “The Triumph of Life suggests, Faflak argues, how being and knowing are the products of their own visualization, which is the same way as the cinema that evokes the haunting quality of nature and human nature as a more real staging of reality itself.

106. Rawes, Alan. "Shelley's 'compelling rhyme schemes' in *The Triumph of Life*." *Romanticism*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2016, pp.76-89.

This essay argues that in Shelley's poem rhymes creates and disseminate equivocality of meaning but also offer Shelley a means of engaging creativity with equivocality, and it is this interplay between form and poet that produces the poem's contradictory readings of "life." It also suggests that paying attention to this interplay working itself out does not just tell us something fundamental about *The Triumph of Life* but also a great deal about Shelley's more general sensitive responsiveness to what he describes in *A Defence of Poetry* as the "relations" between "sounds" and the "uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound," without which poetry, for Shelley, "were not poetry." [From Abstract]

107. Williams, Merle. "A Shape ... Crouching within the Shadow of a Tomb': Shelley's Qualified Apocalypse in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Studia Neophilologica: A Journal of Germanic and Romance Languages and Literature*, no. 88, 2016, pp.4-18.

Argues the apocalyptic imaginings in "The Triumph of Life" is based on the Enlightenment. Especially, Williams focuses on the most obscure "face" of the Life as well as the falling masks of decaying crowd, and disfigured face of Rousseau. Those uncertain, transfigured faces suggest that apocalypse means uncovering, so that Shelley shows, Williams concludes,

apocalyptic threat and an impulse toward redemption hang in the balance.

—2017—

108. Lamperez, Joseph Defalco. "Strong hold and fountain-head of their idolatry': The Juggernaut in the Work of Claudius Buchanan and Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *Studies in Romanticism*, vol. 54, no. 4, Winter 2017, pp.423-52.

Insists that through Hazlitt, Shelley borrows wholesale from Buchanan's depictions of the Juggernaut, the festival of an Indian god, who is believed that people are able to go to heaven when crushed by his car. Buchanan, an East India Company provost and chaplain, is accepted as the forerunner who introduced Indian culture to British Literature. Lamperez argues that Shelley's borrowing images from Indian god means idolatry, and the depiction of Life in the poem removing the face of god signifies iconoclasm. And he gives an detailed explanation about the similarities of the descriptions of the frenzied crowds surrounding the car and the procession in the works of both writers.

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109. Eyers, Tom. "Shelley, De Man, and Historical Time." *Symploke*, vol. 26, no. 1-2, 2018, pp. 477-81.

Arguing against Paul de Man's "quasi-dialectic of historical vision" in his "Shelley Disfigured," Evers claims his new view of historicism. The author focuses on Rousseau's eyes which were at first mistaken as hollows of an old root. This signifies the blindness of Rousseau who gives history a name by explaining the scenes in front of the narrator and Rousseau. As the blindness is concealed by a firmly narrativized procession of events, Rousseau's attempt fails to resolve both an epistemological and ontological dilemma. "The Triumph of Life" should be interpreted, not with revised history over another as de Man reads, but with Romantic view which manifests numerous obscure figures, and tropes of history's irresolvable, stubbornly non-dialectical, and so fecund, doubleness.

—2019—

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Reproduction Information

Each chapter of this dissertation is consist of the combination of the original paragraphs and the revised essays first issued in the journals and books below. Most of them are translated from Japanese to English.

- Part I Ch. 1. "Shelley's 'Necessity' in *Queen Mab* and *Alastor ; or The Spirit of Solitude*." *Silphe*, no. 35, 1996, pp.76-85.
- Ch. 2. "Carnophobia—Shelley's Attitude towards Foods." *Silphe*, no. 50, 2011, pp.31-42; "Shelley and Diet—A Question to 'An Ardent Vegetarian Shelley—.'" *Rakuno Gakuen Daigaku Kiyou [Bulletin of Rakuno Gakuen University], Humanity and Sociology ed.*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2011, pp. 21-27.
- Ch. 3. "Shelley's Medusa: The Beauty of Terror." *Silphe* no. 46, 2007, pp.11-19; "Shelley and Paintings." *Silphe* no. 47, 2008, pp. 13-22; "Two Medusas: from an Ekphratic Point of View." *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Kiyou [Bulletin of Musashino Art University]*, no. 38, 2008, pp. 77-83.
- Ch. 4. "Shelley's Recognition of Christianity." *Silphe* no. 40, 2001, pp. 45-49; "Shelley's *On Christianity*." *Hisyosuru Yumeto Genjitsu [Flight of Vision and Reality]*, edited by Japan Shelley Studies Center, Eihosha, 2007, pp. 105-16.
- Ch. 5. "A Persona As a Catalyst for Sublimation: the Process of Shelley's Self-Idealization in His Middle Period Poems." *Musashino Bijutsu Daigaku Kiyou [Bulletin of Musashino Art University]*, no. 29, 1999, pp. 105-10; "On the Maniac in 'Julian and Maddalo.'" *Silphe* no. 38, 1999, pp. 23-32; "The Use of Lucretia in *The Cenci*." *Silphe*, no. 39, 2000, pp. 11-22.
- Part II: Ch. 1. "Creative Agony: A Critical History of P. B. Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*." *Eibungaku Kenkyu [Studies in English Literature, Regional Branches Combined Issue]*, no. 5, 2013, pp. 7-15. (English)
- Ch. 2. "Negative Sympathy toward the Multitude: P. B. Shelley's Epistemology in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Bungakuto Hyoron [Letters and Essays]*, vol. 3, no. 12, 2017, pp. 2-11.
- Ch. 3. "The Passing Visions in 'The Triumph of Life': Shelley's Historicism in the Napoleon Poems." *Bungakuto Senso [Literature and War]*, Eihosha, 2013; "Shelley's *Hellas* in Comparison with Byron's *Sardanapalus*: The Development of the Idea of Negative Idealistic Necessity." *Bungakuto Hyoron [Letters and Essays]*, vol. 3, no. 11, 2016.
- Ch. 4. "'Shape all light' as an Ideal Expression by Negation: P. B. Shelley's Negative Idealism in the Female Character in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Eibungaku Kenkyu [Studies in English Literature, Regional Branches Combined Issue]*, no. 11, 2019, pp. 29-35.
- Ch. 5. "Negative Ending: Limitation and Possibility of Language Expression in 'The Triumph of Life.'" *Syonan Eibungaku [Shonan English Literature]* no. 12, 2017, pp. 1-11.