Ontological Unity and Empirical Diversity in Shelley's Thought

With Reference to Ibn Arabi's Theory of Imagination

By

Fazel Abroon

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Under the Supervision of
Professor J. Drummond Bone
Professor D. Gareth Walters

Department of English Literature
Faculty of Arts

University of Glasgow

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Dedication

To my wife, a constant source of inspiration, whose unconditional love, indefatigable encouragement, and continuous support and appreciation saw me through the most difficult stages of this project.

Abstract

The key to Shelley's thought system lies in understanding that the thing and its opposite, the idea and its contrary, are brought together simultaneously. Shelley tries to resolve in one way or another the contradiction between transcendentalism and immanence, essentialism and socialism, and finally thought and object. He makes the unity of life his manifesto and yet does not deny the diversity of beings. The ontological clearly has a place within his system and nonetheless the phenomena are considered epistemological divisions, non-essential and insubstantial. He believes in the existence of a comprehensive sign system with no transcendent meaning and yet speaks of an absolute incomprehensibility of a transcendent being which defies words and signs. In short, beings for him are only relationships with no essence, and existence is still one essence in which none of these relations holds true.

In harnessing the contraries Shelley's thought cannot be categorised as reductionist, dialectical, or deconstructionist. The logic he follows denies neither of the two opposites nor does it link them dialectically through accepting a third element, but resolves the opposition through a shift of perspective. Existence is both transcendent and immanent, essential and relational, and comprehensible and ineffable. This dissertation attempts to show that from such a perspective the rhetorical or deconstructive coincides with the grammatical or the metaphysical. Although the opposition set by the deconstructionists between the rhetorical and the grammatical readings is assumed by Shelley to exist between the metaphorical and the literal, nevertheless he accepts them as two *epistemes*; the ontological remains existing but unreadable, and the text is only its expression.

Imagination, in its Shelleyan definition, is at the core and basis of this logic. It is the ground of the shift of perspective and in its two forms, the universal and the

individual, is the plane where the transcendent is the immanent and the spiritual is the material. For Shelley imagination works within the text and is circular in the sense that it conceives only the metaphorical which is self referential, and not the literal which is linear and marked by 'from', the sign, and 'to', the meaning. What this thesis attempts, however, is to show that imagination is not dialectical in the sense of bringing the opposites together, but that it makes the opposites one by shifting the perspective: the metaphoric is the literal which has lost its generative power, and the literal is a metaphor, albeit a dead one. The other important point is that all that imagination does is to shift the perspective between the literal and the metaphoric: all is done within the text and sign system. It does not 'link' the transcendent with the phenomenal in the sense of putting the ontological within a sign system. On the contrary it is anti-ontological in the sense of being the power which purges the phenomena from the traces of essence or presence.

The focus of the first chapter comprises an outline of the principal constituents of Romanticism in general as a mode of thought. The second is concerned with Shelley's Romantic world view which is understood to be based on the integrity of the opposites mentioned above and on the unity of sign and meaning reflected in self-referential metaphor. The world view presented is dynamic--metaphor does not cease from generating meaning; integrative--there is a unity between metaphor and its meaning in being self-referential; and interpretative--there is no one definite meaning for metaphor and it urges ongoing reinterpretation. In the third chapter, imagination is discussed in its Shelleyan context as the place where boundaries between opposites collapse and the fragmented world is reintegrated. It is the locus where symbols are created and things are emptied of their ontological existence and interpreted as metaphorical relationships. In the fourth chapter there is a discussion of the forces that disrupt the metaphoric or imaginative outlook, which Shelley believes man originally had, and which turn the symbols into literal facts and the metaphors into dead metaphors. And finally, in the fifth chapter Necessity, in its two forms, literal and

metaphoric, is discussed as a corollary to such an integrative and imaginative thought system. The reading which is given makes extensive use of the ideas of the great theosophist, Ibn Arabi, and especially of his theories on the 'Oneness of Being', the basis of his integrative system; Imagination, the locus of symbolic meaning and shift of perspective; and 'Continual Creation', or the generative power of sign making and sign interpretation. In order to show the effectiveness of this reading, parallels are drawn with the philosophies of Spinoza, Locke, Hume, and Kant, which were influential in the emergence of Romantic Philosophy.

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I

Romanticism: A Historical Representation of a Metaphoric World View

> So I said to (Yahya): "I didn't see you on my path: is there some other path there?"
> And he replied: "Each person has a path, that no one else but he travels."
> I said: "Then where are they, these (different) paths?"
> Then he answered: "They come to be through the travelling itself."
>
>   (*Futuhat* 3:349)

I. The Romantic World: Self-referential Symbol and Metaphoric Dialectic

Basic to the Romantic world view is the tendency towards non-dualistic thinking, an anxiety to obliterate the barriers existing or seeming to exist between the subject and the object, the mind and the world, and the natural and the supernatural.[1] This implicit tendency to unity is reflected through many Romantic conceptions, especially the idea of organicism and symbolic imagination. The organic structure of Romantic thought links the external and the internal without leaving a gap between the subjective and the objective. The link is established, however, not through intellect, nor the senses which are capable of comprehending only one side of the experience, but through imagination which is a mediatory world, a synthesis of two apparently opposing experiential entities. In the imaginal world the spiritual appears in sensual forms and the material is invested with a spirit alien to pure matter. These forms are symbols apprehended by imagination and are the immediate subject of its work. The interpretability of symbol and its many-sidedness, and its association with imagination establish it as the preffered mode of the Romantics, who define it in opposition to the one-sidedness and the inflexibility of the allegory. Romantic thought, indeed, to some extent could be defined as a new attempt to abandon the allegorical mode of thinking and to establish an epistemology based on symbolic imagination. Allegory is considered to be reminiscent of a divided world where there is, at best, a mutual correspondence between two entities, the abstract and the concrete, but neither is able to penetrate the other and, thus, remain totally separate. The Romantic view of the world could not be consistent with this dualistic nature of allegory and looked for the unifying symbol as another medium which might shape their experience of an organic and integrated world. Romanticism in consequence is partly characterised by the replacement of the mechanical world of allegory with the dynamic, living world of

symbol, and in this way, it celebrates the predominance of imagination along with intellect by giving priority to symbol over allegory.

Symbol as such, for the Romantics, is not a means but an end. It is not the transparent pre-Romantic figure which at best denotes a reality above itself, but itself is the transfigured reality. It is not Baudelaire's symbols of the 'Correspondences', natural objects rarefied to denote their higher correspondences, nor are they the transparent forms of Swedenborg's correspondences (see *Heaven and Hell* 38), but a generating source of power where truth is in making and is continually transformed. The meaning of symbol is dis-covered or re-covered not by referring it to a subtler higher reality, but by looking at it from constantly changing points of view. In short, it has to be transfigured and not translated. In this sense symbol has no external referent, and to use Coleridge's phrase it is ταυτηγορικον ('tautegorical'): it expresses and refers only to itself (see *Lay Sermons* 30).

The unity which marks the Romantic world view is the consequence of the act of the unifying power of the symbol: 'the very powers which in men reflect and contemplate, are in their essence the same as those powers which in nature produce the objects contemplated' (*Philosophical Lectures* 114) The One and the many are interrelated by the symbolic power which presents the invisible and the visible not as two entities but rather two functions of the same being. For Coleridge, God, the whole Reality, is 'the Great/ Invisible (by symbols only seen)' ('Religious Musings' 9-10).[2] He is seen by symbols not in the sense that they are signs denoting His higher reality, the common theological perception, nor in the sense of being a place of revelation of his power or wisdom, a basic conception of the Newtonian and the mechanical eighteenth century philosophy, but they are God in disguise. Symbols, in other words, are God's self-witnessing or self-mirroring. Symbol is also the unifying element that links man to nature; the same power which exists in nature, exists in man, too:

> The power, which all
> Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
> To bodily senses exhibits, is the express
> Resemblance of that glorious faculty
> That higher minds bear with them as their own.
>
> (*Prel.* xiv.86-90)[3]

Symbol, then, in this world view, is not a metaphorical or an expressive device, but an constitutive entity. To use Coleridge's words, it 'partakes of the Reality which it renders intelligible' (*Lay Sermons* 30). In overcoming the discrepancy between the material and the spiritual and the One and the many, symbol, as Thomas McFarland observes, 'from its inception has been a unit of meaning (not a figure of language) with an integrative change directed towards the whole of reality' (*Romanticism and the Heritage of Rousseau* 283).

Symbol, therefore, acts as a medium of reconciliation between subject and object. The question, however, remains that in the process of reintegration through symbol where do the Romantics locate or look for this unifying element. In other words, where do they centre their epistemology, in Nature or the mind? Besides Coleridge who claims that '[d]uring the act of knowledge itself, the objective and subjective are so instantly united, that we cannot determine to which of the two the priority belongs' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 255), we can trace two different lines of thought which are more distinctly reflected in Wordsworth and Blake. Though both define the truth in terms of a dialectical fusion of the subject and the object, nonetheless, their views regarding the priority of the mind or Nature are totally different. Wordsworth believes that unity exists in Nature, and in the fusion of the subjective and the objective gives the priority to the latter. At least the Wordsworth of the 1805 *Prelude* thought that Nature in itself is a unity and it is only through our perception that it is differentiated and multiplied. Nature represents the primal qualities of things. Following Locke in his empirical dichotomy of the primary and secondary qualities he observes that things as they are reflect a unity and it is through the mind in the act of adding its secondary qualities

that they become differentiated. The self in this sense and in this regard distracts from the unity which exists in Nature and is looked at negatively. Wordsworth, thus, as Keith Thomas points out, 'has implicitly located something problematic about the self in its ability to obscure, transform, or block out altogether what is outside itself: nature's self' (*Wordsworth and Philosophy* 25). In order to minimise the fragmenting effect of the mind, the poet observes that the way out of the mechanical world into organic unity is possible only through 'natural piety', the return to and love of Nature, not as a means but an end in itself. Essential to the implementation of this world view is an observing heart that 'watches and receives' ('Tables Turned' 32). Passiveness, or the 'holy indolen[ce]', becomes Wordsworth's strategy to dispense with the interfering mind and become integrated to Nature. This is what makes Wordsworth appear as a 'worshipper of Nature' ('Tintern Abbey' 152)[4] and gives his thought system the distinctive touch of naturalism.

Blake, on the other hand, gives the priority to the mind and prefers meditation to observation. For him 'There is no such Thing as Natural Piety,' for 'nature is the work of the devil' and 'the natural man is at enmity with God' ('Marginalia: Wordsworth's Poems' 1511).[5] Imagination, he observes, is a 'Divine Vision not of the World' (ibid. 1513), and 'Natural Objects always did and now do weaken, deaden and obliterate Imagination' and that divine vision in man (ibid. 1511). He makes the mind the centre of his epistemology and thus, compared to Wordsworth's naturalism, falls into a radical idealism.

Naturalism and idealism, or empiricism and transcendentalism are extremes designating two starting points for approaching the same unity which is the basic objective of Romantic non-dualism. In other words they are epistemological differences depicting the same ontology. Taking these epistemologies as reflecting different world views will make the Romantics appear inconsistent and self-contradictory in their claims and attitudes. Giving the priority either to nature or the

mind, the Romantics' world remains one though approached differently. Empiricism and transcendentalism are only two antithetical approaches to this ontology representing, as Keith Thomas says, a 'binarism that in circular fashion reproduces and reinscribes itself' (*Wordsworth and Philosophy* 18). In the core of their systems, Wordsworth the naturalist and Blake the idealist reflect the same ideas and follow the same objectives, and this is what gives Romanticism its distinctive shape and unmistakable identity. At the same time, the unified world view and its various implementations are what could justify the Romantics' characteristic change of position and shift of attitude.

Unlike the apparent contradiction of giving priority now to mind and then to Nature, Romantic thought is consistent as the priority it gives to either of them is indeed given to a mind ruled over or Nature transformed and perceived by imagination. Imagination is defined in contradictory terms: it is the locus of opposites. It understands and perceives only symbols which, according to Coleridge, 'of necessity involve an apparent contradiction' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 156). If, therefore, the Romantics return to Nature it is the organic nature spiritualized by imagination. It is either nature plus 'self' or nature minus the effect of long familiarity with objects, and never Nature as an external object. As Hartman puts it, 'every incident involving Nature is propaedeutic and relates to that "dark Inscrutable workmanship"' ('A Poet's Progress' 218). Romantic nature worship, then, does not stand in opposition to the self, but, in fact, as Peckham argues, is a 'screen against which to project that sense of value which is also the sense of the self' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 47). On the other hand, when the Romantics speak of the priority of the mind it is a mind endowed with secondary imagination which is both creative and imitative. It is not a mind self-independent and untouched by human experience, but rather is evolving and in making, and is affected by Nature as much as Nature is affected by it. In whatever case, it is imagination that gives value and precedence to Nature or the mind.

Thus, Romantic thought displays itself not in total withdrawal to the inner self, the mind, nor by an obsession with Nature to the limit of denying the self, but through establishing a 'fine balance of truth in observing with the imaginative faculty' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 80). Imagination keeps the balance between observation and meditation, and makes 'the union of deep feeling with profound thought' (ibid.) possible. The Romantics' conception of Nature does not differ from that of the Classicists or the Realists, but is one purified from both the accumulations of time and habitude, and the rationalist's set of fixed boundaries. It does not add to nature but restores to it what to 'the common view, custom had bedimmed all the luster, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops' (ibid.). In this sense, the subject of the work of imagination is the unconditioned, things in themselves and unaffected by intellect. The conditions, however, are not only the categories of Kant, or the secondary qualities of Locke, but everyday reality which obliterates a true vision of things. Symbol in this light could be thought of as not an abstract but the very unconditioned object. Imagination through symbols can find its way through appearances to realities, from phenomena to noumena (in Kant's terminology).

In an epistemology which is based on the fusion of the mind and Nature 'self-consciousness' coexists and even leads to 'nature-consciousness'. Self acts as a means to other-consciousness, not as separate but as a continuation. It becomes the centre and circumference, the infinite and the finite simultaneously. Thus, in such an epistemology, 'self' is the centre of reality. There is a certain dependency of the external world on the mind; it exists only because it is perceived. But the dependency is not limited to this: the self is not only the centre for the circumference of beings, but 'since the world must be translated into the realities of the mind, the self is the circle and contains all reality' (*Subtler Language* 203).

The dichotomy of self and Nature is resolved thus in the Romantic concept of the self as an idea which includes its object. This might seem a fall into idealism, the 'self' as a

means of excluding or negating Nature. However, despite their emphasis on the internal and the inner side of the experience, (to the extent of risking the objective realities in pursuit of 'The passion and the life, whose fountains are within' ('Dejection: An Ode' 46), the Romantics in another step not only shun idealism but also overcome the opposition of self-consciousness and nature-consciousness through losing the self in the absolute self, the I AM. The Romantic self-consciousness becomes All-consciousness, God-consciousness where the self 'Oblivious of its own,/ Yet all of all possessing!':

> Till by exclusive consciousness of God
> All self-annihilated it shall make
> God its Identity....
> ('Religious Musings' 42-44)

The self becomes integrated in the one Self 'that no alien knows!/ Self, far diffused' (ibid. 154-55) throughout the whole of existence. This strategy, in Coleridge's words, proceeds 'from the SELF, in order to lose and find all self in GOD' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 283).

If the self becomes the centre of existence, it is not out of narcissism, not here at least, but on the contrary it is in the sense of self containing the other. In this light the other becomes the self or self in disguise. Knowing, learning, or whatever action one might take, remains in the circle of the self. Even love does not transcend the self. As Drummond Bone puts it 'the Romantic love affair with the medieval, or geographically with the exotic--in particular the Orient--can be seen not as a love affair with the Other, but as a love affair with the self masquerading as the Other' ('The Question of European Romanticism' 126), or as René Wellek says, 'the suppressed forces of the soul seek their analogies and models in prehistory, in the Orient, in the Middle Ages, and finally in India, as well as in the unconscious and in dreams' (*Concepts of Criticism* 166).

The Romantics, it should be emphasised, reject the conventional conception of the self as a means to division or negation. Self consciousness in this case will not lead to other-consciousness through internalisation or assimilation, but ends with dualism or idealism, in either negating the other and succumbing to a self-absorbing narcissism, or excluding it as alien to the self. The Romantics consider the self in this conventional meaning as the first flash of polarisation in the absolute darkness of unanimity and chaos. In this sense, according to Shelley, self is the 'serious folly' that stands opposite to poetry or imagination and its visible incarnation is Mammon. Self consciousness, as Geoffrey Hartman argues, becomes equal to guilt. 'Having tasted knowledge,' he says, 'man realizes his nakedness, his sheer separateness of self' (*Beyond Formalism* 301).

The major concern of the Romantics is how to replace this narcissistic or dualistic self-consciousness with a self-consciousness as an inevitable means to nature-consciousness. It is the question of the possibility of affecting reconciliation instead of reduction, and building an inclusive rather than exclusive self-consciousness. The internal conflict entailed by this question has influenced the Romantics' works and attitude. As Nicholas Riasanovsky writes:

> The contrast between the finite and the infinite, frantic striving yet inability to attain the goal, enormous reach and inadequate grasp dominated the romantic scene. The greatest poets and writers of Europe claimed in despair that they could not adequately express themselves, a problem that had never occurred, for instance, to Voltaire. Vast projects, as we know, remained unwritten or at least unfinished. Longing and ecstasy combined with a crushing sense of inadequacy and unworthiness. (*Emergence of Romanticism* 82)

The Romantic radical ideology does not stop at giving new understanding of the self and Nature but gives a new interpretation of the I AM or God. God in Romantic thought is displaced from His conventional position on the outside to the inside. He is moved, in other words, from the periphery to the centre. Instead of being a higher

external Reality, He becomes an internal entity, the hidden identity of man, the Self. Therefore, man's consciousness of himself turns out to be God's self-consciousness. Man's search for the Absolute then finds the form of self inspection and probing within one's self; in Shelley's words a search not above but deep down where the artificial, functional divisions are removed and the oneness of self and non-self is manifested: 'Where there is one pervading, one alone,/ Down, down!' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iii.79-80).[6]

In consequence of the internalisation of God and the fusion of Nature and the mind, there emerges the Romantic picture of the one world, live and organic: 'the one life within us and abroad' ('Eolian Harp' 26). In nature, as Coleridge writes in a letter to Sotheby on 10 September 1802, 'every Thing has a Life of it's own, & that we are all *one Life*' (*Selected Letters* 114). Riasanovsky believes that it was this 'symbiosis of one life embraced by Coleridge and by Wordsworth that led to the emergence of English romanticism' (*Emergence of Romanticism* 72). McFarland, also, believes that the theory of 'organic unity' is one of the basic theories of Romantic thought (*Coleridge and the Pantheistic Tradition* 257). The theory of One Life is behind *The Pedlar*, 'Tintern Abbey', as it is at the centre of many fragments of Wordsworth's poetry. For Wordsworth, the manifolds of life are accidental and unsubstantiated. They comprise only different forms of consciousness of one motion or spirit that impels 'All thinking things, all objects of all thought,/ And rolls through all things' (Tintern Abbey' 101-102). Such consciousness, Wordsworth believes, is

> ... but accidents,
> Relapses from the one interior life
> That lives in all things, sacred from the touch
> Of that false secondary power by which
> In weakness we create distinctions, then
> Believe that all our puny boundaries are things
> Which we perceive, and not which we have made;
> --In which all beings live with God, themselves
> Are god, Existing in the mighty whole,
> As indistinguishable as the cloudless East
> At noon is from the cloudless west, when all
> The hemisphere is one cerulean blue.[7]

Coleridge, at least in his earlier poems preceding 1802, speaks of life as a circle with no circumference and a centre every where. In 'Religious Musings', first published in 1796, he emphasises that our highest objective as human beings is 'to know ourselves/ Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!' (127-28). In 'The Eolian Harp', which Coleridge wrote in 1795 (but published in 1796), he puts forward the rhetorical question:

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the Soul of each, and God of all?
> (44-48)

The instrument of this perception is imagination, both as the individual faculty which stems from the material and participates in the divine, and as the Absolute that resolves and reconciles the opposites within itself; 'the idea,' as Schelling puts it, 'wherein all opposites are not just united, but are simply identical, wherein all opposites are not just cancelled, but are entirely undivided from one another' (*Bruno* 136). It is the Absolute truth, according to Coleridge, which is 'neither subject nor object exclusively, but which is the identity of both' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 271). It is also imagination as a synthesiser and a power that can see beyond differences into identity: the process, as Hartman observes, of 'recovering deeply buried experience' by which 'the poet seeks a return to "Unity of Being"' (*Beyond Formalism* 303). Imagination, Coleridge also believes, 'modifies images and gives unity to variety; it sees all things in one' (*Table Talk* 1: 490). This is also what Wordsworth might have meant by saying that the greatest pleasure which the mind can derive comes from 'the perception of similitude in dissimilitude', the kind of perception which acts as 'the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder' (*Prose Works* 1: 149). Shelley, likewise, thought of imagination as the faculty that respects the similitude between things in contrast to Intellect which reflects on the differences ('Defence of

Poetry' 480).[8] In all these instances, imagination acts in certain moments, call them 'spots of time,' 'linguistic moments', or whatever, in withholding the mind from observing divisions and differences, to see all as inclusive metaphors. In a moment of blockage, Neil Hertz says, 'as the possibility of interpreting differences diminishes, the possibility of distinguishing presentation from representation does too, and with it, the possibility of drawing a clear demarcation' (*End of the Line* 58). It has to be recalled that there is still no negation of objectivity, for, as Hertz says 'it is not that differences disappear, but that the possibility of interpreting them as significant differences vanishes' (ibid. 59).

Imagination in Romantic philosophy is the criterion that distinguishes between the organic, dynamic, and nondualistic, and the mechanistic, static, and dualistic. It is at the core of Coleridge's important distinction between Reason and Understanding. He makes understanding philosophy subsequent to understanding this distinction, believing that '[u]ntil you have mastered the essential difference in kind of the Reason and the Understanding, you cannot escape a thousand difficulties in philosophy' (*Table Talk* 1: 129). In general, Understanding is mechanical and related to the particular, but Reason is creative and related to the Whole. The acts of Understanding, he says, 'are posterior to things,' which it only 'records and arranges' (*Lay Sermons* 18-19). It offers, in short, a mechanical perception of things. It 'concerns itself exclusively with the quantities, qualities, and relations of *particulars* in time and space' (ibid. 59). Reason, on the other hand, is 'the knowledge of the laws of the WHOLE considered as ONE' (ibid. 59). Now, imagination works in 'incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense' (ibid. 29). Through reorganising temporal sense perceptions in atemporal reason, imagination 'gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the conductors' (ibid.). Understanding, to sum up, could be conceived as the 'science of phenomena, and their subsumption under distinct kinds and sorts, (*genus* and *species*)' (ibid. 59), or, things set in definite shapes and forms. Reason, on the other hand, is the knowledge of the

noumena, or things undistinguished by 'kinds and sorts', things in perpetual transformation or, in short, symbols. It is the 'science of the *universal*, having the ideas of ONENESS and ALLNESS as its two elements or primary factors' (ibid. 59- 60).

Based on the distinction between understanding and reason, Coleridge makes another distinction, that is, between Conceptions and Ideas. Conceptions are the work of Understanding. They reflect man's perception of facts and realities which can call for no reverence or sense of sublimity. Ideas, however, (recognisable by Reason), awaken the sense of mystery, reverence and sublimity in man. For Coleridge only Reason 'has a sense by which Ideas can be recognized, and from the fontal light of Ideas only can a man draw Intellectual Power' (*Table Talk* 1: 384). The difference between Conceptions and Ideas, in turn, is at the root of the Aristotelian and the Platonist thought systems. One favours, to rephrase M. H. Abrams, mimesis, a theory of mind which is held to be passive and receptive, admitting the superiority of the Intellect, the other believes in expressiveness and an active and imaginative mind. Coleridge says:

> Aristotle was and is still the sovereign lord of the Understanding--the Faculty judging by the Senses. He was a Conceptualist, but never could raise himself into that higher state, which was *natural* to Plato and is so to others, in which the Understanding is distinctly *contemplated* and looked down upon from the Throne of Actual Ideas or Living, Inborn, Essential Truths. (ibid. 1: 173)

This, in fact, brings us to another distinction which Coleridge makes between subtlety and talent, and differences and divisions. Coleridge says there is a difference between subtlety which is a part of imagination and talent which is a part of Intellect. While talent works on divisions, subtlety concerns itself with finding the differences. Now the difference between the two is the difference between functions and entities. Division is precipitated and anticipated by incongruent, independent entities; such a world view as that underlying the mechanistic, dualistic philosophy. Differences, on the other hand, are mere distinctions within one entity. In other words, differences are not ontological, but only functional distinctions. While differences as ontological

entities are unacceptable to the Romantics, differences as functional distinctions are a part of their philosophy. Coleridge says: 'To split a hair is no proof of subtlety for subtlety acts in distinguishing differences--in showing that two things apparently one are in fact two; whereas to split a hair is to cause Division and not to perceive Difference' (*Table Talk* 1: 251).

In the light of these definitions and distinctions, and according to the Romantic theory of knowledge, Intellect which is analytical in its perception cannot comprehend the unity of the Absolute. It can be comprehended only through imagination which works on syntheses and the coincidence of oppositions, and this brings us to another distinction which Coleridge makes between talent and genius. If talent is responsible for understanding the objects in their separation or as they appear to the senses, the phenomena, to 'find no contradiction in the union of old and new; to contemplate the ANCIENT of days and all his works with feelings as fresh, as if all had then sprang forth at the first creative fiat' is the work of genius (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 80),[9] which, put in other way, is imagination.

The 'cosmic unity' or 'organic unity' is the basis for the Romantic philosophical structure. The idea underlying this conception of unity is the identity of 'intelligence and being' or 'thought with the thing' and 'the representation with the object represented' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 254) which Coleridge says are 'reciprocally each other's Substrate' (ibid. 1: 143). The Romantics' interest in the ideas of organicism and identity, moreover, was a reaction to Hume's and Lock's materialism and Descartes' rationalism which argued for the 'absolute and essential heterogeneity of the soul as intelligence, and the body as matter' (ibid. 1: 129). Descartes, according to Coleridge, 'was the first man who made nature utterly lifeless and godless, considered it as the subject of merely mechanical laws' (*Philosophical Lectures* 376-7). In an organic world, Coleridge argues, the whole is 'every thing, and the parts [are] nothing', while in an inorganic view of the world the '*Whole* is nothing more than a collection of the

individual phænomena' (*Table Talk* 1: 258). Coleridge, of course, does not deny the existence of the individual, but in an organic world view individuals are parts of an organic body and exist insofar as they are related to the whole. Such a world presupposes unity, growth, and dynamism in contradistinction to the fragmentation and stasis of the inorganicism of materialism and rationalism.

The relation between the whole and the parts in a Romantic world view is dynamic and interdependent. The concept of 'self-witnessing' is an eloquent Romantic metaphor which displays the dialectic interrelationship between the One and its parts. Coleridge explains the idea through the distinction which he makes between 'shape' and 'form'. Though the distinction is originally made in a literary context, it is no less applicable to another distinction on the wider scope of two world views. Taking 'shape' and 'form' as designating the mechanical and organic worlds respectively, Coleridge argues that 'there is a difference between form as proceeding, and shape as superinduced;--the latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the thing;--the former is its self-witnessing and self-effected sphere of agency' (*Literary Remains* 1: 229). In other words, the many are the One in the act of knowing or self-witnessing itself. Lewis's definition of symbol as a 'mode of thought', and Coleridge's functional definition of symbol as partaking 'of the Reality which it renders *intelligible*' (*Lay Sermons* 30; my italics), I think, find their true meaning in this context. Symbols are the One in a cognitive act of self-knowing. Symbol is the revelation of the Universal in the particular; the 'translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal' (ibid.). Symbols are the many, the objects, which express the One and simultaneously take part in it, and the One is the eternal and infinite I AM, where 'the ground of existence, and the ground of knowledge of existence, are absolutely identical' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 275).

The idea of Nature as the One seen from another perspective is based on seeing the many not as the orthodox divine creation but divine emanation or self-mirroring,

which had its precedence in history of ideas. Sometimes it is presented in Scotus Eriugena's well known thesis of 'God creating Himself in the world', and at other in Peckham's definition of Romantic dynamic organicism as the 'idea that the history of the universe is the history of God creating himself' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 11). Spinoza explicates in more detail the idea in the framework of his pantheistic system by distinguishing between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. The former is God as the productive principle of Existence, the latter is God the produced, or the created things in Nature. Both the productive and the produced are two facets of one being. In the Scholium to Proposition 29 of the first chapter he says:

> by 'Natura naturans' we must understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, the attributes of substance that express eternal and infinite essence; or ... God in so far as he is considered a free cause. By 'Natura naturata' I understand all that follows from the necessity of God's nature, that is, from the necessity of each one of God's attributes; or all the modes of God's attributes in so far as they are considered as things which are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God. (*Ethics* 52)

The One and the many, then, is the dialectic of the Self and its self-consciousness. The Self is the identity of subject and object, but its self-consciousness necessitates the division so that the Self in order to become conscious of its existence the idea is separated from its object. Therefore, the distinction between the subject and object is one of consciousness; in other terms, it is epistemological and not ontological, and in Coleridges's words, the 'self-consciousness is not a kind of *being*, but a kind of *knowing*' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 285). On the identity of oppositions within the One, Coleridge says:

> In this, and in this alone, object and subject, being and knowing, are identical, each involving and supposing the other. In other words, it is a subject which becomes a subject by the act of constructing itself objectively to itself; but which never is an object except for itself, and only so far as by the very same act it becomes a subject. It may be described therefore as a perpetual self-duplication of one and the same power into object and subject, which presuppose each other, and can exist only as antitheses. (ibid. 1: 273)

To sum up, the Romantic world is defined by symbols rather than allegory. The relation between the One and the many is one of self-seeing and self-recognition. Therefore, it is not causative but identitive in the sense of being a 'self-consciousness in which the principium essendi does not stand to the principium cognoscendi in the relation of cause and effect, but both the one and the other are co-inherent and identical' (ibid. 1: 285).

II. Things as they are: The Romantic Noumenal Perception

Kant divides the function of reason into two levels: the *logical* which deals with processing, synthesising and generalising data of the senses and turning them into knowledge of the world of the senses, and the *real* which steps beyond the senses and gives a knowledge of things as they are. However, under the influence of Hume, he later discards this possibility of knowing things as they are in his theory on phenomena, noumena, and the categories.

According to Kant, knowledge derives its context *a posteriori* from experience. This, however, is only one side of the process. The mind is invested with certain structures and rules *a priori*, to which any experience in order to be perceptible must conform. This, in fact, was Kant's revolution in philosophy. Contrary to the rationalists and the empiricists who believed that the mind conforms to the outside world, Kant thought it is the external world which must conform to the mind. Accordingly things or what we perceive are only appearances which he calls the phenomena, not the things as they are or the noumena. Although this distinction, as White Beck observes, is 'not an ontological dualism' (*Kant: Selections* 20), the dualism between the mind and the world, the subject and object, still exists, and what is more there is no prospect for any real knowledge.

One can conclude from reading Kant that in order to see things as they are, one has to win freedom from the categories, the *a priori* rules that condition man's perception. In other words one has to see things while unaffected by the light of causal, spatio-temporal conditions. However, this is impossible for the mind, since its only way of perception is through these conditions. The highest conclusion which the mind can reach is to admit the existence of things as different in themselves from what we perceive.

The Romantics, however, base their thought on the claim of knowing things as they are, and on the possibility of stepping outside the realm of sense or intellectual perception and having a direct experience of objects in themselves. The conditioning power, whether it is Locke's 'secondary qualities' or Kant's categories, is abandoned by the Romantics for a direct influx of Nature in its 'primary qualities' and 'adequate ideas'. The conditioned things, for them, represent a world of multiplicity and fragmentation, whereas Nature as it is, is a unity. Coleridge, according to Wordsworth, felt the unity of Life by going beyond the human conditioning power,

> ... that false secondary power
> By which we multiply distinctions, then
> Deem that our puny boundaries are things
> That we perceive, and not that we have made.
> To thee, unblinded by these formal arts,
> The unity of all hath been revealed....
> (*Prel.* ii.216-21)

The apocalyptic, such an essential constituent of Romantic thought, is, as Hartman notes, any strong desire to 'achieve an unmediated contact with the principle of things' (*Wordsworth's Poetry* x).[10] Peckham claims that Romantic nature worship was a way to refrain from any role-playing, and, consequently, to see through the 'phenomenon of nature into the divine noumenon' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 48). He further adds that the Romantics understood the necessity of releasing the 'noumenal self from the bondage of the phenomenal self, the personality and the world of social roles' (ibid.).

Michael Fischer claims, likewise, that '[k]nowledge of things-in-themselves is precisely the knowledge that the Romantics are most interested in' ('Accepting the Romantics as Philosophers' 180). Mary Anne Perkins also writes: 'Coleridge greatly admired Kant's development of the noumenal/ phenomenal distinction, and took it further; but he rejected the total unknowability of Kant's noumenon, declaring that it may be understood objectively or subjectively' (*Coleridge's Philosophy* 84). Coleridge differentiates between seeing and perceiving, believing that man through the latter can gain a clearer vision of understanding things as they are

> ... yea, gazing round
> On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
> Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
> As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
> Spirits perceive his presence.
> ('This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison' 39-43)

The difference between mechanical Understanding and organic Reason, likewise for Wordsworth, is 'the mighty difference between seeing & perceiving', the latter being concerned with knowing the noumena (*Prose Works* 2: 358). Blake's claim is that, 'If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite' (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 44). Wordsworth, hints at the same possibility in speaking of certain moments of his mystical experience. In 'Tintern Abbey', for example, he writes:

> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
> (47-49)

The life of things, animism, indeed, becomes the strategy followed by the Romantics to see things--the phenomena--in a rather different way--the noumena, and a way of rejecting Kant's scepticism as to the knowability of things as they are. 'Coleridge's dynamic philosophy,' Leask observes, 'postulated an *anima mundi* permeating both mind and matter, a theory shared by the other members of his circle,' (*Politics of*

Imagination 11), and Wordsworth in particular whose world, as Fischer indicates, is 'not simply intelligible ... but alive' ('Accepting the Romantics as Philosophers' 181), or, even, it is intelligible because it is alive. Thus, if the noumena are imperceptible through understanding and science, they can be known through 'seeing into the life of things' (ibid. 182).

In Wordsworth's poems, things are frequently seen while they are unconditioned, at least, by spatiality. Several are the incidents which Wordsworth narrates in which, as de Man argues, the 'fundamental spatial perspective is reversed; instead of being centered on the earth, we are suddenly related to a sky that has its own movements, alien to those of earth and its creatures' (*Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism* 79). The experience, albeit, becomes ineffable, and is marked by an 'absolute dizziness which disjoins the familiar perspective of the spatial relationship between heaven and earth' (ibid.). Although Wordsworth later changes this position and in his supplementary Essay to the Preface in 1815 clearly states that the 'appropriate business of poetry ... is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses*, and to the *passions*' (*Prose Works* 3: 63), nonetheless this certainly was not his attitude when in 'Peter Bell' in 1798 he wrote: 'Let good men feel the soul of nature,/ And see things as they are' (764-65).

Reality for Shelley, much like Kant, is an unknown quantity. It is veiled by thought and life itself. In *The Triumph of Life* he calls it 'the realm without a name', and in the 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' it is 'some unseen Power'. In 'Mont Blanc' the top of the mountain which stands for the ultimate reality remains also unknown and obscure. Perhaps the tragic fall of many of Shelley's characters lies in their illusion and vain pursuit to find this incomprehensible, unseen Reality. In their futile search they try to experience what inevitably lies outside the domain of experience, and thus seek the impossible of finding the Absolute in the limited. In his comment on *The Triumph of*

Life, D. H. Reiman notes that Rousseau was lost 'because he insisted on seeking in the real world the embodiment of what must, ultimately, remain eternal ... he tried to absolutize the relative' (*Triumph of Life* 49). The same holds true of the *Alastor* Poet who tries to find absolute Beauty in the actual world.

However, the unseen Power does not remain unknown and unfamiliar. In the 'Hymn' the Shadow of the unknown Power descends to us, and so does the same Power in 'Mont Blanc', in whose likeness the river Arve descends to be the life and blood of existence itself. And although the way to the knowledge of things as they are is extremely difficult, there are always 'the sacred few' who succeed in returning to 'their native noon' which, according to Lloyd Abbey, is the 'transcendent reality' (*Destroyer and Preserver* 122). (The transcendent in Abbey's description, however, at least insofar as Shelley is concerned, has to be taken as simply referring to things as they are, and not to the ontological being which remains ever unknown). Despite the transcendentalist and the sceptic, then, the Romantics believe in the possibility of knowing the noumena.

The means to this new perception are symbols which in themselves are things perceived not through the spatio-temporal frame of mind but through imagination. This gives symbol, according to Coleridge, an ontological status of an intermediary nature. In turn, this conception makes the basis of the Romantic theory of metaphor which is one of the most important features which distinguishes Romantic thought from the classical theories of literal understanding. 'It is among the miseries of the present age,' Coleridge says, 'that it recognizes no medium between *Literal* and *Metaphorical*' (*Lay Sermons* 30). The literal acts only as a sign to the signified which exists somewhere outside the signifier. Therefore, of the two, only the signified enjoys a real ontological status. Things considered in this mode become merely empty, insubstantial signs for a reality higher and outside themselves, a mode of thinking which inevitably leads to dualism or transcendentalism. Metaphor, on the other hand,

does not lead to anything outside of itself, and has to be considered in itself, and therefore does have its own 'ontological' existence. Imagination as the plane of metaphors by placing the signifier and the signified side by side and, thus, giving 'ontological' existence to things, works on giving a noumenal and not a phenomenal understanding of the world.

Some readings given of Romantic poetry are based on dualism while Romanticism is based on an organic and pantheistic interpretation of existence. That is what makes the Romantics often appear inconsistent or self-contradictory. The logic behind such readings is usually based on binary opposition and the principle of non-contradiction, while Romantic logic is one which could combine the opposites. James Boulger, commenting on Coleridge's poems before 1802, asserts that they display the 'collapse of the dichotomous scholastic logic which influenced earlier English poets' (*Coleridge as Religious Thinker* 197). Comparing the two philosophical systems, the Classical and the Romantic, insofar as the principle of non-contradiction is concerned, Peckham argues that in the 'older philosophy grounded itself on the principle that nothing can come from nothing. The newer philosophy grounded itself on the principle that something *can* come from nothing, that an excess can come from a deficiency, that nothing succeeds like excess' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 11). He further adds that the 'logic of Romanticism is that contradiction must be included in a single orientation' (ibid. 35). Peckham emphasises that the Romantic had always looked for a 'way of encompassing, without loss of tension, the contrarieties and paradoxes of human experience' (ibid. 56-57). Hartman's principal theory on Romantic logic is that it takes the form of a 'surmise': "whether ... or" formations, alternatives rather than exclusions,' in which the 'actual is someway the potential' (*Wordsworth's Poetry* 8).

The Romantics' main concern was to establish a relationship between the world and the mind in the scope of this world view and based on such logic. Perhaps 'Mont Blanc' is one of the most illustrative examples in this regard. In 'Mont Blanc', two

rivers mix together, one representing the 'overflowing universe of things', the other the human mind's contribution in the process of perception. Whether we take the 'feeble brook' as representing the mind or the universe of things, it makes little difference as to what Shelley intends to say, that in this way of perception the things perceived are neither creations of the mind nor the objects *per se*, but quite of another category. It is, in other words, not a statement of fact nor a debate over subject/ object priority but a critique of perception rooted in dualism. Shelley is also critical of other philosophies such as idealism, compromising transcendentalism or total scepticism. Nor is he trying to be reductive, reducing the two elements into one, and thus falling into either solipsism or materialism. Nor could Kant's dialectical synthesis be wholly to his taste. Kant in reaction to the empiricists' claim that knowledge is produced by experience, from sensations received from the world of objects, proposed a kind of unity suggesting that knowledge is the product of both experience and reason. He had observed in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that 'though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises from experience. For it may be well that even our empirical knowledge is made up of what we receive through the impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from' (41-42). Although this partial unity of experience and reason in Kant to a certain extent reflects Shelley's understanding of representation, it is also this dialectical synthesis with which Shelley is discontented. Underlying such synthesis is the dualism of mind and Nature which is contrary to his belief in one Life and unity.

Shelley, then, does not intend to say which of the two rivers or the two sides of perception has the priority, but to express his dissatisfaction with the common theory of perception, or the dialectic of mind, object, and representation. The paradox, as Beck comments, is that 'without sensation we would know nothing. But given sensations, we know *more* than sensation alone teaches, for our mind operates on the data of the senses to produce the experience of organised and systematized knowledge

of objects' (ibid. 89). Therefore, Hartman's reading of 'Mont Blanc' as 'a spirit-drama in which the poet's mind seeks to release itself from an overwhelming impression and to reaffirm its autonomy vis-à-vis nature' (*Beyond Formalism* 308) could only be one side of the truth, the other side being the story of the mind's struggle against its modifying power over the universe. Likewise, Kathleen Wheeler's argument that the 'senses do not receive passively an already constituted, independent material,' and that 'the senses themselves are imbued with reason, actively producing "material" which is itself saturated with connections and relations' (*Romanticism, Pragmatism, and Deconstruction* 7) has to be considered tentatively, at least insofar as Shelley is concerned. First of all, underlying such a hypothesis is the dichotomic division of mind and objects. Second, although such an argument is true of Coleridge and of Wordsworth who believe that 'There is creation in the eye,/ Nor less in all the other senses' ('Fragments from the "Christabel"'), it has, however, to be reconsidered with Shelley who believes that the mind cannot create. Shelley, I think, accepts neither the world of the 'universe of things' nor the world of 'the mind,' in their division, nor their modification, a dialectical synthesis of the two worlds. What is wrong with this epistemology is that it is not compatible with his theory of metaphor and his ontologically considered one life and one world. So, he has to look for another theory of knowledge which could explain this specific world view, his oneness of Life, a theory which, as Robert Essick puts it, 'would seem to lead beyond mimetic or expressive theories of natural signification to an ideal sign in which the signifier and signified are not joined like a cause to its effect, or an imitation to the original, but like man and God in Jesus' (*Blake and the Language of Adam* 90).

By leaving aside both empiricism and transcendentalism, Shelley's immediate resort would be scepticism. By the collapse of both sources of knowledge which are at his disposal, the appeal of a sceptical view that there is no sure means to certainty becomes overwhelming. This solution, though sometimes the subject of his reluctant approval, can never be permanently satisfying or convincing to him. Whereas

scepticism leads to passiveness and philosophical resignation, Shelley's reality is embedded in action and movement. On the other hand, although scepticism 'destroys error and the roots of error,' it leaves a 'vacancy' or comes to a 'negative truth'.

Shelley finds his way out of scepticism through imagination. In his 'Defence of Poetry' he says, 'while the sceptic destroys gross superstitions, let him spare to deface ... the eternal truths charactered upon the imaginations of men' (501). Imagination provides him with a new theory of knowledge compatible with his perception of the one and undivided world. It works in filling the gap between the world and the mind by making them different not in kind but degree. The two rivers of objects and mind are in reality one continuity, both reflecting the same existence: they are one entity though qualified differently. Only by stressing attributes like 'rapid,' 'dark,' 'glittering,' 'gloom,' and 'feeble' can we distinguish them. The distinction, in other words, becomes necessary only, as Wasserman says, to 'give this unity linguistic form' (*Subtler Language* 208). Shelley leaves the world of mind and the world of objects for another world which he finds present in the fifth section of 'Mont Blanc'. There, as Michael Cooke argues, '[a]ll available or workable or bearable terms of mind and universe break down, so that neither subsists there though both are paradoxically invoked' (*Acts of Inclusion* 191). Mind and matter cease to exist, and still both are invoked by imagination, by the effect of which, to use Coleridge's words, 'substances were thinned away into shadows, while every where shadows were deepened into substances' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 301).

The Romantic epistemology, thus, works, first, by denying the ontological existence of the opposites. Such an epistemology, in fact, emerges as 'an impulse and a demand for a principle of comprehension' which characteristically takes the form of 'an act of inclusion' (*Acts of Inclusion* xv). Blake begins his system by announcing that 'first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged' (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 43). It obliterates the demarcation lines between things, or, in

Spinoza's conception, by reducing all substances to one infinite and eternal Substance, or, again, in Blake words, by 'melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid' (ibid.). A corollary is the integration of all beings in the one Substance as its modes and attributes. In this understanding, all things are images of the one reality, and as such each is infinite and includes all within itself. The infinity, eternity, and inclusiveness of the images is what constitutes the symbolic power of things.

The Romantic transformation is the second principle of this theory of knowledge. According to this principle, all images which are the affections and modes of reality have to be looked for in their infinite and indefinite forms. As Drummond Bone observes, 'the whole cult of an indefiniteness which bypasses the merely accurate senses to reveal the Unity beyond them ... [is] indubitably part of the heritage of Romantic poetry' ('Turner and Shelley' 217). In fact, this is what distinguishes the Romantic image which is inclusive and dim from the classical exclusive and clear image. The Romantic image is not ready for comparison or compartmentalisation, as it also evades clarity or showing all its dimensions simultaneously. The 'moment of individuation, or clarity of form,' Drummond Bone writes, 'has to be allowed to pass, so that the illusion of separate existence can give way to the reality of Oneness' (ibid. 216). Wordsworth believes that that image can produce in us the sense of the sublime which 'suspends the comparing power of the mind & possesses it with a feeling or image of intense unity, without a conscious contemplation of parts' (*Prose Works* 2: 353-54). Thus, besides, or because of its infinitude and mutability, the Romantic image is dim and evasive.

On the absence of this element of clarity and decisiveness in the Romantic image Riasanovsky writes: 'The entire romantic setting tends to fade out in "wise passiveness," moonlight, and reabsorption into the universe. Streams, water, liquidity served admirably this blurring of boundaries, for water could dissolve or overflow

everything' (*Emergence of Romanticism* 73). One reason for music being considered as the proper medium for conveying the Romantic sensibility could be its inherent freedom from elements of clarification and distinction. Riasanovsky observes that '[m]usic, [apparently] unrestricted by physical form, place, and (in a sense) time became the ideal art of German romanticism and other romanticisms' (ibid. 74).

The infinitude of the image and its process of continual transformation put the Romantic poet on his guard against objectifying the image. Images are not 'reflections [which] essentially give evidence of sources,' as they are defined by Duerksen (*Shelley's Poetry of Involvement* 43), but are sources, or we can say at least, partakers of the Source. Images have to be approached in their full symbolic power, and as such, their resources of meaning are endless. Any allegorical interpretation will be a 'misreading' insofar as it covers only one of the possible readings or interpretations. Burke writes:

> ... let it be considered that hardly any thing can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea. (*The Sublime and Beautiful* 63)

Clarity, Drummond Bone writes, is the 'hubris of perceived time in the face of unperceivable eternity' ('Turner and Shelley' 216). The Romantic hero is defeated in his search once he is captured by one clear and objectified image. The tragic death of the Poet in *Alastor* is precipitated by his objectification of Beauty in the image of the 'veiled maid'. Looking for the image in its transformation, of course, has not to be taken in the sense that it has no objective existence. The objective reality in Romanticism loses its distinctiveness and becomes itself and something else, never to be discovered in full. This is true not only of objects, but is evident even in the characters which Wordsworth pictures in incidents of imagination. In the characters like the discharged soldier (*Prel.* iv.387 ff.), the blind London beggar (ibid. vii.635

ff.), or the Leech-gatherer ('Resolution and Independence' 53 ff.), Wordsworth meets

not a certain character, but a 'Borderer dwelling between life and death'. He meets a

man 'not alive nor dead,/ Nor all asleep' (ibid. 64-65):

> ... his voice to me was like a stream
> Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
> And the whole body of the Man did seem
> Like one whom I had met with in a dream....
>   ('Resolution and Independence' 107-110)

C. E. Pulos argues that the hero's death in *Alastor* was caused by overlooking the fact

that beauty 'has no objective existence' and thus, '[i]nstead of looking for the likeness

of his vision in a human maiden ... [he] vainly seeks to apprehend its pattern in

ultimate reality' (*Deep Truth* 81; my italics). The critical point is that reality has no

ultimate form. It has to be looked for in its infinite manifestations, the Arab maid

being only one of them.

The sublime, from a Romantic point of view, could be defined then as an act of

liberating the image from the boundaries which make it clear, distinct, and fixed.

Symbol, in fact, has its power through an act of mystification and indeterminacy. The

Romantic image has to be far, imperceptible distinctly, and not spotted clearly.[11]

Burke, emphasising obscurity and uncertainty in the sublime, says: 'To make any

thing very terrible [and therefore sublime], obscurity seems, in general to be

necessary' (*The Sublime and Beautiful* 58). On Milton's picture of Death, as one of the

best examples of the sublime, he comments: 'In this description all is dark, uncertain,

confused, terrible, and sublime to the last degree' (ibid. 59).[12] For Coleridge, too,

imagination and poetry defy any sense of clarity and exactness. Obscurity seems to be

an essential ground for both of them:

> ... the grandest effects of where the imagination was called forth, not to produce a
> distinct form but a strong working of the mind still producing what it still repels &
> again calling forth what it again negatives and the result is what the Poet wishes to

impress, to substitute of a grand feeling of the unimaginable for the mere image....
(*Lectures 1808-19 on Literature* 1: 311)

For Coleridge this is one of the major differences between understanding and imagination. In his definition of understanding, besides what has been said before, he includes a defining act of fixing the meaning of images, while in imagination the meaning of the images is neither fixed nor determined. He says:

> ... there is an effort in the mind when it would describe what it cannot satisfy itself with the description of, to reconcile opposites and to leave a middle state of mind more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other when it is hovering between two images: as soon as it ~~becomes~~ is fixed <on one> it becomes understanding and when it is waving between then attaching itself to neither it is imagination. (ibid.)

Regarding imagination and its free action on images Coleridge gives the same example cited by Burke on the sublime: the image of Death in Milton's *Paradise Lost* - 'Of Shadow like but called Substance'. The images, however, are not shadows representing Platonic ideal forms which are not accessible to human perception; they rather represent themselves, though there is no one definite and ultimate representation. It is this sense of freedom that makes Romantic thought not dependent solely on outward sense influxes. The felt obscurity, therefore, as Hartman indicates, 'is inseparable from the soul's capacity of growth; it is obscurity that both feeds the soul and vexes it toward self-dependence' ('A Poet's Progress' 221).

The modern concept of blockage, I believe, refers to the same element of obscurity in the Romantic image. To the mind blocked in its act of apprehension, as Neil Hertz writes, the 'world is neither legible nor visible in the familiar way; faces, which had earlier been associated with signs, are there but they cannot be deciphered, while visible shapes have taken on a dreamlike lack of immediacy' (*End of the Line* 58). This is what de Man probably meant also by 'a knot' and 'unresolved riddles' which confront the inquirer faced with an unending series of questions given in answer to a question. He says:

> Whenever this self-receding scene occurs, the syntax and the imagery of the poem tie themselves into a knot which arrests the process of understanding. The resistance of these passages is such that the reader soon forgets the dramatic situation and is left with only these unresolved riddles to haunt him: the text becomes the successive and cumulative experience of these tangles of meaning and of figuration. (*Rhetoric of Romanticism* 98)

The working of imagination *via Naturaliter Negativa* or the Negative Way which Hartman proposes in his exposition of Wordsworth's poetry is tantamount to the same blockage of understanding. The core of the Negative Way is that it is 'the inscrutability of an external image, which lead[s] via the gloomy strait to its renewal' (*Wordsworth's Poetry* 44). Nature, Hartman writes, 'changes its shape from familiar to unfamiliar' (ibid. 42), and causes a sense of loss and confusion, which tells the poet that infinitude 'is not at the end of the path but in crossing and a losing of the way' ('A Poet's Progress' 224). Wordsworth's 'spots of time', indeed, could be redefined as not moments of gain but loss and confusion, blockage, when imagination halts 'without an effort to break through' (*Prel.* vi.597).

For de Man the same sublimity inherent in Milton's shadows is present in Shelley's enigmatic shapes of *The Triumph of Life*. Each shape is defaced or disfigured and can assume different names in different contexts. Romanticism for de Man is marked by an endless process of interpretation, of questioning without coming to an ultimate clear answer. Each question is answered by another question. He says, 'these questions can easily be referred back to the enigmatic text they punctuate and they are characteristic of the interpretative labor associated with romanticism' (*Rhetoric of Romanticism* 94). The triumph of Life is implied in the very process of questioning the question and the act of receding further and further from the origin of the query.[13] Life, as Roland Barthes points out, 'never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred' (*Image, Music, Text* 147).

It is this continuous process of questioning and ever recessing from the origin of query that Miller might have intended by 'linguistic moment'. The 'linguistic moment' is a moment of suspension, as Miller says, when the words 'reflect or comment on their own medium' rather than looking for meaning, signification somewhere outside of themselves. The concept, Miller says, is a 'form of parabasis, a breaking of the illusion that language is a transparent medium of meaning' (*Linguistic Moment* xiv). It is the 'effacement of extra-linguistic reference initiated by the apparent act of self-reference' (ibid. 4).

Apocalyptic organicism is the third characteristic of Romantic epistemology. The Romantic world is apocalyptic (not in the etymological sense of the word, denoting a sudden change but) in the sense that it is 'continuously evolving and in constant state of creation' (*Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 5). Romantic organicism is apocalyptic in the sense that the word organic, as Kathleen Wheeler points out, posits an infinite 'growth and transformation as a major character of existence' (ibid.). In this sense, Romantics like Blake, Coleridge, and Shelley offer an 'apocalyptic view of mind, language, the universe and self consciousness, philosophy, and so on' (ibid. 45). According to this view, the world is not fixed or static, nor has it to be received passively, but is dynamic and has to be interpreted actively. The mind is also not fixed; it is evolving and developing.

Wheeler's equation of the apocalyptic and the 'historical' ('the evolution or historical process of achieving self-consciousness'; ibid. 46), however, seems to me paradoxical. Despite the fact that both concepts imply change and dynamism, the difference lies in the direction of the movement which in the apocalyptic is circular but in the 'historical' is linear. Although the historical, as David Hawkes states, represents the truth in its freedom 'from the restrictive grip of customary assumption' (*Ideology* 41), it implies a kind of change which is continuous in its progression. It is much like the

Miltonic conception of stream-like truth which knows no resting place.[14] The dubious word here is the term progress, a concept which I found not much in congruity with Romantic thought as it is assumed each image in its recurrent manifestations is new and independent. On the other hand, a linear movement which is presupposed by the 'historical' is thought to preconceive a beginning and an end, a duality, a temporality, which even in Wheeler's terms is inconceivable in Romantic thought where there is no ultimate end, no final and fixed truth, but an unending process of interpretation and, in de Man's words, questioning. 'Nature's apocalypse,' as Hartman comments, 'destroys the concept of the linear path, and also severs finally the "eye" from the "progress"' ('A Poet's Progress' 223). The 'historical' from the point of view of Hegel to which Wheeler particularly alludes, also, presupposes an essence in becoming with a beginning and an end. Hegel says, 'the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is' (quoted Hawks 79).[15] Although Hegel denies that one can attain fixed truth since it is changing and developing with history, nonetheless the linear movement is presupposed in the theory. In Derrida's words, such a 'certain historical system of evolution or progress,' which for him is 'a notion derived from Enlightenment rationalism,' carries the risk that may 'blind us to the fact that what confronts us today is also something ancient and hidden in history' (*States of Mind* 163). In the same interview Derrida expresses his preference to speak of any mutation 'as a "movement" rather than as an historical or political "progress". I always hesitate to talk of historical progress' (ibid. 171). For the Romantics, there is no dialectical progression. There are antitheses but they are neither true dialectical antitheses in the sense of being real ontological differences, nor ending in a synthesis higher and more progressive than its combining elements. In his analysis of Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* Miller writes: 'As soon as something can be seen and therefore named, it must be seen and named according to antitheses. These appear to be true oppositions naming ontological differences and generating the progressions of dialectical thought or dialectical progressions in history' (*Linguistic*

Moment 120). In refutation of this view he adds, '[t]hese oppositions cannot be made the basis for progressive movement, either in thought or in "real history." Each pair is made only of different modes of the same thing. They collapse into that same thing' (ibid. 120-21). The repetitive scenes in *The Triumph of Life* suggest that 'thinking and naming by oppositions makes a non-advancing repetitive series' (ibid. 121).[16] Drummond Bone likewise observes that the Romantics, and Shelley in particular, concerned themselves with a 'sequence of creation (or epistemology) which moves from the indefinite to the finite (or perceived) and necessarily on once more into the resolution of difference in infinity' ('Turner and Shelley' 216). The change, the dynamic fluidity should, then, assume a circular movement, a movement which, as de Man puts it, 'dispels any illusion of dialectical progress or regress' (*Rhetoric of Romanticism* 98).

The historical in the temporal sense of Heideggerian destructive criticism is nonetheless apocalyptic in its Romantic sense and meaning. Heidegger recommends the temporal view of being instead of the traditional spatial outlook. The spatial or iconic view follows a dualistic, mechanistic view of being in putting, as Leitch comments, 'human consciousness above the tumult of life, affording man a measure of objectivity and distance from things as they are' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 74), a view characterised by permanence, stasis, and literality. However, Heidegger believes that the meaning of Being, or Dasein as he calls it, is temporal, in the sense that time is the 'horizon of every understanding and interpretation of Being' (*Basic Writings* 61). Temporality, on the other hand, Heidegger understands to be the 'condition of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of being of Dasein itself' (ibid. 64). By placing being within the historical, man, as Leitch points out, 'discovers being as *be-ing* in the actual temporal process itself, and discloses that interpretation is a ceaseless experience of concealing and unconcealing the truth of being' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 75). One can see that the historical here does not convey any sense of progress; on the contrary, it gives the sense of repetition, albeit, repetition through

difference. Romanticism in this sense is a call for organic temporality against mechanical spatiality. If we can use Fish's words, it is a call for a shift of attention from 'the spatial context of a page and its observable regularities to the temporal context of a mind and its experience' (*Is There is a Text in This Class?* 91).

Apocalypse, on the other hand, constitutes the ground for the Romantic denial of permanent orientation or fixed metaphysics. From a Romantic perspective, Peckham argues, 'value, identity, and order can be experienced only temporarily, in moments of illumination, spots of time', and that regarding an orientation as final inevitably 'leads to disaster' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 34). The Romantic's moral task, then, is 'to break down an orientation once it has been fully realized' (ibid.). This is what Hartman may have meant by saying 'it takes the poet many years to realize that nature's "end" is to lead to something "without end" '(*Wordsworth's Poetry* 44).

The distinction between self and role becomes another basis for Peckham to illustrate the Romantic unfixed apocalyptic perspective. Romanticism, he says, is marked by 'the emergence of new social role' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 37). This role, paradoxically, is an anti-role, in the sense that it is deployed to signify the difference between the self and role, and thus precipitate the liberation of the self. Peckham defines the role or roles of the self in terms of its relationship with the society and the dominant culture. To play a role is to 'act according to the cultural conventions of a particular category of situations' (ibid. 38). The self, in sharp contrast, is not a submissive, imitative element but is the source of 'order, meaning, value, and identity' (ibid. 40), and in this sense, the role, he writes, is the 'violation of the self' (ibid.). The self is detained from its value-giving activity by the roles which it assumes in its encounter with environment and society, or, as Wheeler observes, the mind 'takes as literal and external things (thoughts) made up out of its own inner nature and activity' ('Kant and Romanticism' 54). The emancipation of the self, therefore, comes in the form of rebellion against these roles. Peckham explains this phenomenon in the

appropriate metaphor of vandalism. He claims that cultural vandalism and the 'all-encompassing negation of available high-level explanations and validations, is the behaviour subsumed by the term "self" as distinguished from "role"' (*Romanticism and Behaviour* 24).

Wheeler's concept of 'Agility', which she has from the German Romantic ironists, is another exposition of the desire which the Romantics have for putting aside any fixed orientation. Agility, she writes, is

> ... the ability of the reader or artist to move from one perspective to another through imaginative detachment from egotistic preferences and prejudices. One transcended one's initial perspective or self, only, however, to have to transcend the next point of view, and the next; agility was needed since there was no question of art arriving at some unlimited, neutral perspective, some higher viewpoint transcending all others. (*Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 37)

The Romantics' emphasis on action and search is based on this sense of 'Agility' and restlessness. Reality for the Romantics, as Wasserman comments, is 'neither a thing nor a place, but an act; it is not in the mind nor outside it, but in the very act of searching' (*Subtler Language* 221). Reality, he further adds, 'resides in the verb' and can 'exist only while the thoughts seek' (ibid.). Familiarity with things, thus, could be redefined as only a form of fitting images of life into fixed concepts or looking at them from one fixed and static perspective. It is the predisposition of the mind to take, as Wheeler puts it, 'as literal and external the very things (thoughts) which are made out of its own inner activity' (*Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 13). Hence the Romantics' stress on the destructive effect of familiarity. Familiarity with objects, Wordsworth believes, 'tends very much to mitigate & to destroy the power which they have to produce the sensation of sublimity as dependent upon personal fear or upon wonder' (*Prose Works* 2: 353). If the 'consummation of sublimity,' according to Wordsworth, 'exists in the extinction of the comparing power of the mind, & in intense unity' (ibid. 2: 356), familiarity then counteracts sublimity

precisely in that regard. It is one role or another which the self assumes, or an orientation which it accepts. It is, in Shelley's definition, the world looked at as mechanically juxtaposed elements and understood literally, the world of dead metaphors in contrast to the live and organic metaphors of the apocalyptic.

Logos or self in its Romantic context is the fourth element of the Romantic theory of knowledge. In its Greek origin logos denotes the link between the One and the many or unity in distinction. In a general definition, it is either the active principle of the generation of the many from the One, or the passive referential entity which relates the many to the One. R. T. Wallis writes: 'Logos normally denotes the 'ground-plan' or 'formative principle' from which lower realities evolve and which subsequently governs their development. As such it is especially prominent in Plotinus' accounts of Soul's government of the sensible cosmos' (*Neoplatonism* 68). On the other hand, he argues, logos could be not formative but assumes a relational role. In the latter sense it denotes 'an entity's relation to its producer' (ibid. 69). The idea is further explained through an analogy with the speech act:

> ... just as external speech ... constitutes the external expression of internal thought ... so an Hypostasis flows forth from its prior and 'expresses' it under conditions of greater multiplicity, so revealing it to the external world. Universal Soul thus constitutes a Logos of Intelligence ... and individual souls Logoi of their own individual intelligences. (ibid.)

In either case logos is the intermediary link between the One and the many. One of the main consequences is positioning the soul in the status of intermediary imagination, as Wallis concludes, 'hence the term is appropriate to Soul's role as an intermediary between Intelligible and sensible worlds, conveying Matter images of the Forms she receives from Intelligence' (ibid.).

The relationship between the mind and Nature was the main focus of the Romantics' attention. They mainly tried to formulate this relationship in a nondualistic system

without being reductive. Without minimising the role of Nature, they thought of the self as the logos or the ultimate source and originator of meaning. The 'I' has the ability, in Fish's words, to 'give the world meaning rather than to extract a meaning that is already there' (*Is There a Text in this Class?* 86). Thus Wordsworth speaks of 'the inherent superiority of contemplation to Action' (*Prose Work* 2: 19). Knowledge for him is not only 'efficacious for the production of virtue' but is 'the ultimate end of all effort, the sole dispenser of complacency and repose' (ibid.). In his note to 'Intimations of Immortality' he writes: 'I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature' (*Wordsworth's Poetical Works* 4: 463). The theme of many of his poems like 'Tintern Abbey', as Hartman comments, justifies his 'late yielding of primacy to the activity of the mind or the idealizing power of Imagination' ('A Poet's Progress' 214):

> Oft in those moments such a holy calm
> Did overspread my soul that I forgot
> The agency of sight, and what I saw
> Appeared like something in myself - a dream,
> A prospect in my mind.
> (*The Two-part Prelude* 397-401)

Coleridge, likewise, thinks of logos as the 'Self in every creature' or the 'Principium Individuum'. In his Notebook entry of 14 April 1805, he writes:

> In looking at objects of Nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering thro' the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were *asking*, a symbolical language for something within me that already and forever exists, than observing anything new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling as if that new phænomenon were the dim Awaking of a forgotten or hidden Truth of my inner Nature/ It is still interesting as a Word, a Symbol! It is Λογο σ, the Creator! <and the Evolver!> (*Notebooks* 2: 2546)

Logos or self as such is not the originator of meaning in its idealistic sense but is the unifying element which sees itself in the other. As Coleridge observes, the 'spirit in all

the objects which it views, views only itself' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 278). The Word, in this sense, is the Self to which all other selves are only phantoms. Thus, man should, Coleridge argues, 'leave behind, and lose his dividual phantom self, in order to find his true Self in that Distinctness where no division can be,--in the Eternal I AM, the Ever-living WORD, of whom all the elect ... are but the fainter and still fainter echoes' (*Confession of an Inquiring Spirit* 72).

Conceiving the Absolute as the identity of *Natura naturans* and *Natura naturata*, *Natura naturans*, then, is the Logos, imagination or the cognitive side of existence, which is the subject, or the Self. Coleridge, having this distinction in mind, rejoins that 'you must master the essence, the *Natura Naturans*, which presupposes a bond between nature in the higher sense and the soul of man' (*Literary Remains* 1: 222). In the same essay ('On Poesy or Art') he further develops the idea and the parallel between Nature and mind, saying:

> In the objects of nature are presented, as in a mirror, all the possible elements, steps, and processes of intellect antecedent to consciousness, and therefore to the full development of the intellegential act; and man's mind is the very focus of all the rays of intellect which are scattered throughout the images of nature. (*Literary Remains* 1: 223)

Based on this reasoning he concludes that, 'of all we see, hear, feel and touch the substance is and must be in ourselves' (ibid. 1: 224).

III. Romanticism: A Historical Representation of an Innate Perspective

Riasanovsky claims that: 'Apparently ... romanticism was produced only by Western Christian civilization. It appeared nowhere else--except, of course, as translated and otherwise adapted from Europe. In my view, it would be likely to emerge

independently only if another civilization had a concept of God and of man's relation to God at least very similar to the Christian' (*Emergence of Romanticism* 83).

Romanticism, I would like to argue, however, is not a set of rules or dogmas historically produced and even less the effect of certain religions or civilisations. On the contrary, it is anti-dogmatic, uncontainable and unrestrained. Romanticism, instead of being reducible to certain features expressing or dominated by the taste of a generation or two, is rather a picture of man's long struggle against stability and the temptation of finding the final meaning or last interpretation. It is an element of growth, change, universality and inclusiveness in an original and undefiled world view which is innate in mankind. It is an expression of man's 'agility' and 'anxiety' for preserving or initiating an apocalyptic vision, for role breaking and for disrupting custom and familiarity with life and the prevalence of literality over man's vision of the world. To use Hartman's words 'Romanticism at its most profound reveals the depth of the enchantment in which we live. We dream, we wake up on the cold hillside, and the sole self pursues the dream once more. In the beginning was the dream, and the task of disenchantment never ends' (*Beyond Formalism* 307-308). Although I agree with Peckham's argument that 'Romanticism came into existence because of the failure of the Enlightenment, and because when the Enlightenment failed, two thousand years of European metaphysics collapsed' (*Triumph of Romanticism* 71), yet one should be careful not to take one limited historical instance for the original, universal and permanent reality which it represents, and in short, not to mistake the representation for the reality. We have to keep in mind that Romanticism was a reaction against Enlightenment as a world view, a mode of thinking, and not a certain European or Western culture. My assumption is that Romanticism did not succeed Enlightenment as a historical event, but that Romanticism in its origin is inseparably bound to Enlightenment. The dialectic of Romanticism and Enlightenment is rooted in man's intellect insofar as they represent two antithetical outlooks which are inextricably mingled with man's self-

consciousness and his consciousness of the world. Romanticism in spirit is not as much the struggle between two philosophical or political systems, or social and political events as it is the displacement of two world views. In this continuous change it represents the prevalence of non-dualism over dualism, metaphor over the literal, the dynamic over the static, the self over the roles it might take, perceiving over seeing, and finally imagination over intellect. The cycle of displacement, however, is not a complete circle, and as with other aspects of the Romantic world view, there is a spiral movement with each alternate replacement. Romanticism, as René Wellek observes, is 'the revival of something old, but it is a revival with a difference' (*Concepts of Criticism* 196). For example, the old Romantic principles, which he broadly classifies as the views of an organic nature, a creative imagination, and a symbolic, or mythic conception of poetry, in the nineteenth century were 'translated into terms acceptable to men who had undergone the experience of the Enlightenment' (ibid.). Abercrombie also argues that '[f]ar from being a modern affair, romanticism moves in a rhythm that seems to include in its process the whole record of literature' (*Romanticism* 22).

My contention is that what appears as a novel, unprecedented movement in the late eighteenth century is something old and is rooted in man's nature itself. Romanticism was not a product of the nineteenth century but was ever present where imagination was not dominated by reason, and rationalism was not considered as the only valid way of thinking, though it should be admitted that the superiority of intellect was until the nineteenth century a dominant element in Western thought. Therefore, a distinction should be made between Romanticism as a world view and a philosophy of life, and Romanticism as a literary mode and a historical movement. Although Romanticism as a literary movement was an unprecedented European movement, as a philosophy and a thought system it was present not only in Western thought and culture but in other cultures and thought systems.

No doubt Romanticism has enormously different implications and has been interpreted so variously that the word has been emptied from meaning and historians stress the necessity of speaking rather of Romanticisms (see A. O. Lovejoy 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms').[17] According to Lovejoy, '"Romanticism" has no generally understood meaning and has therefore come to be useless as a verbal symbol' ('Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas' 258). He concludes that nothing 'but confusion and error can result from the quest of some supposititious intrinsic nature of a hypostatized essence called "Romanticism"' (ibid. 260). Nevertheless, generally there is little doubt that Romanticism historically existed as a new movement in poetry and literature with certain tenets and in contradistinction to the literature of Neoclassicism. According to Wellek, the Romantics were marked by their implementation of the 'same conceptions of poetry and of the workings and nature of poetic imagination, the same conception of nature and its relation to man, and basically the same poetic style' (*Concepts of Criticism* 160-61). These and other criteria, however, are all inflections of one major difference (between classical and Romantic poetry), namely difference of epistemology. According to Wasserman, it is 'characteristic of eighteenth-century criticism and poetry in being psychological far more than epistemological or ontological' ('English Romantics' 20). In other words, its main accomplishment 'is to describe the operations of the mind, not to define experience or reality' (ibid.). Moreover, in the main problem which faced the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the transaction between mind and Nature, the classicists, Wasserman argues, betrayed a lack of any 'significant epistemology'. Instead they resorted to analogy in making the scene 'significant only by stimulating the poet to link it with man by some loose association' (ibid.). Such analogy at best shows that there is a relationship between the subject and object, but at the same time inserts an insurmountable barrier between the two. The relationship, then, remains a mechanical one, and in Coleridge's definition, a sort of 'formal Similes' (*Selected Letters* 114). The Romantics, however, based their assumption on the symbol, the metaphor, and tried to resolve the division between subject and object by 'making

perception an act of self-knowledge' ('English Romantics' 21).[18] This epistemology in its different forms presents a non-dualistic world where, first, the opposites have no ontological existence, second, the images are in continuous transformation, third, the phenomena are in making, and, fourth, the self is the logos which originates meaning and links the mind to the object as its other.

IV. Oriental Imagination and Shift of Perspective

Imagination has always been a part of Oriental thinking and never lost its place as an important and even the highest faculty of the mind. William Chittick says:

> Many important thinkers have concluded that the West never should have abandoned certain teachings about reality which it shared with the East. They have turned to the Oriental traditions in the hope of finding resources which may help revive what has been lost and correct the deep psychic and spiritual imbalance of our civilization. One result of this ongoing search for a lost intellectual and spiritual heritage has been the rediscovery of the importance of imagination. In putting complete faith in reason, the West forgot that imagination opens up the soul to certain possibilities of perceiving and understanding not available to the rational mind. (*Sufi Path of Knowledge* ix)

Nondualism was another dominant element in Eastern thought which presented itself as the underlying basis for many thoughts and philosophies; in other words, the division between subject and object was not the central problem as it was for Western philosophy. Nondualistic modes of thinking, in fact, always underlay Oriental reasoning and presented itself in their philosophies which were accompanied and prefixed by the term 'unity', among these are *wahdat al-shuhud*, or 'unity of contemplating', and *wahdat al-wujud*, or 'unity of being'.

One of the Oriental philosophers who has most elaborately based his system on imagination to reach a comprehensive and an absolute unity in existence is Ibn Arabi, the Murcian mystic, philosopher and poet. Rom Landau argues that '[i]f any Western

philosopher, rooted in a Semitic 'Weltanschauung', succeeded in providing such a non-dualistic philosophy, it was Ibn Arabi.... A splendid system of perfect non-dualism rises before us, and innumerable questions that other Western systems leave only partially explained receive answer equally satisfying from a philosophical and a religious point of view' (*Philosophy of Ibn Arabi* 24). His system, though extremely complicated, is based in principle on three elemental and interrelated constituents: pantheism, imagination, and interpretation.

Ibn Arabi's system is intrinsically nondualistic. The whole existence is one being which he calls Reality or the Real. Reality, from his point of view, has an essence and an infinite number of Names and attributes. The essence, however, is the only ontological entity, and the Names and attributes are only relational, in the sense that they are mere relationships within the essence. They relate the One to the many; the many being only a concretisation of these Names. In other words, they are only manifestations of Names which are themselves pure relations.

The essence in its pure ontological existence is unknown and devoid of any attributes or characteristics. It is impossible to speak of knowing the essence, because, as Peter Wilson puts it, 'to know implies knower and known, and Unity of Being precludes any such duality' ('In the Mirror of a Man' 3). The attributes, however, represent the cognitive side of being and are 'present' when we speak of some known aspect of the Real. A definition of the Real, then, becomes possible and even necessary only epistemologically, since, as Michael Sells points out, 'the purely indeterminate cannot be known or manifest' ('Ibn Arabi's Garden among the Flames' 291). Therefore, essence and attributes are not two realities but one reality, and the Names are the Real perceived in its attributes and not in its essence. They represent 'a multiplicity of faces that Being assumes in relation to created things' (*Sufi Path of Knowledge* 26). Ibn Arabi in answer to the question whether the Names have ontological entities, says that they are relationships which 'designate intelligible, non-ontological realities,' and

therefore 'the Essence does not become multiple through them, since a thing can only become multiple through ontological entities, not through properties, attributions, and relationships' (*Futuhat* 4: 294).[19]

Under this definition, the phenomena are only manifestations of the Real or the Names which he assumes in his self-manifestation. The term pantheism, therefore, is used here only because there is no other words which can describe his system, otherwise it is extremely different from other pantheistic traditions known in the West. Dr. N. H. Abu Zeid says :

> The kinds of pantheism taught by Spinoza or Leibnitz can never give an interpretation of Ibn Arabi's system, for they either dissolve God in Nature, as Spinoza did, or dissolve Nature in God, as it is with Leibnitz. Ibn Arabi resorts to neither of these, rather he keeps the dualistic relationship between the Divine Essence and the universe, so that nothing can bring them together. (*Falsafat al-Tawil* 31-32)

Annemarie Schimmel, also writes:

> ... terms like pantheism, panentheism, and even Louis Massignon's term "existential monism" would have to be revised, since the concept of *wahdat al-wujud* does not involve a substantial continuity between God and creation. In Ibn Arabi's thought a transcendence across categories, including substance, is maintained. God is above all qualities - they are neither He nor other than He - and He manifests Himself only by means of the names, not by His essence. (*Mystical Dimensions of Islam* 267)

The unbridgable gap between God and universe, however, has to be understood epistemologically. On the ontological plane there is no more than one undifferentiated Existence. Existence according to Ibn Arabi, as Ronald Kiener explains, 'is a continuum between the Absolute Creator (*al-Haqq*) and relative creation (*al-kalq*), different sides of the same coin' ('Ibn Al-Arabi and the Qabbalah' 36). The distinction between the two worlds, therefore, is only a distinction of perception. Negation, exclusion, and contradiction all are conceptualised, and none is essential or substantial. Contradiction, within the context of Ibn Arabi's 'oneness of being', as Abraham Abadi puts it, is 'the actualization of a conceptual opposition, so that the manifestation of the contradiction has to appertain to the perception of a single reality

in accordance with two considerations, where each consideration negates the description which the other affirms' ('Centre of the Circumference' 42).

Although Ibn Arabi starts his system by asserting the separation between God and Nature, he nevertheless overcomes this duality through introducing an intermediary world which contains both. 'He inserts,' Abu Zeid says, 'the world of imagination with all its strata and degrees to be the intermediary between God and Nature. It is an ontological, and epistemological intermediary world simultaneously' (*Falsafat al-Tawil* 31-32). It is the world of imagination which is the loci of all contraries and opposites.

Imagination for Ibn Arabi is an intermediary world, a *barzakh*, or ismthus as he calls it. It is a world between two worlds, it is 'the realm where invisible realities become visible and corporeal things are spritualized' (*Sufi Path of Knowledge* ix), the pattern which Ibn Arabi elucidates in his known description of the Imaginal world as the place of 'corporealization of the spirits' (*tajassud al-arwah*) and 'spiritualization of the corporeal bodies' (*tarawhun al-ajsam*) (ibid. 15). This world, however, is not the synthesis of two worlds, but it is the real one world looked at from another perspective. As a world of infinite beings, the imaginal world has no boundary nor limitation; it is ambiguous and defies both intellect's and dogma's delimitation. Henry Corbin in his study of Ibn Arabi speaks of imagination as the 'science which eludes rational demonstrations and dogmatic theorems alike' (*Creative Imagination* 93). Chittick also points out that:

> Imagination understands in modes foreign to reason. As an intermediate reality standing between spirit and body, it perceives abstract ideas and spiritual beings in embodied form. Since in itself it is neither the one nor the other, it is intrinsically ambiguous and multivalent, and it can grasp the self-disclosure of God, which is He/ not He. Reason demands to know the exact relationships in the context of either/ or. But imagination perceives that self-disclosure can never be known with precision, since it manifests the Unknown Essence. (ibid. 29)

The noumena, for him the divine Reality, are knowable, if the self is decentred and things looked at not through the intellect but imagination. 'None of the strata of the cosmos,' as Chittick comments, 'makes known the situation as it really is except this imaginal presence, for it makes contraries come together, and within it the realities become manifest as they are in themselves' (*Sufi Path of Knowledge* 116). Things unconditioned by the self are 'the essence of God ... without how or where' (*Treatise on Unity* 3), and as such they can be perceived not from the 'I am' but 'It is' perspective. 'The Divine Reality,' Ibn Arabi argues, 'is too elevated to be contemplated by the eye which must contemplate; for there is a trace of creation in the eye of the contemplator. Thus if that which never was passes away, being transient, and that which ever is remains, being subsistent, then the Sun of clear proof will rise for evident comprehension' (*Book of Annihilation* 5).

Ibn Arabi's monism is not a fixed and static universe, a world, as it is thought by Wheeler to be, 'fixed and immutable, where inventions, free play, spontaneity, and unforeseen possibility have little place' (*Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 105). In the world Ibn Arabi describes nothing is still nor permanent. Anything which is 'not in movement,' as Maren Pekedis comments, 'then ... cannot be of existence' ('Belief and the Haqq' 38). In his theory on the 'renewal of creation' Ibn Arabi argues that the phenomena are in constant flow and change and the universe in every moment is created and annihilated. Nor is any manifestation ever repeated, as, according to Pekedis's reading of the theory, 'there is no end to the manifestation of different configurations of the *Ipseity*, that is, the Essence of all things,' as there is no limit to 'any one of the configurations of the *Ipseity*' itself (ibid.).

The human heart, which is the medium of Imaginal perception in his philosophy, he describes metaphorically as the root of the tree of Nature. The tree is ever renewed, he assumes, because the root, which is the human heart, is always renewed. Heart is in constant fluctuation and never retains one image of beings and changes along with

their change. It can grasp the constant renewal of existence because it is itself in constant renewal. Strikingly, he plays on the word *qhalb*, heart, which is derived from the same root, meaning 'change'. He says the organ of perception is the heart and not the mind because the mind is fixed, but the heart is never fixed and is in constant change. He says:

> ... the heart possesses fluctuation (*taqlib*) from one state to another. That is why it is called 'heart' (*qalb*). He who explains 'heart' as meaning 'reason' has no knowledge of the realities, for 'reason' is a 'delimitation' (*taqyid*), the word *aql* being derived from 'fetter.' But if he means by 'reason', which is delimitation, what we mean by it, that is, that which is delimited by fluctuation so that it never ceases undergoing transformation, then he is correct.... If man examines his heart, he will see that it does not remain in a single state. So he should know that if the Root were not like this, this fluctuation would have no support. (*Futuhat* 3: 198).

He also says:

> ... the heart is known through constant fluctuation in states, since it does not remain in a single state. So also are the divine self-disclosures. Hence he who does not witness the self-disclosure in his heart denies him. For the rational faculty delimits, like all other faculties except the heart. The heart does not delimit, but quickly fluctuates in every state.... The heart fluctuates with the fluctuation of self-disclosures, but the rational faculty is not like the heart. (ibid. 1: 289).

And finally, the homogeneity of the heart and Nature ensures the unity of the continuum and becomes a basis for his integrative system. He would say with Wordsworth that whatever 'I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream/ That flowed into a kindred stream' (*Prel.* vi.743-44).

As regards perception, the mind does not receive ready-made-objects which pre-exist its knowledge. It is the maker of its world, not in the idealistic sense that the outside world is non existent, being only a creation of the mind, but in the sense that there is nothing which is fixed and determined. An admirable explication which Ibn Arabi gives on this point comes in *Futuhat*, chapter 367. In his imaginary ascension the Dantesque traveller in the fifth heaven meets John the Baptist whom he had met in the third heaven along with Jesus. The traveller is filled with wonder:

> So I said to (John the Baptist): "I didn't see you on my path: is there some other path there?"
> And he replied: "Each person has a path, that no one else but he travels."
> I said: "Then where are they, these (different) paths?"
> Then he answered: "They come to be through the travelling itself."[20]

Neither can the mind determine the existence of anything. It can only discover the infinite facets of each thing through imagination. The intellect, he observes, 'restricts and seeks to define the truth within a particular qualification, while in fact the Reality does not admit of such limitation' (*Fusus* 150). He warns: 'beware lest you restrict yourself to a particular tenet and so deny any other tenet' (ibid. 137).

What emerges from this infinite state of fluctuation, is that the final truth will remain incomprehensible. In fact, Ibn Arabi thinks of Understanding as a process and never as coming to a resting place or a real ground for unchangeable truth. Every stage reached has to be discarded for another for 'there is no permanence for the world in any state' (*Book of Annihilation* 11). He says: 'the heart does not "embrace" Him except by overturning what is with you. The meaning of "overturning what is with you" is as follows: You attach your knowledge to Him and apprehend some specific thing in your knowledge. But the highest thing you apprehend about Him in your knowledge of Him, is that He cannot be apprehended and is nondelimited' (*Futuhat* 1: 289). The logical consequence to this mode of thinking is what Ibn Arabi calls *hayra* or 'bewilderment'. Bewilderment, as Michael Sells comments, is 'caused by an abandonment of the linear, dualistic logic' ('Ibn Arabi's Garden among the Flames' 302). This state of confusion is what differentiates the literal from the metaphorical, between the established one-to-one allegorical relationship and the transformation of meaning without disuniting the origin and the end. On this logical notion Ibn Arabi writes:

> For the bewildered one has a round and circular motion around the Pole which he never leaves. But the master of the long path tends away from what he aims for seeking what he is already in. A master of fantasies which are his goal. He has a "from" and "to" and what is between them. But the master of the circular movement has no

starting point that "from" should take him over and no goal that he should be ruled by "to".[21]

Thus, unlike the rationalists who aim at dispelling perplexity to reach a philosophical certainty, Ibn Arabi, as Michael Sells argues, 'affirms an esoteric hermeneutic which guarantees perplexity by seeing history, text, the phenomenal world, and dreams as various levels of dreams within dreams. And instead of resolving contradictions, the Sufi master inverses the very principle of contradiction by appealing to an ultimate *coincidentia oppositorum*' ('Ibn Arabi's Garden among the Flames' 303).

Joy, which is inextricable from Ibn Arabi's world view, has its root in this ever changing face of existence. He says:

> The men of knowledge are forever joyful, but others remain in the shadows of bewilderment, wandering astray in this world and the next. Were it not for the renewal of creation at each instant, boredom would overcome the entities, since Nature requires boredom. This requirement decrees that the entities must be renewed.... But no one in the cosmos becomes bored except him who has no unveiling and does not witness the renewal of creation constantly at each instant and does witness God as Ever-creating perpetually. Boredom takes place only as the result of unceasing companionship. (*Futuhat* 3: 506).

The self, in the philosophy of Ibn Arabi, has its special place and significance. It is not the ego nor the opposing side to God or Nature. It is expanded to include all beings and simultaneously is lost in the divine Self. Corbin, exploring the concept of self in the philosophy of Ibn Arabi, speaks of this mutual, reciprocal relationship:

> Knowing one's self, to know one's God; knowing one's Lord, to know one's self. This Lord is not the impersonal self, nor is it the God of dogmatic definitions, 'self' - subsisting without relation to 'me', without being experienced by 'me'. He is the he who knows himself through myself, that is, in the knowledge that I have of him, because it is the knowledge that he has of me; it is alone with him alone, in this syzygic unity, that it is possible to say 'thou'. (*Creative Imagination* 95)

Perfection for Ibn Arabi lies not in coming to the origin of things or to an ultimate unchangeable truth, which according to his theory of renewal of creation would be impossible, but in internalising all divine Names and attributes. The 'degree of

completion,' from this point of view, as Maren Pekedis puts it, 'contains, unifies, collects within itself all the Names' ('Beliefs and the Haqq' 40). It is the state of permanent residence in the Imaginal world. The Perfect Man, Ibn Arabi states, is he 'who integrates in himself all Cosmic realities and their individual [manifestations]' (*Fusus* 55). And if we take each divine Name as defined by Landau as 'the creative element that holds within itself the potentiality of a particular phenomenon' (*Philosophy of Ibn Arabi* 30), then perfection will mean an infinite resource of creativity and emanation through an ever active generation of potential manifestations of each particular phenomenon or image. To this creativity in generating infinite images of one phenomenon Ibn Arabi gives the name *tawil* or 'interpretation'. Imagination in this regard is dependent on a certain power which constantly feeds and empowers it to pass beyond the literal into the figurative, the metaphor. The 'perspective of the imagination,' he says, 'require[s] interpretation' (*Fusus* 100). Nothing has to be taken literally, he says. All things and images have to be interpreted. There is no univocal, one sided, fixed and static truth. Our perception lies in our interpretation and our interpretation makes our perception. And because there is no one manifestation of each image only, so each image has to be interpreted and reinterpreted. Interpretation, in other words, is a continuing process. On *tawil* as an Oriental methodology of spiritual apprehension or interpretation Corbin writes: 'The idea of the *tawil* is not an allegorical exegesis but a transfiguration of the literal text' (*Creative Imagination* 88). Among the characteristics of this methodology, he explains, is 'the perception of an overall unity, calling for perspectives, depths, transparencies, appeals, which the "realities" of the letter or dogma have no need for or reject. And this contrast is far more fundamental than any opposition conditioned by time or climate, for in the eyes of the "esoteric" all this 'realism' lacks a dimension or rather the many dimensions of the world which are revealed by the *tawil*' (ibid. 93).

This state of transcending dualism Ibn Arabi calls *fana. Fana* is the moment when man stops looking at things as subject and predicate, but the predicate either

disappears or becomes one with the subject. The unity, however, is only cognitive. Ibn Arabi still thinks that the unity between the One and the many on the ontological side is not the matter in question. He would say with Coleridge that 'none but One--God-- can say 'I AM' or 'that I AM" (*Table Talk* 1: 448). As far as existence is concerned all are one being, but in regard to identity they are separate, and the unity will be only a matter of coming into knowledge. The phenomena insofar as their identity is concerned are non existent, therefore, how can non existent be united with pure existent? The unity which is achieved, in other words, is only the unity of the Names in their referentiality to the Essence. As Elton Hall argues, 'Insofar as the Divine Names refer to the Essence (*dhat*) ... they refer to the object named and are utterly identical. But insofar as each name refers to an aspect of the Absolute's self-manifestation (*tajalli*) ... they are archetypes, different from one another and setting the causal boundaries of the world as it is' ('Al-Haqq, Beauty and the Beast' 54). Ibn Arabi by differentiating between the manifestation of essence and Names, exposes the mistake of taking the epistemic unity for an ontological one. He illustrates this point through numbers. Although the One constitutes the essence of all numbers, it is not a number. Therefore, though the numbers essentially are one, they are still different from the One:

> ... the numbers are seen as the One (*wahid*), which none the less journeys in the degrees and by this journeying are the realities of the numbers manifest. It is at this station that the one who professes unification (*ittihad*) falls into error: for this person, seeing the journeying of the One through the imaginary degrees so that the names differ in accordance with the various degrees, does not see any number except the One and Only (*ahad*), and therefore he professes identity. (*Book of Annihilation* 6)

Fana has a complementary notion, namely *baqa* or 'remaining' or 'subsistence'. Ibn Arabi faces the problem which always posed itself to nondualistic thinkers. If the One is known only by the relationships and attributes which are embodied in the external objects, and if the external is only its other aspect or dimension, what will happen when one attains *fana* and stops observing things? To put it another way, does the

philosophy of Ibn Arabi end with a final Truth; the Absolute in Hegel's terms which is 'essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is' (quoted Hawks 79)?[22] Does his dialectical method end by reaching an ultimate meaning or truth? The answer is decisively, no. One of the fundamental features of Ibn Arabi's writing and philosophy, as James Morris indicates, is 'the continually alternating contrast between the metaphysical (universal and eternal) "divine" point of view and the "phenomenological" (personal and experiential) perspective' ('Ibn Arabi's Spiritual Ascension' 353). Therefore, there is no halt for the phenomenal, as there is no ceasing for the self (see *Treatise on Unity* 2). Therefore, in Ibn Arabi's logic there is no definite state, position or station for truth. It is always a matter-in-between, or as is mentioned in his meeting with Averos, the truth lies 'between the Yea and the Nay' (*Futuhat* 1:153), or, as Michael Sells comments, between 'the independence of the Truth from all relation and duality ... and the dynamic polarity of its manifest relationships' ('Ibn Arabi's Garden among the Flames' 310). His truth remains an ever-continuing dialectic of *fana* and *baqa*. As soon as one state is achieved, it is replaced with the other. There is always this shift of perspective, this dialectic of transcendence and immanence. *Fana* acts in obliterating the borders while *baqa* re-establishes objects as a necessary part to this unity. The circle, however, is not complete as at the end of each process there is a further realisation, a stronger consciousness, a closer movement to looking at things from the 'It' perspective; it is a return, to use Morris' words, accompanied by 'a transformed awareness of the physical and social world' ('Ibn Arabi's Spiritual Ascension' 632). Peter Wilson writes: 'if Annihilation is an ecstasy, a stepping outside the body, or form, the Permanence can perhaps only be called bliss, since it involves no such split between consciousness and form' ('Eros & Literary Style in Ibn Arabi' 4). Ibn Arabi sees them as two manifestations which are inextricably interrelated. They are the manifestations of the Oneness, the Name One, and the manifestation of the essence. The former requires the annihilation of all otherness, while the latter demands their subsistence:

Now if He manifests in His Name (One), He does not manifest in His Essence (*dhat*) as well except in His own private degree which is the Oneness (*wahdaniyyat*), so that in whatever degree He is manifest in His Essence, He does not manifest His (own) Name. He is named in that degree by that which the reality of the degree gives Him, so that it is through His Name in that degree that there is extinction, and it is through His Essence that there is subsistence. Therefore if you say "one" (*wahid*), everything other than He is annihilated through the reality of that name; and if you say "two", its essential reality (*ayn*) manifests through the being of His Essence, of the One, in that degree, not through His Name (One), and His Name (One) denies the existence of this degree, whereas His Essence does not. (*Book of Annihilation* 6)

V. The Shelleyan Metaphor: A World in Making

It is precisely for these tenets that Shelley stands as an elaborator of a Romantic philosophy based on pantheism, imagination, and the conception of a world in making, or, metaphor.

The ground where Shelley builds his system is unmistakably nondualistic. For him the 'difference is merely nominal between those two classes of thought, which are vulgarly distinguished by names of ideas and of external objects' ('On Life' 174), and the 'view of life presented by the most refined deductions of the intellectual philosophy is that of unity' (ibid.). He, more than any other Romantic, elaborates on the concept of one Life, and the oneness of thought and thing. Different minds, for him, represent only different modifications of the one Mind which, as Wasserman comments, is 'the total undifferentiated reality' (*Subtler Language* 213). Thoughts likewise are similar and differ only in their vividness. To put it another way, they represent different functions rather than different divisions. Things, on the other hand, are only thoughts which become objects of other thoughts. Thus Shelley obliterates the demarcation lines between thought and thing. Nor do different phenomena represent to him pure ontological divisions. The apparent division he considers as one of function, relation, or, as he puts it, grammar and rhetoric, rhetoric being unsubstantiated and unreal; all it does, as Leitch puts it, is to provide 'a way to move

beyond the closure of referentiality' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 53). This is what, according to Wasserman, makes 'individual identity a fiction' from the view point of Shelley.

Shelley's theory on metaphor, which is one of his clear contributions to Romantic philosophy, stems from his nondualistic and synthetic world view. Metaphor, in general, derives its unique position from the fact that it is not referential. All it refers to is itself and thus does not permit any split between image and referent. Therefore, metaphors, for Shelley, are not merely figurative devices, but are real fusion, representing a world of unity, of signs in which, as Robert Esseck puts it, 'being and meaning share the same ontological/ semiotic ground' (*Blake and the Language of Adam* 93), in contrast to the dualism of the literal and its dichotomic implications of the sign and the signified. The metaphor and the literal, for Shelley, indeed become two systems, two world views: one is dead, dualistic, with objects fixed and stereotyped, and the other nondualistic, alive, and ever new. Shelley's ideal world, we can say, is indeed made of words and not things. Reification, hypostatisation, or idolatry, for him, is the result of the 'vulgar mistake of [taking] a metaphor for a real being, a word for a thing' ('Necessity' 111-112). Once again, however, it has to be said that words and things stand for him not as two different categories, but the same entity looked at from two different perspectives. Words are not insubstantial abstractions but things liberated from reification. Neither does deny the world of things, but as he puts it in a letter to Peacock on 7 November 1818, he always seeks in what he sees 'the manifestation of something beyond the present & tangible object' (*Letters* 2: 47).[23] If things, in their usual signification, are considered as forms, words are not concepts for these forms, but are both concepts and forms; in other words, in Shelley's system, concepts and forms are not linked but are made one. He would say with Wordsworth in his note to 'The Thorn' that, 'the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion' (*Poetical Works* 2: 513). Language is metaphorical, and all words are

metaphors. What is considered as literal, Shelley believes, are only dead metaphors; to use Fish's words, there are no 'linguistic facts' as might be distinguished from 'stylistic facts'; 'everything is a stylistic fact' (*Is There is a Text in This Class?* 65). And if the linguistic aspect, literality, becomes dominant, it is not because of the possibility that metaphor can ever lose its power and turn into the literal, but because of the change in our perspective. Habit and the 'veil of familiarity', to use Shelley's own expression, make us blind to see its novelty and unity; we see it as a sign and look for its transcendent meaning. Miller, echoing Shelley, notes that: 'Rather than figures of speech being derived or "translated" from proper uses of language, all language is figurative at the beginning. The notion of a literal or referential use of language is only an illusion born of the forgetting of the metaphorical "roots" of language' (*Theory now and then* 89). Shelley argues that the meaning or signification has to be looked within and not outside the phenomena. That is why external search in poems like Alastor is usually doomed to failure. The quest has to be not beyond but deep down into the cave of metaphor.

Beings, on the other hand, are metaphors in the sense of being, like Coleridge's symbols, partakers of the one Life which they represent. Shelley's world, as Wasserman puts it, 'unlike Wordsworth's and Keats's, is symbolic in its very nature, since it is not *categorically* different from other thoughts' ('English Romantics' 33; italics mine).

It is necessary to note in parentheses here that the assumption some critics make on the repudiation of the metaphoric by the Romantics, and especially Wordsworth, have to be distinguished from the metaphor in its Shelleyan sense. Richard Cronin's discussion on Locke and Wordsworth and their distrust of the figurative language of the Poets is instructive and illuminating (see *Shelley's Poetic Thought* 17 ff.). However, there is major difference between the metaphoric nature of language as a source of unending meaning, and metaphor in its conventional sense as a supra-added

literary device. Metaphor in the latter sense, especially from the point of view of Shelley, is no other than a literal fact or a dead metaphor. Even Wordsworth's later effort 'to rescue metaphor as a device allowable in poetry,' on the ground that '[f]igurative language may be employed when it is an inevitable constituent of impassioned speech' (ibid. 19), still does not go beyond the sense of the word in its Lockean meaning. Cronin is still not speaking of the Shelleyan doctrine of 'Speech created thought' but evidently the same Lockean and Benthamite assumption of language as derived from thought.

It is on the basis of this theory of metaphor that Shelley introduces his second principle, that of understanding as interpretation. In this sense, perception is not an act of pure description, but, as Stanley Fish puts it, the 'interpretative acts are what is being described' (*Is There a Text in This Class?* 93). Metaphor certainly differs from the literal, which has one fixed meaning and, thus, requires only description, in having different layers of meaning and thus has to be interpreted, in the sense of uncovering these layers of meaning. In a world constituted by metaphors, then, there is no ultimate meaning, but all life and understanding is one unending process of interpretation. According to Shelley, the metaphorical 'marks the before unapprehended relations of things' ('Defence of Poetry' 482), as it also reflects the superiority of organic interpretation over mechanical description. Thus interpreted, there will be no end to the meaning repository of metaphor, as there is no end to finding new signification, relations, or generating new interpretations. For Shelley, consequently, there is no one certain, fixed state for any phenomenon. All have to be understood in their change and transformation; he, as Wellek comments, 'conceives of nature as one phenomenal flux; he sings of clouds, wind, and water rather than, like Wordsworth, of the mountains or the "soul of lonely places"' (*Concepts of Criticism* 186). Search, which in its true sense constitutes Shelley's major theme, as Wasserman points out, 'takes place in the cave of Poesy, in the sense of [being] the place of making, shaping, and formulating' (*Subtler Language* 221-22). Therefore, if Shelley

'revelled in creating world after world in idea,' it is not because, as George Santanyana would like to believe, he is 'incapable of understanding reality' ('Shelley' 160) but because reality has no one definite form or interpretation.

Imagination is another feature of Shelley's philosophy. In his world view imagination is the supreme faculty of the mind. Man, according to him, is not so much marked by his morality or intellectuality as he is 'preeminently an imaginative being' ('Treatise on Morals' 186).

And finally Shelley brings together the concepts of unity, metaphor, and imagination in the one concept of poetry and the character of the poet. Poetry is the reverse process of literality, a counter-movement to familiarity, an act of making familiar objects 'as if they were not familiar' ('Defence of Poetry' 487). Poetry is language as metaphor; it is, as Heidegger puts it, 'the inaugural naming of being and of the essence of all things' (quoted Leitch 63).[24] The Poet on the other hand represents the mind in its imaginal metaphoric perception, unaffected by literality or familiarity. He 'participates,' Shelley says, 'in the eternal, the infinite, and the one' ('Defence of Poetry' 483). He is the Word as a source of meaning and metaphoric interpretation, the logos. 'Disclosing Being and founding existence,' Leitch writes, 'the poet stands between the divinities of the sky and the mortals of the earth' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 64-65).

The poetic perception, however, cannot be sustained. Once metaphor is generated or uncovered it turns into a literal fact or a dead metaphor. Metaphor itself precipitates the loss of identity in the sense that a thing has to be understood in its relation to the other. Everything is itself and something else; nothing, as Carol Jacobs puts it, 'can remain itself or maintain its self-identity: every element enters into play only in relation to its other' (*Uncontainble Romanticism* 48). This makes death and annihilation the highest ecstasy in many of Shelley's poems. As Drummond Bone states, 'transience becomes the sign not of death but eternity, and solidity ... is the sign

of true death' ('Turner and Shelley' 210). Metaphor is the life in death, an end to another start, the theme of many of Shelley's poems like *Prometheus Unbound*, *Epipsychidion*, and 'Ode to the West Wind'. For Shelley, as Jacobs says, a 'form can meet its image, a subject its dreams and imaginings, only by way of death' (ibid. 28).

However, completion for Shelley never ends in annihilation or loss of identity. Unity, as one can see in many of Shelley's poems, is unsustainable. Besides the metaphoric, the literal will never lose its ground; it remains a substitute, a difference. The unity, the sameness, always subverts itself. It is always replaced by its alternate, diversity. 'Occupying the edge or standing before the abyss,' Leitch writes, 'the visionary reader ultimately covers over the space and restricts the flight of the sign to understanding, to meaning, to truth' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 53), and, thus, interpretation ends in determination and metaphoric relations into hypostases. As Barbara Johnson says, '[t]he obsessive cry for oneness, for sameness, always ... meets the same fate: it cannot subsume and erase the trace of its own elaboration. The story Shelley tells again and again is the story of the failure of the attempt to abolish difference' (*A World of Difference* 36). Gareth Walters in his informative analysis of one of the sonnets of Francisco de Aldana also points out that an awareness of the nature of reality and possible unity 'involves a realization of the limitations of human life,' and consequently 'the solace initially expected from the contemplation of a higher reality vanishes when it is realized that this entails a full awareness of the very condition from which the poet has longed to escape' (*Poetry of Francisco de Aldana* 119).

Shelley throughout his writings attempts in one way or another to recover the lost vision, the child's metaphoric perception, when language is poetry; he succeeds to an extent, but he cannot preserve this victory over the literal. In many of his poems the attempt is aborted by death, as in *Alastor*, or remains equivocal at best as in 'Ode to the West Wind'. In *Epipsychidion* he explicitly says that there is no prospect in sight to reach this unity permanently: literality, referentiality, misreading necessarily

replace the metaphor, and poetry is 'concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes' ('Defence of Poetry' 502).

> Woe is me!
> The winged words on which my soul would pierce
> Into the height of love's rare Universe,
> Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.--
> I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!
> (*Epipsychidion* 587-91)

VI. Romantic Affinities: Following the Traces

Tracing the historical influences or even origins of thought systems like Romanticism which represent, as Abercrombie points out, only 'a certain attitude of mind' (*Romanticism* 28) and are rooted in human nature, is inappropriate. Yet, it is not impossible to follow shared elements of thought between the Oriental pantheistic, imaginative and interpretative philosophy and European Romantic thought. In the particular case of this study it is even possible to trace some definite influences, although they are not the kind of direct influence which is usually looked for in comparative studies of literature and history of ideas. My conviction is that the proximity of Oriental and Occidental thought systems insofar as shared Romantic traits are concerned goes back to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, and the surge of romantic love in the phenomenon of the Courtly Love of the Troubadours. This coincided, not accidentally I believe, with the resurgence of Greek philosophy in its Oriental form represented in the philosophy and mysticism of Avicennia, Averroes, and Ibn Massara. The final and enduring impression, I suggest, goes back to Ibn Arabi and his well known doctrine of 'Oneness of being', with imagination and Logos as the intermediary link between the earthly and the divine. Woman is the embodiment of imagination and the best form in which truth is contemplated, as is illustrated in his synoptic work *Fusus al-Hikam*, the last chapter in particular, and his fine collection of odes, *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, which is dedicated to his beloved Nizam Ayn al-Shams.

(I) In discussing the possibility of any affinities between the literature of the East and the West, we have to remember, first of all, that we are speaking of an Oriental philosophy which flourished in Spain, a part of European cultural identity, and at a time when the Iberian Peninsula (Al-Andalus) was the focus of cultural transmission to the whole Continent. This geographical and historical situation makes the probability of thought exchange more plausible. We should remember, second, the highly exceptional historical and cultural position which Spain held during the middle centuries. At the time when Europe was living its dark ages, to use Christopher Dawson's words, 'the culture of Moslem Spain had attained complete maturity, and surpassed even the civilisations of the East in genius and originality of thought' (*Mediaeval Religion* 134). Spain, especially in its rich and populous southern and eastern parts, for several centuries was the centre of Islamic thought and cultural transmission between East and West, and eventually the place where, as Paul Cantor puts it, 'Averos was virtually Dante's neighbour' ('Uncanonical Dante' 145).

One of the characteristics of Romanticism is a taste for Medievalism and a rising interest in Medieval literature. Its importance for the Romantics has often been compared with the importance of Hellenism for the Humanists.[25] Much of the content of Romantic literature, and especially the concept of romantic love, is inherited from the Middle Ages (see *Heresy of Courtly Love* 19-20). And finally, one of the sources from which Romanticism as 'a new designation for poetry' draws its inspiration, according to Wellek, is the Middle Ages (*Concepts of Criticism* 152).

But what in particular is so important for the Romantics and modern 'Western' literature in the Middle Ages? What is that 'mysterious element' that makes the Middle Ages of such great importance to the Romantics? If we do not want to consider the Romantics' indulgence with the medieval as mere nostalgia or escape certainly we have to look for more important reasons than the feudal system, religious

zeal, and the narrow and suspicious attitude towards love in the Middle Ages. The main reason behind this interest was Courtly Love, and consequently, the 'age and the country of the Troubadours' (*Mediaeval Religion* 125). It is in Mme de Stäel's classic definition of Romanticism that we read: 'The name *romantic* has recently been introduced in Germany as a term referring to the poetry that has its origins in the songs of the troubadours, and that is rooted in the traditions of chivalry and Christianity' (quoted Furst 25). The poetry of the Troubadours and the cult of Courtly Love captured their spirit as an ingenious attitude, humanistic in its ideals and religious in its tone and images. This legacy of double truth influenced the Romantics, and, according to Meg Bogin, 'continues to determine a good portion of the Western world of feeling' (*Women Troubadours* 10).

If we do not want to consider the Romantics' indulgence with the medieval as mere nostalgia or escape certainly we have to look for more important reasons than the feudal system, religious zeal, and the narrow and suspicious attitude towards love in the Middle Ages. The main reason behind this interest was Courtly Love, and consequently, the 'age and the country of the Troubadours' (*Mediaeval Religion* 125). It is in Mme de Stäel's classic definition of Romanticism that we read: 'The name *romantic* has recently been introduced in Germany as a term referring to the poetry that has its origins in the songs of the troubadours, and that is rooted in the traditions of chivalry and Christianity' (quoted Furst 25). Courtly love by introducing the concept of romantic love and establishing a sentiment unprecedented in the culture of the West precipitated one of the great and rare advents in the history of European sentiment and ideology. C. S. Lewis observes that 'Real changes in human sentiment are very rare - there are perhaps three or four on record ... and that this is one of them' (*Allegory of Love* 11). The Troubadours, he argues, effected 'a change which has left no corner of our ethics, our imagination, or our daily life untouched' (ibid. 4), and that compared with this change in sentiment and ideology the 'Renaissance is a mere ripple on the surface of literature' (ibid.). It became the turning point where the old classic

came to an end and the modern view of literature had its beginning. In its radical viewpoint on life, love and women Courtly Love erected, to use Denomy's words, 'a barrier between the literature of the classical past, Latin and vernacular literatures contemporary with them, and the literary tradition which followed them in Western Europe' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 20). It was the source of inspiration for the medieval poets and a certain continuity links it with the Romantics and modern poetry. As Dawson observes, it inspired the 'French romances of chivalry, on the one hand, and the *dolce stil nuovo* of Dante and the Italian poets of the Dugento, on the other' (*Mediaeval Religion* 141); whereas 'an unmistakable continuity,' Lewis argues, 'connects the Provençal love song with the love poetry of the later Middle Ages, and hence, through Petrarch and many others, with that of the present day' (*Allegory of Love* 3). Therefore, although we cannot trace more deeply its direct influence on European literature, as Lindsay shows, 'we must note its primary importance in building the bases of later medieval and modern literature' (*Troubadours and their World* 253).

Different views have been given on the origin of Courtly Love and the new sentiment expressed in Troubadour poetry. Christian Chivalry, specified in the definition of Mme de Staël, is one of these sources. This, however, is considered unlikely as, to use Dawson's expression, there is 'nothing save the name in common between the rude Christian chivalry of the north and the refined secular courtly chivalry of the South' (*Mediaeval Religion* 131-32). He emphasises that 'there is nothing in the earlier history of mediaeval society to explain this development. The attitude of feudal society towards women ... was completely unromantic. Woman was regarded either as a chattel or as the partner of her lord in the management of his fief' (ibid. 141).

Christianity is another source which is considered by William Montgomery Watt to be at the root of the medieval 'humble attitude to woman and their conception of love' (*History of Islamic Spain* 116). Lewis rejects the thesis of Religion as being the origin

of Courtly Love: 'there is no evidence that the quasi-religious tone of medieval love poetry has been transferred from the worship of the Blessed Virgin: it is just as likely - it is even more likely - that the colouring of certain hymns to the Virgin has been borrowed from the love poetry' (*Allegory of Love* 8). Jackson holds a similar view: 'The language of the courtly love lyric was undoubtedly used to express the deep feelings of the Christian lover of Mary' (*Literature of the Middle Ages* 23-24, see also 220). Courtly Love which was based on the elevation of the lady, the cult of beloved-worship, and joy of love cannot be in agreement with the medieval Christian perspective. Bogin observes that the Church 'regarded women as so many incarnations of Eve, "the first sinner"' (*Women Troubadours* 11). Denomy also believes that the Troubadour love 'is directly at variance with Christian morality' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 27; see also 19). On the other hand, another characteristic of Courtly Love, as Lindsay puts it, is the 'assertion of the joy of love as a good thing, as the supremely good thing on earth,' which is in opposition to 'all the theological positions' (*Troubadours and their World* 93). The coming of Christianity, as Lewis points out 'did not result in any deepening or idealizing of the conception of love' (*Allegory of Love* 8). Dawson, likewise, rejects the idea, saying that 'Christian morality, especially in its ascetic monastic form, was naturally hostile to and contemptuous of sexual love' (*Mediaeval Religion* 141). And finally, Christianity was considered by critics like John Rutherford as not only not a source of its origin, but quite the contrary, a cause of its decline. He observes: 'The progress of the Christian dominions in Spain turned the attention and the sympathy of the people of Aragon and Catalonia to the westward, and tended to sever them from the Provençals' (*Troubadours* 84).

Nor could the classics be the source of this change of ideology. Love in its Courtly context, Lewis writes, is 'as absent from the literature of the Dark Ages as from that of classical antiquity' (*Allegory of Love* 9). Dawson, too, thinks that 'Latin erotic poetry certainly existed even in the Dark Ages, but it was based on the tradition of Ovid and was frankly sensual and hedonistic in its conception of love' (*Mediaeval Religion*

141). In most classic love poetry there is no idealisation of women nor is it ennobling for the lover. As Jackson argues, 'Respectable women do not appear in the love poetry of classical antiquity. When the ladies are not merely imaginary, they are courtesans or slave girls' (*Literature of the Middle Ages* 95). On the other hand, one of the main features of Courtly Love is its ennobling characteristic which is incompatible with Ovid's conception of love, which is considered to be, according to Denomy, 'shameful and debasing' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 28). As Gerald Bond points out, 'Ovid's lover is not a vassal, love service is absent, and there is no question of gradual refinement' ('Origins' 244). The influence of classic love poetry on the Troubadours, therefore, is not philosophic and is confined, to use Jackson's words, to 'language and style' (*Literature of the Middle Ages* 219).

The other theory on the origin of Courtly Love which is strongly supported by Stern and was given more plausibility by his discovery of the *kharja* is the Mozarbic origin of Courtly Love as a genre and the indigenous root of the troubadour tradition. Stern bases his hypothesis on the ending couplets of the *muwashshah* which sometimes were written in Romance. He argues that before the coming of the Muslims into Spain people there celebrated certain festivals and these festivals continued to be celebrated by the natives even after the coming of Islam. He then concludes that

> We can assume that the old custom of women singing contica amatoria on these festivals also survived into the Muslim period. The Arabic poets, in quest of new melodies, took up these songs and composed new texts on the tunes; the new poems were no longer sung in the public places by the women of the people, but in courtly assemblies by singing-girls. Yet, in memory of the popular poems which provided them with new tunes, the poets formed the habit of inserting at the end of their verses short quotations from their models; in this way *kharja* came into being. (*Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry* 62)

However, even if we take this hypothesis as true, it does not prove the indigenous origin of the Courtly Love tradition. First of all, we have to remember that Courtly Love is not a simple genre or a theme. The art of the Troubadours was not and should

never be considered simply a style of poetic expression. As Lewis argues, 'We may be quite sure that the poetry which initiated all over Europe so great a change of heart was not a "mere" convention: we can be quite as sure that it was not a transcript of fact. It was poetry' (*Allegory of Love* 22). Courtly Love, as Boase also explains, is much more than a 'poetic convention': 'it was a literary and sentimental ideology, a secular profession of faith, which, from about the time of the First Crusade (1096-9) until the Protestant Reformation, was the chief impulse behind the cultural achievements and the style of life of the European aristocracy' (*Troubadour Revival* xi).

Courtly love, thus, does not represent only one other episode in the history of literary forms but is an attitude, a philosophy of life, and an ideological, cultural behaviour based on the concept of love as ennobling, and which represents the highest ideals of human existence. Therefore, the existence of certain festivals or using certain words or even expressing oneself in one language or another does not contradict the introduction of a new outlook or attitude which could have used these existing occasions to promote its ideals.

Stern's view is essentially concerned with the technical aspects or the poetics of Courtly Love as a form of poetry. On the other hand, his assumptions are based only on the existence of *kharja* in one of the Romance languages. Because of this evidence he assumes that Courtly Love Poetry must have stemmed from 'the line of traditional oral poetry' (*Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry* 209). But there are very few clues to the question of what the form of that poetry was. As he admits, 'speculation on a form of poetry which has disappeared is rather like groping in the void' (ibid. 209-210). On this meagre evidence he nevertheless concludes that 'poems in Romance had the same form as that of the *muwashshah*--AA bbbaa' (ibid. 210), and then the more important hypothesis that 'one can see no reason why one should not admit that Muqaddam [the supposed initiator of *muwashshah*] imitated in Arabic a pre-existing Romance rhyme-

scheme: *aa* bbb*aa'* (ibid. 212). As is apparent, these arguments cannot provide the basis for any judgement on the origin of the Troubadour poetry. Jack Lindsay in discussing the phenomenon of *kharje* writes:

> ... the *jarchas* did not themselves create the forms of *muwashshah* or *zejel*, though scholars, in their eagerness to deny the role of the Arabs in helping to bring about Troubadour poetry, often write as if we have proof that they did. Certainly we can now surmise that romance-forms or song did play their part in the creation and development of the Arabic forms. Even if we consider the latter forms based their rhymes and metres on *jarchas* which were normally in Arabic vernacular, in romance-dialect, or in both, we still have to give the Arab poets much credit for the expansion and elaboration of the song-forms, which in turn would have reacted back on the songs of the romance-vernaculars. (*Troubadours and their World* 166)

Peter Dronke also wonders if 'these brief verses [are] fragments from longer lyrics, the rest of which is lost' but comments that it is not necessarily so (*Medieval Lyric* 88). He continues: 'the context to envisage for such lines may well be a dance rather than a longer poem: there they could be built out by repetition, instrumentation and mime, or, in a longer dance-play, each *kharja* or *refrain* could have acted as a focal point for one scene' (ibid.).

(II) Although many views have been expressed on the origin of Courtly Love--many think of it as an insoluble question, and some critics like Peter Dronke are even sceptical about the existence of such a poetic form--the origin of Troubadour poetry is most likely Oriental.

John Rutherford argues 'That the poetry of medieval Provence derived its peculiarities from the Moors there cannot be a doubt. It is Eastern in nearly all respects, and in form as well as character. The prototype of every species of lyric in use among the troubadours is to be found in the poetry of the Spanish Moors, of their Arab progenitors, or of the cognate races' (*Troubadours* 76). Considering the origin of Provençal poetry he further suggests that 'Its rise and prosperity were caused by communication with the Moors, by the excitement of the crusades' (ibid. 83). Dawson

strongly holds that 'it is in Moslem Spain rather than in Northern Europe that we must look for the prototype of the knightly troubadour whose art was thoroughly aristocratic' (*Mediaeval Religion* 138). Denomy's conviction is also that the origin of Courtly Love has to be found in 'Arabian philosophy and specifically in the mystical philosophy of Avicenna' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 29-30). Writing on the identity of Courtly Love Boase too observes that it 'was brought about by changes in the social environment and by influences from the Arab world, and that it was reinforced by behavioural codes that gave free expression to the play of instinct in man' (*Troubadour Revival* xi). After discussing the possible influence and enumerating the thematic and linguistic similarities between Arabic poetry and Provencal poetry, Jackson points out that 'All this could be explained away as coincidence if it were not for proven cultural contacts, not with the Arabs in the East, as was formerly believed, but with the rich Arab culture of Spain' (*Literature of the Middle Ages* 241).

Stern, however, categorically rejects such an influence. His main reason for overlooking the possible Arabic influence on the emergence of Courtly Love and the Troubadours is that theories supporting such a hypothesis presuppose direct contact, and, according to him, 'it is absurd to claim that those who expressed the ideas of courtly love have had such contact with Arab sources as to be able to derive from them comprehensive ideas of this kind' (*Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry* 216). Gerald Bond also shares this view on the same basis of lack of direct contact in the late eleventh and early years of the twelfth centuries (see 'Origins' 243). However, enough has been said on the contact and cultural and philosophical exchange between East and West to make Stern's hesitations unnecessary. If by lack of direct contact, however, he means contact between the few practitioners of Courtly Love as a genre, we should say that this could be true, but many of the deeper exchanges which take place between cultures and civilisations have taken place not through direct contacts but through indirectly creating a much wider cultural atmosphere, European Romanticism being one such example. This is not to say that direct contact did not

also exist and many Troubadours were under the direct influence of Arabic poetry. First of all, the Islamic culture was so pervasive that, according to Bogen, 'it was hardly necessary to leave Occitania to hear the melodies of Andalusia and Arabia' (*Women Troubadours* 46). Second, many of the Troubadours were indeed familiar with Arabic culture and literature. Guilhem, for many the first Troubadour, for example, as Bogen observes, 'by all accounts did not begin to write until 1102, just after his return from the Crusades. He had spent a year semi-imprisoned at the court of Tancred, where presumably, he would have been exposed to Arab poetry' (ibid.). Peyre d'Auvergne, Rutherford assumes, borrowed many of his poetic themes and stories from the Moors, 'with whom old Peyre often came in contact during his rambles' (*Troubadours* 70).

(III) If the major historical and ideological events which have been decisive turning points in the history of thought and ideas are few and numbered, Romanticism no doubt is one of these major events. With the same extreme importance which Lewis gives to Troubadour and Courtly Love as an event which has changed the Western culture and thought, Abrams speaks of Romantic thought and literature as being a 'decisive turn in Western culture' (*Natural Supernaturalism* 14). 'The writers of that age,' he argues, 'in reinterpreting their cultural inheritance, developed new modes of organizing experience, new ways of seeing the outer world, and a new set of relations of the individual to himself, to nature, to history, and to his fellow men' (ibid.). Besides their importance, these two movements have much in common to make them liable to a comparative study insofar as their constitutive thought elements are concerned.

The poetry of the Troubadours, no doubt, was known and admired by the Romantics, and it has left a deep impression on their conception of love and their logic in its combination of the contraries. Shelley certainly was aware of the Troubadours and

had read their poetry. On its dominant theme, love, and the way it leads to disinterestedness and moral perfection, he writes:

> The Provençal Trouveurs, or inventors, preceded Petrarch, whose verses are as spells which unseal the inmost enchanted fountains of the delight which is in the grief of Love. It is impossible to feel them without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate: it were superfluous to explain how the gentleness and the elevation of mind connected with these sacred emotions can render men more amiable, more generous, and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapors of the little world of self. ('Defence of Poetry' 497)

Different views have been expressed on the rationale behind this high esteem. Boase's view is typical: 'Since the troubadours did not appear to be constrained by the need to imitate classical models, they were to prove a useful weapon in the campaign against Neo-classicism: in the early years of the nineteenth century they were proclaimed the initiators of 'le gout moderne' and harbingers of Romanticism' (*Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love* 2). This statement, however, speaks of the innovation of the Troubadours insofar as their poetics or form of poetry is concerned. No doubt in this they presented a good example to the Romantics in their wish for simultaneity of words and emotion and their antagonistic attitude towards artfulness in poetry in the sense of separation of form and meaning. But what makes them more important to the Romantics is the new sentiment and attitude they brought to literature and poetry, reflected in their conception of Courtly Love.

The affinity between Troubadour poetry and Romanticism should be looked at in the two concepts of Courtly Love and romantic love which reflect the same passion and are derived from a similar attitude.[26] One of the characteristics of this attitude is that it is quasi-religious in the sense of being religious yet not orthodox nor professing religion in its institutional form; it combines the contraries, and in this it is gives rise to the concept of Logos and imagination as the intermediary world which gathers the two worlds in itself, or rather it is the only one real world.

It is well known that the Renaissance initiated a trend of secularisation in most fields of learning. Although this trend was continued in the Romantic era, the tendency was to a new direction, and it would be a mistake to assimilate it in the general trend of secularisation which has been continued up to the modern age. In this particular age, beside the age-old movement of secularisation, there was a tendency to the assimilation of religious and theological concepts in a new secular form. Thus, the same old doctrinal principles were brought into life again but with a different connotation and interpretation. In his classic major study of the religious and secular aspects of Romantic thought and literature, *Natural Supernaturalism*, Abrams observes that what distinguishes the Romantics is that 'they undertook, whatever their religious creed or lack of creed, to save traditional concepts, schemes, and values which had been based on the relation of the Creator to his creature and creation, but within the prevailing two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature' (*Natural Supernaturalism* 13). Thus, the 'characteristic concepts and patterns of Romantic Philosophy and literature,' according to Abrams, 'are a displaced and reconstituted theology, or else a secularized form of devotional experience' (ibid. 65). He further argues that

> ... despite their displacement from a supernatural to a natural frame of reference, however, the ancient problems, terminology and ways of thinking about human nature and history survived, as the implicit distinctions and categories through which even radically secular writers saw themselves and their world, and as the presuppositions and forms of their thinking about the condition, milieu, the essential values and aspirations, and the history and destiny of the individual and of mankind. (ibid. 13)

Romantic love, following the same trend, is neither divine nor secular or purely sexual. It is imaginative in its Romantic sense of being integrative and combining the two aspects of being: earthly-divine or sexual-spiritual simultaneously.

Troubadour love, like romantic love, was markedly distinct from both the classic or Latin concept of love and its medieval and religious counterpart. Ovidian love by nature is generally sensual, carnal, and hedonistic. It is profane rather than sacred and would readily recognize the pleasures of love but deny its ennobling effect. The coming of Christianity after the fall of classic civilisation, also, did not change the concept of love very much. Love was still considered as something evil, or at best instrumental.

The age of the Troubadours like the Romantics' witnessed a movement of secularisation in the sphere of poetry and love in particular. The era between the ninth and the twelfth centuries saw an increasing interest in secular education, which, as Raymond Gay-Crosier points out, 'provided rich and fertile ground for the development of secular poetry' (*Religious Elements in the Secular Lyrics of the Troubadours* 15-16). Although the Troubadours expressed their real passion and ideals, they did so only by using the same medium and images as their religious predecessors. This combination of contraries was inevitable since the love they championed was neither purely sensual nor religious. It was secular in the sense of being earthly rather than divine, and ideal or spiritual in the sense of being ennobling rather than hedonistic or instrumental. Thus, the Troubadours by making their love neither purely divine nor sexual separated themselves from both the classics and the theologically dominated atmosphere of the Middle Ages. On the one hand, they were, to use Meg Bogin's expression, 'among the first to express what we might now call romantic love, as distinguished from, though not necessarily excluding, sexual passion' (*Women Troubadours* 9). On the other hand, they were persistent, as Raymond Gay-Crosier points out, in their 'consistent transposition of religious categories of thought into the realm of the glorification of women' (*Religious Elements in the Secular Lyrics of the Troubadours* 19). In its conception of love as ennobling and good, the 'troubadour love ethic,' as Lindsay puts it, is 'a highly

sophisticated expression of the revolt against the branding of love as evil' (*Troubadours and their World* 93).

The Troubadours, to sum up, turned the religious content of the medieval poetry and its dominant theme of divine love into an earthly love and ordinary human passion. However, the earthly love of the Troubadours did not mean mere sexual passion in its Ovidian form. Their love is distinguished from both religious divine love and sexual passion in having the two aspects of love simultaneously. The cult of the Troubadours is not purely secular as there is a sort of worship, devotion, and dedication. Nevertheless it is not purely spiritual as the aim is not God, but the beloved, nor is it idealistic in the platonic sense as it aims at union with the beloved and it does not exclude sexual passion. Thus the new movement was initiated not by abandoning religious terms and themes, but by making these a vehicle for earthly love and secular passion. The movement, however, is unprecedented, having no observable indigenous background in the European classic or Christian theological climate.[27] And it is here that one becomes tempted to look for the origin of courtly love in other thought systems or philosophies.

(IV) The movement of the Provençal Troubadours coincided with a great surge of interest in mystical and philosophical traditions tinged with Greek philosophy in the Iberian Peninsula, and the Troubadours, no doubt, were influenced by these thought systems (Cf. Gay-Crosier 88). The Troubadours, as Lindsay argues, 'took over from the mystics the idea of love as the one great ennobling force, which drove man through the stages of self-fulfilment; but for union of the lonely soul with God they substituted the union of two earthly lovers in the fullness of their spiritual and physical existences' (*Troubadours and their World* 164). Moreover, the ideas of piety and purity of heart, Gay-Crosier points out, offered the Troubadours 'a new field which allowed them to give somewhat freer rein to their strongly subjective inclinations' (*Religious Elements in the Secular Lyrics of the Troubadours* 90). Thus,

they changed the religious overtone of the mystical experience and turned it into a quest for more graspable ideals.[28] The new strategy transposed the divine for an earthly beloved, and accepted a Neoplatonic line of quest for truth and perfection. These were the traits that branded their poetry a heresy, and made them appear to many during the Middle Ages as followers of 'a mystical philosophy that was heretical' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 32).

Taking into account that the origin of Courtly Love philosophy was not indigenous, Oriental philosophy and mysticism become the more likely sources of the Troubadour movement (or had the most influence on it). Different philosophical traditions have been nominated as the possible source of influence: Avicenniaism (especially in *Treatise on Love*), Averroism or Latin Averroism, and Pseudo-Empedoclianism. What is common between these schools is their belief in a dialectical and dynamic affinity between two entities based on their acceptance of the combination of the contraries which makes them distinct from the linear and static classical and Christian medieval conception of love which is based on exclusion.

To begin with the latter, the classics' end of love is pleasure; so it is both reductionist and static. The medieval Christian attitude, on the other hand, is linear insofar as it starts from matter and ends with God. Matter was considered as the source of all deficiencies and thus any movement of love should be summarised in reducing the attachment of the spirit to the world of matter. Sexual love was considered evil or at best an end for preserving the species of human kind.

Turning to the other group, Avicennia bases his concept of love in the beings' quest for perfection. He believes that 'no being is ever free from *some* connection with a perfection, and this connection with it is accompanied by an innate love and desire for that which may unite it with its perfection' (*Treatise on Love* 212). Although in like manner he endorses a movement of love which begins with matter and ends with

absolute perfection, and thinks that 'every evil results from attachment to matter and non-being' (ibid.), nevertheless the matter he speaks of is different from its corresponding term in Christian spirituality. What he understands by 'matter' is not the antithesis of spirit, the physical aspect of man or the world, but the 'other' of form. In Christian theology we have to leave the matter to reach the spirit, but in Avicennianism we do not have to leave the matter, but to look for its other. In other words, matter and form are two relational terms which could be understood only in their relationship to each other. Thus matter, when deprived of form, is equal to non-being and exists only potentially. It is matter in this sense of non-being that is considered a defect and has to accomplish itself with the perfection of a form. Avicennia says:

> ... whenever it [matter] is deprived of a form it will hurry to receive another form in its stead. For it is an inexorable law that all beings by nature shy away from absolute non-being. But matter is the abode of non-being. Thus, whenever a form does not substantially subsist in it, this will be equivalent to relative non-being, and if matter is not connected with a form at all, there will be absolute non-being.... It is established, then, that matter possesses an inborn love. (ibid. 215)

However, form likewise is dependent on matter, and without it, it has no existence. It 'cannot subsist in separation' (ibid. 214). Avicennia defines them in complementary terms: 'form is a substance in the mode of actuality', and matter 'is a substance in the mode of potentiality' (ibid. 215).

Thus, the movement from matter to form and form to matter is motivated by the desire to reach perfection which Avicennia thinks of as a form of creation since it is a movement from non-being to being and existence. This movement he defines as love, on the basis that he thinks love is the source of being and the cause of creation: 'In all beings, therefore, love is either the cause of their being, or being and love are identical in them. It is thus evident that no being is devoid of love' (ibid. 214). Love thus defined by Avicennia comes out of its narrow frame of affection between two persons

or an intentional quest for divine perfection by some accomplished philosophers or mystics. It extends to include all animate and inanimate beings: 'every one of these simple and inanimate entities is accompanied by an inborn love, from which it is never free, and this love is the cause of their being' (ibid. 215).

Now we come to the kind of love which exists between two persons. In his anatomy of such a love Avicennia believes that it is neither pure rational or spiritual nor sensual or sexual. It is a fusion of the two:

> ... it is part of the nature of beings endowed with reason to covet a beautiful sight; and that this is sometimes,--certain conditions granted--, to be considered as refinement and nobility. This disposition is either specific to the animal faculty alone, or it results from a partnership [of the rational and animal faculties]. But if it is specific to the animal faculty alone, the sages do not consider it as a sign of refinement and nobility. For, it is an incontrovertible truth that when a man expresses animal desires in an animal fashion, he becomes involved in vice and is harmed in his rational soul. On the other hand, [this type of love] is not specific to the rational soul alone either, for the endeavour of the latter requires the intelligible and eternal universals, not sensible and perishable particulars. This [type of love], then, results from an alliance between the two. (ibid. 220-221)

This is perhaps the first step taken to consecrate sexual love and think of it as ennobling. Love in this sense not only will not be considered as evil but a necessary condition for any growth in character. 'For this reason,' Avicennia says, 'one will never find the wise ... to be free from having their hearts occupied with a beautiful human form' (ibid. 221).

The introduction of Averroism in Europe, even more than Avicennianism, was effective in bringing the earthly and the divine together, paradoxically by separating reason and faith or philosophy and theology which hitherto were united in Christian spirituality (Cf. *Heresy of Courtly Love* 41). Lindsay argues that 'Avicenna's system had in effect got rid of any creator god, stressing that matter was eternal and itself the principle of multiplicity, and there was a single active intellect for all humanity.... But Averroes, commenting on Aristotle and accepted by Western thinkers by about 1250,

had even more deeply broken the unity of faith and reason' (*Troubadours and their World* 225). Averroism, in the form of Latin Averroism, thus, was more familiar to the medieval philosophers and the Troubadours, as it was also very instrumental in drawing the outline of the Troubadour love ethics. It was this widespread influence, especially on the Troubadours, that aroused the hostility and condemnation of the theologians of the Middle Ages against the outlook reflected in the new philosophy and sciences. Lindsay states that in the condemnation of philosophy, science and Troubadour poetry by the scholastics, 'What was being attacked was not so much a formal system of ideas as a state of mind that came to be associated with the work of Averroes' (ibid.).

Although both Avicennia and Averroes commented on an Aristotle 'deformed and interpreted according to neoplatonic pantheism and mysticism' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 48), nevertheless they were Aristotelian peripatetic. The Troubadour movement, however, was mainly centred on Neoplatonism. It is this Platonic philosophy that distinguished the Troubadours and continued their literary tradition within Western thought and literature. As Gay-Crosier points out, 'Beginning with Guinicelli and Dante, through Petrarch and his disciples, Marot, Marguerite de Navarre, Ronsard, and the Romantics, a line may be drawn indicating the continuation in literary terms of the Platonic heritage, alongside the purely philosophical tradition' (*Religious Elements in the Secular Lyrics of the Troubadours* 91). Therefore, in the milieu where the Troubadours lived and inhaled the cultural spirit of the age, there should have been more important philosophical and mystical schools than Avicennianism or Averroism, which are mostly philosophical rather than mystical and more Aristotelian than Platonic. One of these schools which was in a most scholarly manner introduced by Palacios was that of Ibn Massara, 'a real heretical system within Islam with Neo-Platonic, mystic, and pantheistic characteristics whose roots are closely intertwined in the Spanish souls' (*Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Massara* xi). The school reflected certain philosophical principles similar to the teaching of Empedocles which Palacios

calls pseudo-Empedocles. Creation was conceived as a series of emanations from the One beginning with the primal matter, then, intellect, soul, nature, and secondary matter. Unlike Plotinus, however, who starts the hierarchy with the One, Empedocles in his Massarian version, 'eliminates the hypostasis of the One from the five substances' (ibid. 66), and starts creation with primal matter which is the simplest and most spiritual in the hierarchy. The One remains transcendent, and although it is the cause of creation, it is not a direct cause, as creation is mediated through the primal matter, the Word or Logos.

Empedocles, as Palacios notes, like Parmenides thought of love as 'the divinity that unites', and hate 'the destructive force of the unity' (ibid. 59). Now, the main alteration which the pseudo-Empedocles introduces into the system is in attributing love and hate 'not to God himself, but to *primal matter*' (ibid. 60). It consequently separates the two forces, placing love in the soul and hate in Nature respectively.

Empedoclianism, Abercrombie indicates, followed two lines of thought. One line of thought which comes from Heraclitus and is 'pursued by Empedokles in his poem *Concerning the Nature of Things* [*sic*]' (*Romanticism* 63)[29] 'sought to make inner and outer experience the two halves of an equation' (ibid. 62). The other line was received from Pythagoras and is followed in the *Purifications* disrupts this equilibrium and gives the priority to the inner experience. The priority which Empedocles gives to the inner experience and subsequently to imagination makes him Romantic in many of his thoughts, and to John Addington Symonds, as he writes in one of his 'Studies of the Greek Poets,' resembling 'Shelley in the quality of his imagination and in many of his utterances' (quoted Abercrombie 58).

Two outstanding notions in Empedocles' *Purifications* are those of Personal Genius and Perfectible Life. On the other hand, Love and Strife are the two forces which simultaneously rule over the world. Strife is the tendency towards disintegration and

individual existence. Love, however, is at work to restore unity to the fragmented world. It was this 'aesthetic principle of *concordia discors*, derived from the cosmology of Empedocles and Heraclitus,' according to Boase, that 'played some part in the development of a paradoxical courtly style, justified by a theory of universal strife' (*Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love* 124). Lindsay also observes that 'It is from this angle of the quest, with a dialectic of give-and-take, of union and separation, conflict and resolution, that the Troubadour system merges with certain aspects of Sufism and of Christian mysticism' (*Troubadours and their World* 218-19). Unity through Love in Empedoclean thought, in turn, becomes the ground for two major Romantic themes: 'Life Perfectible through Love' and 'individual mind through love knowing and entering into God' (*Romanticism* 68). The two themes originate two major tendencies in Romantic thought which are exemplified in Blake's mysticism and Shelley's vision of a world made perfect through love, Empedoclean themes which Palacios insists flourished in Europe through the school of Ibn Massara.

The distinctive core of the above thought system and what makes it relevant to the cult of Courtly Love constitutes the two principles of Logos which is considered as the cause of creation and the mediator between the One and the many, and love as the power that reintegrates the world and brings the warring elements together.

Although the Massarian mystical school and the Neoplatonic tradition were of prime importance in furnishing the background of Troubadour poetry, they lack the feminine element which is the very essence of Courtly Love, nor is there any clue in either of them for us to consider their concept of logos as bearing the same characteristics as woman in the Troubadour poetry and the concept of the beloved as the intermediary between the intellectual and the sensual. In the philosophy of Avicennia and Averroes the feminine element, although present, is dealt with on the abstract level and never thought of in a concrete fashion. It is described with the abstraction of a philosopher rather than the vivacity and the peculiar reality of an imaginative poet.

One of the theosophists who, more than any other mystic or philosopher, has elaborated on the idea of logos as an intermediary between the earthly and the divine, and in this has deeply influenced the philosophical side of Courtly Love (followed by Dante and Petrarch and in contrast to the dialectical or secular side of the concept)[30] and left a clear influence on Dante and many others was Ibn Arabi. The idea gains more credibility when we take into account the important role which Ibn Arabi had in the cultural exchange between the East and the West. Following his idea of Logos, Ibn Arabi thought of the beloved as the intermediary between the divine and the sensible, the idea which, according to Dawson, 'was taken over by the Italian poets of the *dolce stil nuovo* and finds typical expression in the Canzoni of Guido Cavalcanti and Dante' (*Mediaeval Religion* 152). Like Avicennia, Ibn Arabi thinks that love 'is the origin of all existent being' (*Fusus* 272). If the former considers love as the relationship between matter and form, Ibn Arabi thinks of it as the relationship between beings and the divine Names and attributes. He believes that man seeks to contemplate Reality; however, 'Contemplation of the Reality without formal support is not possible,' and the 'best and most perfect kind is the contemplation of God in women' (ibid. 275). Thus Ibn Arabi's definition of love is not purely spiritual but is 'formal'. It is not carnal, moreover, as he believes he whose love is 'limited to natural lust lacks all [true] knowledge of that desire' (ibid. 276).

The best form in which Reality might be contemplated thus is woman: She is the beloved that is incomprehensible and the figure that combines the contraries. This is most strikingly elucidated by Ibn Arabi in the collection of his lyrical odes, *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* or 'Interpreter of Desires'. The theme of these poems is his love for Nizam Ayn al-Shams, an exceedingly beautiful girl. In the introduction to this collection he writes of his affection for the girl that 'he would [have] descanted on her physical and moral perfection had he not been deterred by the weakness of human souls, which are easily corrupted' (*Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* 3). On the theme of the poems and his

motivation in writing them, in spite of the expected opposition from the traditionalists, he says:

> ... I have put into verse for her sake some of the longing thoughts suggested by those precious memories, and I have uttered sentiments of a yearning soul and have indicated the sincere attachment which I feel, fixing my mind on bygone days and those scenes which her society has endeared to me. Whenever I mention a name in this book I always allude to her, and whenever I mourn over an abode I mean her abode. (ibid. 3-4)

These odes attracted the strict theologians' censure of him as 'a man famous for religion and piety, [who] composed poetry in the erotic style' (ibid. 5). However, Ibn Arabi's love for the lady is not purely sensual, but spiritualised and ennobling, and this is what makes his lyrics fine examples of Courtly Love poetry. Immediately after doting on the physical and earthly aspects of his love or beloved Nizam, he, paradoxically, states:

> In these poems I always signify Divine influences and spiritual revelation and sublime analogies, according to the most excellent way which we (Sufis) follow.... God forbid that readers of this book and of my other poems should think of aught unbecoming souls that scorn evil and to lofty spirits that are attached to the things of Heaven. (ibid. 4)

Thus, Ibn Arabi in one gesture obliterates the barrier between the earthly and the divine. Nizam, a real girl, *is* a thing of Heaven. All manifestations of his love become metaphors, symbols, in the sense, as Peter Wilson would say with Coleridge, that 'both represents and is the thing it represents' ('Eros & Literary Style in Ibn Arabi' 11). This is, in fact, what attracts the attention of Austin in his comment on Ibn Arabi's poems: 'It has always interested me how frequently the poetic expression of erotic and spiritual love and ecstasy, apparently so opposite, share a common imagery' ('Feminine Dimensions in Ibn Arabi's Thought' 11). Thus, the argument whether Ibn Arabi's lyrics were purely erotic [the view supported by Dozy] or really mystical [Nicholson's view] is out of place, because Ibn Arabi's conception of love and

consequently his poetry although spiritual does not exclude the 'formal' or the sexual. The distinction between the two modes is only a distinction of perception.

This argument could be followed by examining the way he treated love in his odes which could be considered as among the best examples in the tradition of Courtly Love. His many odes in *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* describe love in its deepest and richest experience with all their Troubadour characteristics. Although the philosophical and mystical sides sometimes become dominant in his poetry, and the beloved becomes a symbol for the enigmatic ecstasy and the exultation of the experience, nevertheless, his experience is real and he is in love with a real person. It is true that he 'uses the symbolism of love,' as Dawson observes, 'to express his deepest religious ideas'; nevertheless his 'book of mystical odes is dedicated to a real lady whom he met at Mecca in 1201 and who occupied somewhat the same position in his life as Beatrice did in the life of Dante' (*Medieval Religion* 144). These odes are undeniably erotic and have direct reference to his beloved Nizam. In one of his lyrics he describes her:

> The full moon appeared in the night of hair, and the black narcissus bedewed the
> rose.
> A tender girl is she: the fair women were confounded by her, and her radiance
> outshone the moon.
> If she enters into the mind, that imagination wounds her: how, then, can she be
> perceived by the eye?
> She is a phantom of delight that melts away when we think of her: she is too subtle
> for the range of vision. (xliv.1-4)

In one place he alludes to her name Nizam (Harmony) directly:

> O my two comrades, may my life-blood be the ransom of a slender
> girl who bestowed on me favours and bounties!
> She established the harmony of union, for she is our principle of
> harmony: she is both Arab and foreign: she makes the gnostic forget.
> Whenever she gazes, she draws against thee trenchant swords,
> and her front teeth show to thee a dazzling levin. (xxix.13-15)

He describes her in another ode:

She is a rose that springs up from tears, a narcissus that sheds a marvellous shower.
And when thou wouldst fain gather her, she lets down, to conceal herself, a scorpion-
like tress on each side of her temples.
The sun rises when she smiles. O Lord, how bright are these bubbles on her teeth!
Night appears when she lets fall her black, luxuriant, and tangled hair. (xxx.21-24)

He further speaks of his beloved:

Among them is she who loves and assails with glances like arrows and Indian swords
every frenzied heart that loves the fair.
She takes with a hand soft and delicate, like pure silk anointed with nadd and
shredded musk.
When she looks, she gazes with a deep eye of a young gazelle; to her eye belongs the
blackness of antimony.
Her eyes are adorned with languishment and killing magic, her sides are girt with
amazement and incomparable beauty. (xxii.5-8)

Despite all these erotic descriptions of his beloved, Ibn Arabi nonetheless claims that
all of the images, places, events, or dialogues described in these poems are symbols
which intend something beyond their 'superficial' meaning, a 'something', however,
not contradictory in nature since what Ibn Arabi intends by love and beauty is nothing
other than the supreme theophany which could be revealed only through love. As
Henry Corbin observes:

Mystic love is as far from negative asceticism as it is from the estheticism or
libertinism of the possessive instinct. But the organ of theophanic perception, that is,
of the perception through which the encounter between Heaven and Earth in the mid-
zone, the 'alam al mithal' takes place, is the active imagination. It is the active
Imagination which invests the earthly Beloved with his 'theophanic function'....
(*Creative Imagination* 98)

Ibn Arabi's beloved reveals all the characteristics of Courtly Love. She is a real
woman yet unapproachable and superior. She is the symbol of *aql* or intelligence, the
embodiment of imagination which he considers the isthmus or causeway between two
worlds, and in other words the only real world, the other two being two sides or
aspects of it. Thus in his poetry the beloved is both a real human being and at the

same time an imaginative consecrating figure who bears marks which make her distinctively ethereal:

> She is the joy that transports from the rank of humanity every one who burns with
> > love of her,
> From jealousy that her clear essence should be mingles with the filth which is in the
> > tanks.
> She excels the sun in splendour: her form is not to be compared with any.
> The heaven of light is under the sole of her foot: her diadem is beyond the spheres.
> (xliv.8-11)

Ibn Arabi's language, like that of the Troubadours, is also religious, and many of the similes and allusions describing or referring to his beloved are religious. In many of his odes, like the following, he brilliantly mixes the earthly and the divine, and it is not surprising that it is difficult to say if his odes are erotic or mystical:

> When she walks on the glass pavement thou seest a sun on a celestial sphere in the
> > bosom of Idris.
> When she kills with her glances, her speech restores to life, as tho' she, in giving life
> > thereby, were Jesus.
>
> The smooth surface of her legs is (like) the Tora in brightness, and I follow it and
> > tread in its footsteps as tho' I were Moses.
> She is a bishopess, one of the daughters of Rome, unadorned: thou seest in her a
> > radiant Goodness.
> Wild is she, none can make her his friend; she has gotten in her solitary chamber a
> > mausoleum for remembrance.
> She has baffled everyone who is learned in our religion, every student of the Psalms
> > of David, every Jewish doctor, and every Christian priest.
> If with a gesture she demands the Gospel, thou wouldst deem us to be priests and
> > patriarchs and deacons. (ii.3-9)

In another ode, he describes truly and accurately all the hopes and fears and the contradictory emotions and responses which real and earthly love awakens in the lover's mind. The language and the images, however, are divine and religious:

> O grief for my heart, O grief! O joy for my mind, O joy!
> In my heart the fire of passion is burning, my mind the full moon of darkness hath
> > set
> ....
> She is the mourning sun rising in a heaven, she is the bough of the sand-hills planted
> > in garden.

If she riseth, she will be a wonder to mine eye, or if she setteth she will be the cause
of my death

....

If Iblis had seen in Adam the brilliance of her face, he would not have refused to
worship him.

If Idris had seen the lines that Beauty limned on her cheeks, then he would never
have written.

If Bilqis had seen her couch, the throne and the pavement would not have occurred to
her mind. (xxv.1-13)

Ibn Arabi through his idea of logos and the lady as the embodiment of imagination
has influenced the Troubadours who were interested like him in the philosophical side
of their love. His subject matter become standard topics discussed later in medieval
Courtly Love. 'Almost all the dichotomies of late medieval European love poetry,'
Boase writes, 'can be found in the mystical works of Ibn Arabi: delight and torment;
life and death; absence and presence; sickness and medicine; hope and despair;
secrecy and self-expression; freedom and slavery; memory and oblivion; human and
divine; or everything and nothing' (*Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love* 66).

One of the themes which was initiated by Ibn Arabi and continued to affect both
Eastern and Western literature was the theme of a lady as the symbol of love and a
guide for the quester in his search for truth. The first intermediary link with European
literature was perhaps Dante. As Bogin states, 'Through Dante's Beatrice, love was
proclaimed the supreme experience of life, and the quest for love, with the lady as its
guiding spirit, became the major theme of Western literature' (*Women Troubadours*
10). Ibn Arabi gives an example in the introduction to his collection of odes:

I was circumabulating the House one night when I felt a sudden joy and had a rapture I
had experienced before. Then, I left the court to avoid the crowd and began to walk on
the sand. Few lines came to my mind, and I began to recite them in a way audible to
me and those behind me, if there were any:

Would that I were aware whether they knew what heart they possessed!
And would that my heart knew what mountain-pass they treaded!
Dost thou deem them safe or dost thou deem them dead?
Lovers lose their way in love and become entangled.

When suddenly I felt somebody beating between my two shoulders with a palm softer than silk; I turned back; I saw a maid from the daughters of Rome. I had never seen a more beautiful face, or sweeter eloquence, more delicate bearings, finer meaning, more precise gestures, or more interesting discourse than hers. She has exceeded the people of her generation in intellect, learning and beauty and wisdom. (*Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* 14)[31]

Then, Ibn Arabi says, the girl began to ask him about the verses he was reading. He began to reread the four lines, and after each line the maid stopped him and commented on his mistakes and the contradictions implied in that specific line. Thus, in the first line she observes that it is impossible for a person who has owned the heart to be ignorant of it. In the second line it is impossible the heart should have known anything about the road the beloved ones have taken for it is the same road which separates him and them. In the third line the question is wrongly put since it would be more correct if the poet had asked himself if he is safe or perished rather than the beloved. And finally in the fourth line it is contradictory that a lover who has lost all his heart to the beloved, should still have some left with which to wonder.

However, the Angelic visitor is not an abstract idea, and at the end of the episode does not disappear like the 'Shape all light' in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life* or the 'veiled maid' in *Alastor*, but maintains a long-term companionship with Ibn Arabi.[32]

The other closely connected theme is that of ascension or spiritual journey which was followed, according to Palacios, also by Dante. In his book *Islam and the Divine Comedy* Palacios traces the indirect influences of Ibn Arabi on Dante, especially in respect to the above idea. The theme of ascension in Dante, as Palacios indicates in his other book, *The Mystical School of Ibn Massara*, has its roots in *miraj* or 'ascension' of Ibn Arabi.[33] Ibn Arabi, as Morris shows, elaborates on the theme in many of his writing, and especially in *Kitab al-Isra*, *Risalat al-Anwar*, and chapters 167 (2: 270-284) and 367 (3: 340-54) of *Futuhat*. Palacios particularly alludes to chapter 167 of the second volume of *Futuhat*, saying:

This passage is an allegoric journey of the Sufi and philosopher in search of truth. It is a Dantesque ascension through all the categories of earthly and celestial beings, until they reach Saturn. In each stage of their simultaneous ascension each one of the two travellers finds his respective mentor: in the first heaven Adam and the sprit of the moon; in the second, Jesus with John the Baptist and Mercury; in the third, the patriarch Joseph and Venus; in the fourth, Enoch and the sun; in the fifth, Aaron and Mars; in the sixth, Moses and Jupiter; in the seventh, Abraham and Saturn. The philosopher, guided by natural reason, is unable to ascend higher. The Sufi, on the other hand, goes successively through the sphere of the fixed stars and that of the constellations, arriving at the footstool and at the throne of God. Overwhelmed in ecstasy upon hearing the music of the celestial spheres, he ascends to the mansion of the universal corporeal matter, of the universal nature, and of the universal soul and intellect. Beyond this, he penetrates into the heart of the mist or spiritual matter and fathoms the mysteries of hadaras or divine perfections without getting to know their essence From there he begins the descent. The philosopher goes to meet the Sufi and becomes a Muslim in order to be able to ascend by faith the grades of science which were previously inaccessible by reason alone. (*Mystical School of Ibn Massara* 182)

There are some other affinities with medieval European thinkers. Lull, as one example, shared with Ibn Arabi the idea of the unknowability of God, unless through His attributes which he called 'dignities'. According to Palacios, Lull's 'dignities' are a distorted translation of Ibn Arabi's similar conception of *hadarat* which are the divine Names and attributes. Scotus' idea of 'nature creans creata' or 'God creating Himself in the world' Palacios considers as echoing very closely Ibn Arabi's conception of *tajalli* or the manifestation of the Real in the world (ibid. 132). Ralph Austin also claims that, whether influenced or not, 'the celebrated German mystic Meister Eckhart taught a form of Christian mystical theology that in certain respects bears a striking resemblance to the monistic teachings of Ibn al-Arabi' (*Fusus* 16).

To sum up. The Romantics' interest in the medieval owes most to Troubadour poetry and the concept of Courtly Love which is highly similar to the idea of romantic love. Oriental philosophy and mysticism become effective in the later formation of European Romanticism, in turn, mainly through their influence on the Troubadours and the introduction of Courtly Love as an enduring major theme and attitude in European literature. Ibn Arabi's influence becomes more conspicuous through his

elaboration of the doctrine of the logos, and his theory of imagination as the intermediary link between the earthly and the divine. His influence, particularly on the followers of the philosophical side of Courtly Love like Dante, is evident in his conception of woman as the embodiment of imagination and the best form in which the truth can be contemplated. Finally, the Iberian peninsula (Al-Andalus) gains its importance, insofar as Romanticism is concerned, from two things: the emergence of the thought behind Troubadour poetry, which eventually ended in the creation of European modern poetry, and the mystical schools, especially that of Ibn Massara, which culminated in the school of Ibn Arabi. This gives at least some historical plausibility for the juxtaposition of a medieval Muslim philosopher with an English Romantic poet.

In what follows what has been discussed so far as a theory is studied practically by discussing four major themes which are thought to be essential to Romanticism and many Romantics: pantheism, imagination, reification and Necessity. Pantheism is the constitutive world view of the Romantics. Imagination is studied as the means and method to the implementation of such a world view. It is the epistemology to the Romantic ontology. In other words, if pantheism speaks of what the world should look like from a Romantic point of view, imagination speaks of how to know or effect such a view. Reification, however, is the acting force in disrupting such a world view. It is the main counter force that divides the one world and life into constituting, conflicting and fixed components. Necessity is discussed as a corollary to a pantheistic world view, a world characterised by oneness of action and destination. It is a paradox that both passivity and activity manifested in a strong will to search marks the Romantic text. Through a meticulous and comprehensive study of their works, these themes will be explored in Shelley as a representative European Romantic, and Ibn Arabi, as an exemplar of Oriental imaginative philosophy.

Notes to Chapter One

[1] See René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism* 218. See also Kathleen Wheeler, *Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 6. Nigel Leask in particular points out that '[i]t is this denial of dualism which is the common intellectual goal of Wordsworth, Coleridge and their circle in the years after 1795, unifying their various discursive endeavours' (*Politics of Imagination* 24).

[2] *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912). All quotations from Coleridge's poetry are from this edition unless stated otherwise.

[3] Quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the 1850 text of *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd edn, rev. Helen Drarbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

[4] References to Wordsworth poetry other than *The Prelude* are to Ernest de Selincourt edition of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1944-49), unless stated otherwise.

[5] *William Blake's Writings*, ed. G. E. Bentley Jr, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). All other references to Blake are to this edition unless stated otherwise.

[6] In this work all quotations from Shelley's poetry of 1804-1817 are cited from *The Poems of Shelley*, eds. Geoffrey Mathews and Kelvin Everest, vol. I (London: Longman, 1989). Other poems are from Timothy Webb's edition of Shelley's *Poems and Prose* (London: J. M. Dent, 1995), and finally poems not found in these two editions are cited from *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, the Julian edition, eds. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, 10 vols. (London: Ernest Benn, 1926-30), unless stated otherwise.

[7] As quoted by Ernest de Selincourt in his annotation of the second book of *The Prelude* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926; lines 216-19) from after an unpublished passage from Wordsworth's notebooks.

[8] 'A Defence of Poetry,' *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, selected and edited by Donald H Reiman and Sharon B Powers (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 478-508. Except for this essay, all other references to Shelley's prose are to *Shelley's Prose, the Triumph of a Prophecy*, ed. David Lee Clark (Albuquerque, 1954), unless stated otherwise. Despite this edition's deficiencies, it provides ease of reference as we await a definitive edition. Where there are substantive textual problems, these are indicated.

[9] See also *Lay Sermons* 25.

[10] See also *Wordsworth's Poetry* 49.

[11] See Lascelles Abercrombie, *Romanticism* (London: High Hill Books, 1963).

[12] Burke believes that 'a great clearness helps but little towards affecting the passions, as it is in some sort an enemy to all enthusiasms whatsoever' (*The Sublime and Beautiful* 60). He also observes that 'in nature dark, confused, uncertain images have a greater power on the fancy to form the grander passions than those have which are more clear and determinate' (ibid. 62).

[13] In his comments on *The Triumph of Life* de Man argues that 'questions of origin, of direction, and of identity punctuate the text without ever receiving a clear answer. They always lead back to a new scene of questioning which merely repeats the quest and recedes in infinite regress' (*Rhetoric of Romanticism* 97-98).

[14]'Truth,' Milton says, is 'a streaming fountain; if her waters be not in a perpetual progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition' (*Areopagitica*, II, 543. Quoted by David Hawkes, *Ideology* 36).

[15]*Phenomenology of Spirit* 11. Quoted by Hawks, *Ideology* 79.

[16]See also *The Linguistic Moment* 124-25.

[17]See A. O. Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms,' *PMLA* 29 (1924): 229-53, reprinted in *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore: 1948) 228-53.

[18]In drawing the outline of this exchange between mind and Nature, Wasserman speaks of three epistemologies: the epistemology of identity, the egotistical epistemology and the epistemology of sympathy or empathy. The first represents Coleridge, the second Wordsworth, and the third Keats, not to speak of Shelley who originally denies the dichotomy between the mind and objects (see 'English Romantics').

[19]Quoted in William Chittick's *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* 46, from *Futuhat al-Makkiyya*, ed. Osman Yahya (Cairo, 1991).

[20]Translated by James Morris, 'Ibn Arabi's spiritual Ascension,' *The Meccan Illuminations*, ed. Michel Chodkiewicz (Paris, 1988) 373, from *Futuhat al-Makkiyya* 3: 349.

[21]Translated by Michael Sells, 'Ibn Arabi's Garden among the Flames' 302.

[22]*Phenomenology of Spirit* 11. Quoted by Hawks, *Ideology* 79.

[23]*The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Fredrick L. Jones, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). All other references to Shelley's letters are to this edition unless stated otherwise.

[24]Martin Heidegger, *Existence and Being* 283.

[25]Christopher Dawson observes that 'The rediscovery of the Middle Ages by the Romantics is an event of no less importance in the history of European thought than the rediscovery of Hellenism by the Humanists. It means an immense widening of our intellectual horizon' (*Mediaeval Religion* 124).

[26]The Troubadour expressed, Lewis argues, 'that romantic species of passion which English poets were still writing about in the nineteenth' (*Allegory of Love* 4). Denomy also points out that 'our very conception[s] of romantic love--are an inheritance of the Middle Ages. They derive from an institution that we have come to know as Courtly Love' (*Heresy of Courtly Love* 20-21).

[27]Bogen argues that 'The image of the lady in the courtly lyric was at once more sensual and more spiritual than anything that could have come directly from indigenous European sources' (*Women Troubadours* 47).

[28] Lindsay asserts that the 'importance of the Troubadours is that they first sought to draw down the scheme of development, of a quest through stage after stage, into earthly life and to secularise it' (*Troubadours and their World* 220).

[29]Certainly Abercrombie is alluding here not to Lucretius' poem *On the Nature of Things* but to Empedocles' fragmentary poem *Physics* or *On Nature*.

[30]The poetry of the Troubadours has two aspects or constitutes two sides: the metaphysical or philosophical and the secular. As Lindsay argues: 'in so far as the Troubadour insists on the perfection of his lady he moves towards the mystical or metaphysical position. In so far as he carries out with her a drama of union and separation, in which she is treated as in no way essentially different from himself, he is breaking down the metaphysical element and creating a true dialectic of human process.... The

metaphysical side leads on further to Dante and Petrarch. Here we see what is essentially a turning up-side-down of the vital aspects of the Troubadour position' (*Troubadours and their World* 221-222).

[31]The whole story in the *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, ed. and trans. Nicholson, is given in Arabic except for the four lines of verse. The translation, except of those verses, is mine.

[32]He gives the same notion in one of his odes:

> The loved ones of my heart--where are they? Say, by God, where are they?
> As thou sawest their apparition, wilt thou show to me their reality?
> How long, how long was I seeking them! and how often did I beg to be united with them, and yet I feared to be amongst them.
> Perchance my happy star will hinder their going afar from me,
> That mine eye may be blest with them, and that I may not ask, 'where are they?' (xlv.1-6)

[33]For a relatively comprehensive discussion of the theme of 'ascension' in Ibn Arabi's writing see James Morris, 'The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn Arabi and the Miraj', *Journal of American Oriental Society* 107.4 (1987) 629-52 and 108.1 (1988) 63-77.

II

Transcendet and Immanent Power: The Concept of One Life and the Diversity of Beings in Shelley's World View

           If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets:--But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world?
              (Prometheus Unbound II.iv.114-18)

I. The 'Unknown Power' and Shelley's Conception of Unity

For both classicists and Romantics the separation of the mind and objects is a given fact. The point that differentiates the two is the mind as either active or passive in the process of knowing the world. It is an epistemological difference based on whether and to what extent the mind contributes in the process of knowing its object. For the the empirically oriented classicists the mind is somehow passive and inactive in learning about its object. It is a *tabula rasa* on to which is transcribed the world of objects. The truth is the result of a mirror-like reflection of the outside world, and the more precise the reflection is, the closer we are to the truth. This mimetic theory of knowledge explains much of Locke's empiricism and, consequently, the classical correspondence theory of truth. Accordingly the mind is either passive or of secondary significance in understanding the world, and perception is the almost one-sided influx of the world of senses into the mind. Although Locke attributes to the mind certain qualities which contribute in forming the representations of its objects, they are secondary and compared to the primary qualities which are essentially those of the outside world, they are neither essential nor important.

For Romantics, the mind is never passive in knowing the world. Truth is the result of knowing the world actively and dynamically. Thus the mind not only contributes to its object but determines the kind of experience it has of the external world. It does not in any sense receive ready-made, finished and stable phenomena to be understood and assimilated passively. It rather works actively in making its objects and world. In other words, its experience of the world is interpretative rather than reflective, and thus the Romantic theory of knowledge is, at least in some sense, expressive rather than mimetic. This transcendental idealist position is maintained by most Romantics. Perception, they claim, is not the work of a passive or reflective mind but of that active part of the mind which is called imagination. For Coleridge as for most other

Romantics, perception is a constructive activity of imagination rather than an intellectual process of knowing what already exists in its entirety outside the mind. It is not in any way strange then that perception itself is the primary imagination while art concerns only the secondary imagination. The primary imagination, Coleridge says, is the 'living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 304). Wordsworth believes also that we half create what we perceive ('Tintern Abbey' 104 ff.). He speaks in the Prospectus of *The Excursion* of the wedding of the mind to the universe (52-55), the mind being that 'auxiliar light ... which on the setting sun/ Bestowed new splendour' (*Prel.* ii.368-70) .

Despite this partial unity resulting from the fusion of the mind and objects, the gap between the two in any kind of perception will remain wide. This makes the Romantic claim for unity to some extent paradoxical and self-contradictory. Despite its argument for the oneness of life and unity of existence, the Romantic thought system is originally based on dualism and deals mainly with discussing the relationship between subject and object. That is why much of the poetry of Romantics is epistemological in kind,[1] in the sense that it tries to explore the relationship of the mind and the external world. This logically betokens dualism, although transcendence of the division between subject and object and oneness of Life constitute the main objectives of Romantic philosophy. Having such a dualistic departure, the Romantics hardly succeed in ending with unity. In other words, the Romantics' attitude is deeply rooted in dualism while they aspire for unity. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats already accept the division between the mind and things, and in a dialectical process try to integrate the two into that which transcends the pre-existing duality. But what they can attain or experience is only, as Hillis Miller puts it, 'a momentary coalescence of subject and object, followed by a fall back into the normal bifurcation of existence' (*Theory now and then* 8).

Both empirical theories of correspondence and Romantic views on the interpretative nature of knowledge are dualistic in nature. They divide between thing and its representation and look essentially for truth outside the representations which are only signs for things they represent. Signs weave a text the meaning of which lies always outside its texture. The text, in other words, is only a shadowy reflection of real being, and, as such, is only an appearance for a reality which lies elsewhere. To reach the truth, according to both theories, the text must be penetrated and left behind. This ontological appeal for a transcendent meaning or ultimate signification lies at the core of both classical and Romantic theories of knowledge. In the view of the Lockean empirical theory, as Jerrold Hogle argues, 'traces of sense experience (including emotions) become "ideas" that are recollections of former perceptions; these then become signifieds that employ words to be their signifiers to other minds' ('Shelley and the Conditions of Meaning' 53-54). Therefore, there is always a distance, a gap between the signified and the signifier. The signified will ever remain outside the sign system. 'The copy theory of ideas,' Richard Rorty observes, 'the spectator theory of knowledge, the notion that "understanding representation" is the heart of philosophy, are expressions of this need to substitute an epiphany for a text, to "see through" representation' ('Philosophy as a Kind of Writing' 94). For the transcendental idealists likewise the truth is synthetic and lies outside the text and the world of signs.

Shelley, however, holds a different view and expresses a different understanding of the problem. What, in short, is missing in Shelley's theory of knowledge is this ontological transcendent meaning or signified. Perception and whatever falls in its compass, mind and object, signified and signifier, for him are totally epistemological. Truth is not a transcendent reality nor an empirical fact. He rejects the two because, unlike other Romantics, he never takes the duality of mind and object as a matter of

fact. The mind for him is not separated from the world so that it is impossible to determine whether it is either active or passive in knowing the world.

Shelley is not only non-dualistic, but also non reductive in his thoughts and theories. He is neither an idealist nor a materialist. He openly rejects the idea of the mind being the creator of the world. The mind, he says, 'cannot create, it can only perceive' ('Refutation of Deism' 136), and it is 'infinitely improbable that the cause of mind, that is of existence, is similar to mind' ('On Life' 175). He quite similarly rejects materialism on the ground of man's immortality and the eternality of the world. For him, man is 'a being of high aspirations ... disclaiming alliance with transience and decay; incapable of imagining to himself annihilation,' and that '[w]hatever may be his true and final destination, there is a spirit within him at enmity with nothingness and dissolution' (ibid. 173).

On the other hand, Shelley is not a thoroughgoing sceptic. Although he maintains that there are things which the mind can never penetrate, yet he definitely speaks of the possibility of knowing the world and things through imagination. He warns that 'whilst the sceptic destroys gross superstitions, let him spare to deface ... the eternal truths charactered upon the imaginations of men' ('Defence of Poetry' 501).

And finally, although he observes that the world is the playground of metaphors, Shelley never denies the possibility of the existence of an ontological presence. It is true that perception and what is perceived is considered by him as epistemological, yet there is a clear and acclaimed place for an ineffable ontological reality within his system.

Truth from the viewpoint of Shelley is both transcendent and immanent, as it is unknowable and knowable, and finally, is both ontologically present and is relational with no positive entity or identity. Despite all these contradictory dualistic

descriptions, Shelley is unmistakably and consistently non-dualistic in his thought. He finds his way through these paradoxes by adopting a logic based not on dualism but monism, a logic not linear but circular. He evades the problem of simultaneous presence of transcendence and immanence, on the one hand, and unity and diversity, and presence and absence, on the other, by leaving aside the conventional logic which is essentially based on the principle of non-contradiction and acts through dividing into 'either ... or' or 'neither ... nor,' and thinking in the context of another logic which accepts contradiction and is based on 'both ... and'. In discussing any of these conceptual pairs, he is neither reductive nor negatory. He accepts the necessity of both ends of each concept. Both, however, represent to him one reality with two aspects. What differentiates them is only a shift of perspective, a change of outlook.

What makes Shelley rather different from other Romantics in their attempt to bridge the gap between unity and diversity and the mind and objects, then, is, first, that he already takes unity as existing and, second, that he does not assume a dialectical approach but bases his assumption on a shift of perspective.

For Shelley representation is not at all different from the thing, and thought is not other than the object. In other words, he never takes the division between the mind and object as something real. He already assumes that thought and thing are one category; their difference is one of force and qualifications, and is experiential rather than substantial, indeed accidental and not essential. He says:

> It imports little to inquire whether thought be distinct from objects of thought. The use of the words *external* and *internal*, as applied to the establishment of this distinction, has been the symbol and the source of much dispute. This is merely an affair of words, and as the dispute deserves, to say, that when speaking of the objects of thought, we indeed only describe one of the forms of thought--or that speaking of thought, we only apprehend one of the operations of the universal system of beings. ('Treatise on Morality' 186)

His definition of 'thing' is revealing also. 'By the word *things*,' he argues, 'is to be understood any object of thought--that is, any thought upon which any other thought is employed with an apprehension of distinction' ('On Life' 174). The difference between subject and object, thus, is one of experience only. 'The difference,' Shelley also says, 'is merely nominal between those two classes of thought which are vulgarly distinguished by the names of ideas and of external objects' (ibid.). He, as Hillis Miller points out, 'holds that mind and world are one realm which has been artificially divided in our experience of them' (*Theory now and then* 8), mind and object being only two functions of one experience. Accordingly, there is no pre-existing subject or consciousness. Consciousness itself is a kind of experience and is another name for its object. Of childhood, when imagination is vivid and less overshadowed by the habitual and mechanical reasoning, he says:

> We less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt, from ourselves. They seemed, as it were, to constitute one mass. There are some persons who in this respect are always children. Those who are subject to the state called reverie feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction. ('On Life' 174)

Thus, for Shelley, representation is one with its object, and each sign has its signified within itself. Unlike the empiricist and the transcendental idealist, Shelley places the truth not outside but inside the text. No truth or meaning could exist outside the text. This is the major step which he takes in maintaining unity without falling into the dualism of thing and representation.

Moreover, Shelley denies that there is any difference between one thought and another. He believes, thus, not only in the unity of thought and thing, but in the unity of thoughts and ideas as well. He dismisses the existence of any basic division between them, and insofar as their nature is concerned, '[n]o essential distinction between any one of these ideas, or any class of them, is founded on a correct observation of the nature of things' ('Treatise on Morality' 183). Thought which is one

in kind and nature, is graded by the mind on the basis of its force so that it can be the subject of an evaluative experience.[2] For Shelley the similarity and difference between thoughts are based on their agreement and disagreement which is exclusively experiential. 'The principle of the agreement and similarity of thoughts,' he argues, 'is that they are all thoughts; the principle of their disagreement consists in the variety and irregularity of the occasions on which they arise in the mind. That in which they agree to that in which they differ is as everything to nothing' (ibid.). What gives them distinction is not their kind in which all are the same, but their force which is, in fact, not essential but functional and experiential.

Shelley saw this underlying unity in all the dimensions of man's creative thought, art being one example, of which he says, 'all the inventive arts maintain, as it were a sympathetic connection between each other, being no more than various expressions of one internal power, modified by different circumstances, either of an individual or of society' ('On the Manner of the Ancient Greeks' 217).

For Shelley, thus, the whole world is one text made of signs which have their meaning in them, and in this text there is no existential difference between thought and object as there is no such difference between one thought and another. The difference is only functional.

Shelley not only obliterates the demarcation lines between thought and object and one thought and another within the text to establish the unity of sign and meaning or representation and object, but also makes the text ontologically devoid of any real existence. For him all signs are metaphors with no one original and pre-existing meaning. Meaning, thus, is produced not by lexical items, but by these metaphoric relationships. This lack of core signification makes the metaphors insubstantial and their levels of meaning endless. No metaphor exists independently or represents one final or unequivocal meaning. Shelley emphasises that 'almost all familiar objects are

signs, standing not for themselves but for others in their capacity of suggesting one thought which shall lead to a train of thought' ('On Life' 173).

There is a direct relationship between perception and existence in Shelley's thought. He does not hesitate to admit that 'I am one of those who am unable to refuse my assent to the conclusions of those philosophers who assert that nothing exists but as it is perceived' (ibid.). In his 'Defence of Poetry' he also says, '[a]ll things exist as they are perceived: at least in relation to the percipient' (505). Perception, for him, on the other hand, is the very basis of thinking: 'we can think of nothing which we have not perceived' ('Treatise on Morals' 182). And finally all perception and thinking are made possible by speech. Perception, in other words, is nothing other than thought created by speech: 'speech created thought,/ Which is the measure of the universe' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.72-73).

This proves that perception and as a corollary existence from the point of view of Shelley is no more than a linguistic affair, and while it is so, there is, first, no ontological presence behind perception, and, second, there is no dualism or dichotomy of perception and things perceived. As Richard Rorty observes, '[i]f all awareness is a linguistic affair, then we are never going to be aware of a word on the one hand and a thing-denuded-of-words on the other and see that the first is adequate to the second' ('Philosophy as a Kind of Writing' 100). Things are considered only in their relationship to others with no ultimate end or being. Metaphors are certain relationships, and outside or beyond these relations there is nothing which could be perceived, and this is explicated by Shelley in much of his writing after 1816. Karen Weisman writes, 'Shelley by 1816 has already had years of anxiety over the implications of the fictions of figurative language; he knows that there is no ontological sanction for metaphoric predication' (*Imageless Truths* 60).

To sum up, the Shelleyan text, is made, first, of both thought and things; second, of signs with no external meaning; and, third, of metaphors with no innate substance or meaning but a meaning which is determined by their relationship with other metaphors. The meaning lies in the very layers of the text.

For Shelley there is only one reality, one undifferentiated being, and unity dominates the different dimensions of existence. He starts with the unity of mind and thought and proceeds to assert the oneness of life and being. Despite the apparent diversity in minds and our habitual distinction between them, Shelley believes they are one and the same. The mind of one man is the type and representation of all minds (see *Revolt of Islam* VII.271-79)· The difference between one mind and another is not real and is only a matter of distinction and not division. The 'existence of distinct individual minds,' Shelley says, 'is likewise found to be a delusion' ('On Life' 174). He argues that if it was possible to record the exact process of the development of one mind through different stages of man's life, from infancy to old age, then an account of all minds will be given, and a 'mirror would be held up to all men in which they might behold their own recollections and, in dim perspective, their shadowy hopes and fears' ('Treatise on Morality' 185). In his Essay 'On Life' he says, 'The words *I, you, they* are not signs of any actual difference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts thus indicated, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the one mind' (174). 'The words *I* and *you* and *they*,' Shelley further explains, 'are grammatical devices invented simply for arrangement, and totally devoid of the intense and exclusive sense usually attached to them' (ibid.). He thinks of these grammatical divisions at most as different functions of one entity, devoid of any independence and without any real demarcation lines between them. They are understood in their relation to each other. In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchiner on 2 January 1812 Shelley writes, 'I, you, & he are constituent parts of this immeasurable whole' (*Letters* 1: 215). Consequently, man, for Shelley, despite the apparent multitudinousness of forms, constitutes one entity linked by the same thought and

feeling, representing different modes of one stream of thought essentially one and undivided: 'Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,/ Of love and might to be divided not' (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.394-95).

Regarding life Shelley even more forcefully states its unity declaring that the 'view of life presented by the most refined deductions of the intellectual philosophy is that of unity' ('On Life' 174). All beings, animate or apparently inanimate, share one life in which they are equal. It makes the different levels of being subject to one law and demolishes the apparent barriers existing between them. The lowest is thus connected to the loftiest, and all make one life and are endowed with one Spirit, where the 'spirit of the worm beneath the sod/ In love and worship, blends itself with God' (*Epipsychidion* 128-29). A corollary is Shelley's strong belief in animism. In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 24 November 1811 Shelley states that 'all Nature is animated,' and that 'Nature itself was but a mass of organised animation' (*Letters* 1: 192-93). He thinks there is no being, however passive and insignificant it may look, which is not enjoying life and sharing it even to the same degree with others:

> I tell thee that those living things,
> To whom the fragile blade of grass,
> That springeth in the morn
> And perisheth ere noon,
> Is an unbounded world;
> I tell thee that those viewless beings,
> Whose mansion is the smallest particle
> Of the impassive atmosphere,
> Think, feel, and live like man....
> (*Queen Mab* II.226-34)

So far Shelley's conception of unity raises no dispute or difficulty and could be taken as any other pantheistic system where the many are dissolved in the One and the One is the ontological sum of all things, or like other monistic systems which are based on metaphoric relationship and without ontological existence. It becomes problematic, however, when the reader begins to feel the crack in this solid wall of unity when Shelley, despite his insistence on unity, distinguishes between the mind and its cause

('On Life' 127), and between the One and the many, the former being eternal and immutable while the latter is changing and perishable.[3] He goes so far as to think of the relation of the One to the many as everything to nothing.[4]

The edifice of this unitary system seems totally to collapse when in unmistakably transcendental terms he speaks of a 'Power [that] dwells apart in deep tranquillity,/ Remote, serene, and inaccessible' ('Mont Blanc' 96-97). Power that exists not in its relation to others, but in itself; an inaccessible Power that is distinguished from metaphors and signs by being ontologically present and bearing no meaning or signification.

Although Shelley speaks openly of the One and the many, nevertheless, he considers them not as two different poles opposite to each other, but two aspects of one reality. The One and the many are two names for one Power considered in its transcendence or immanence. To put it in other words, Shelley considers the Power, on the one hand, as an ontological being with no sign, no text; he puts the same Power in a sign system, a text which is merely based on relationships with no ontological beingness, on the other. However, he never considers the presence of the two simultaneously. In other words, there is no text and a being outside it, nor any being outside the text. He rejects such dualism entirely. What he considers being and the text to be, are two perspectives of one reality. Considered in itself it is a being without signs, with no relations, and, therefore, without a text and not out of the text. Considered as signs within a sign system, it is a text, relational in meaning, with no pre-determined meaning or ontological core. It is a text that refers to nothing outside it, but to itself only. Therefore, Shelley accepts the existence of only one reality which could be looked at from two perspectives. One perspective looks at reality as it exists, the other as it is perceived. The former deals with reality as a transcendent ontological presence whereas the latter perceives it as an expression, a metaphor immanent in nature with no existential identity.

Therefore, although Shelley does not doubt the truth of beings, he nonetheless speaks of the One as ontologically the only real being, and the many compared to it are as nothing to every thing:

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments.
>
> (*Adonais* 460-464)

Shelley on many occasions contrasts the One and the many reaching the same conclusion that the One is 'that which cannot change,' 'The unborn, and the undying,' to which 'Earth and ocean,/ Space, and the isles of life or light' and all 'is but a vision' (*Hellas* 769-70, 780). By accepting the truth of the many, on the one hand, and denying the reality of the many before the One, on the other, inevitably we have to qualify our understanding of the conceptions of the One and the many and think of them as Shelley did. The One, as it appears from the above and other contexts is certainly not the orthodox Deity which on many occasions Shelley has denied,[5] nor the Spirit which is immanent in Nature and which to the universe is as a soul to body, but a being which is infinite, unknown, and inaccessible. The conception is very close to Plotinus' idea of the One or the God of the negative theology which is beyond any definition and which cannot be described in any positive way, the only way the mind can have any perception of it being through negative terms. 'The Universal Being,' Shelley says, 'can only be described or defined by negatives which deny his subjection to the laws of all inferior existences' ('On Christianity' 202). In 'A Refutation of Deism' he further says, '[w]e admit that the generative Power is incomprehensible' (131). Shelley, moreover, denies any human attributes or feelings to the Power or the One. It is passionless, unaffected and remote from any human attribution. It is beyond any good or evil and cannot be characterised as either constructive or destructive. In 'Necessity! Thou Mother of the World' he calls this Power the 'principle of Universe'

and denies it the power of will, and to attribute any moral qualities to it, he maintains, will seem 'to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature' (111).

Transcendence, therefore, for Shelley does not mean a transcendent God dwelling beyond the world but an incommunicable, unknown and imperceptible Power, and as such it is an inconceivable reality which cannot be put into any sign system. Therefore, it does not entail dualism or any of its conventional dichotomous forms: the One and the many, subject and object, and mind and things. It is simply where the unknown Power in all its images in Shelley's poetry stands beyond and above human understanding. When the Power is considered in itself, there are no attributions, relations, or signs to make it perceptible to human understanding. It is pure oneness that accepts no division or even distinction whatsoever. This, however, does not mean that Being and beings stand in contrast to each other. Beings are the perceived state of Being which is certain differences and relationships. Immanence is transcendence not in its presence but infused in the web or system of signs and words. It is the linguistic expression of the transcendent Power.

There is an insoluble contradiction in thinking of the transcendent as ineffable and then attributing to it certain qualities or in trying to enter in a sort of communication, let alone union, with it. As Plotinus says, 'what is not a thing is not some definite thing' (*Enneads* 4: 54). There is also an absurd contradiction in assuming an experience and then thinking of that experience as ineffable. Of the first absurdity Wasserman's statement in assuming that the poet in the 'Hymn' has the intention to 'address a prayer to the transcendent and immutably Intellectual Beauty, whose shadow visits the human mind at certain moments' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 15), is an example, since the Power cannot be thought of as transcendent and at the same time characterised by intellection and beauty. The second absurdity which is more common is the conception that there are some kinds of experiences, and the mystical

experience in particular, that are ineffable and cannot be put into words. In other words, it is assumed that some perceptions do not come under the domain of language and lie outside the linguistic or sign system. However, and as Steven Katz puts it, '*[t]here are no pure (i.e. unmediated) experiences*. Neither mystical experience nor more ordinary forms of experience give any indication, or any grounds for believing, that they are unmediated. That is to say, *all* experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways' ('Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism' 26). No perception or experience, then, can be outside the closure of linguistic system. The difference between ordinary experience and mystical experience is not a matter of ineffability, but in the kind of language being used. Shelley distinguishes between two types of languages: the metaphoric and the literal. If the common experience falls in the domain of the latter, the more spiritual or real experience falls within the realm of the former. In any case, language has the potential, and, indeed, is the only means, of reflecting any experience or perception. As Fredrick Streng argues, 'within the dynamics of human awareness a shift in the function of language helps to produce a catharsis in thinking and perceiving' ('Language and Mystical Awareness' 143). W. T. Stace also disputes the idea of the ineffability of the mystical experience: 'If the mystical consciousness were absolutely ineffable, then we would not say so because we should be unconscious of such an experience; or in other words, we should never have had such an experience' (*Mysticism and Philosophy* 291). Yet, he later mistakes two different languages for two different experiences or two stages of one experience. He divides the experience into 'during the experience' and after the experience, and while thinking of the latter as expressible, he thinks of the former as ineffable and beyond the linguistic function. He says:

> Mystical experience, *during* the experience, is wholly unconceptualizable and therefore wholly unspeakable. This *must* be so. You cannot have a concept of anything *within* the undifferentiated unity because there are no separate items to be conceptualized. Concepts are only possible where there is a multiplicity or at least a duality.... But afterwards when the experience is remembered the matter is quite

different. For we are then in our ordinary sensory-intellectual consciousness.... Since we now have concepts, we can use words. We can *speak* of an experience as 'undifferentiated', as 'unity', as 'mystical', as 'empty', as 'void', and so on. (ibid. 297)

Reality as an ontological Power, therefore, is not above beings to think of separation or anticipate unity. Insofar as Reality in its transcendence is concerned, there are no beings, all there is is one undifferentiated and unperceived Being. Beings remain unknown until Reality is expressed, perceived, put into signs and words. Beings are the same transcendent Reality put into expression to become a subject of perception. However, the sign system then will have no transcendent signifier, no external referent. George Santanaya's statement in this regard is true that the 'real constitution of nature' was hidden from Shelley by a 'cloud, all woven of shifting rainbows and bright tears' ('Shelley' 167) but it is not as much 'hidden' as it is non-existent. Insofar as it is considered a subject of perception, there is no 'real constitution' or transcendent signifier. The Power, the signified, is immanent and has to be sought within the system. Immanence, in other words, is Reality within the circle of perception and caught in the prison-house of language. The immanent Power, as Hogle puts it in a note, 'certainly a linguistic construct, is a movement between differences, a self-ironising process 'in itself', throughout Shelley's poem' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 254). As such, Reality is not a presence, a positive entity, but is only differential and relational. The world of beings, although not without truth, is the result of differences or relationships. In short, the 'solid universe of external things' is insubstantial, and as Shelley would say with Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), is '"such stuff as dreams are made of"' ('On Life' 173).

Contrary to the many claims made on his aspiration for a transcendent signified, Shelley always thought of meaning as immanent within the sign system. It is true that he often mistrusted words as insufficient representations of the truth, but he never intended to reach by an epiphany an extra-linguistic unmediated reality. He proves now and then that beyond words and outside the sign system there is no meaning as

there is no perception. But he still differentiates between words as metaphors and words as literal facts. What he dismisses as insufficient in presenting the truth are words exclusively in the latter sense.

Both conceptions of metaphor and dead metaphor, or monism and dualism from the point of view of Shelley have to be discussed within the text. In other words, Being as ontological existence is beyond these descriptions. These conceptions form a kind of perception and fall within the domain of language and sign systems, and, consequently, text. Monism or dualism, in brief, are consequences of taking the text as made of metaphors or literal signs. Shelley makes a distinction between beings as different functions of one whole, and beings as already fixed and fully-formed entities. He differentiates between beings as rhetorical, metaphoric expressions, and beings as dead metaphors and reified literal facts. What Shelley rejects is not the many in the first sense of the word, but the many as different beings with ontological existence.

Originally, Shelley thinks of beings as metaphors and what he intends by the word is not merely a literary device, but signs or words where meaning, first, resides in the very sign system; second, it is not a pre-existing entity but the result of dynamic relationships; and, third, there is no one meaning to each sign, but the levels of meaning are endless. Consequently, he would say, what we perceive are only metaphors with these characteristics and not representations of fixed and pre-existing ontological phenomena. He would agree with Wilfrid Sellars that 'all awareness is a linguistic affair' (quoted Rorty 'Deconstruction' 175).[6] The linguistic experience of reality is originally metaphorical, and what is observed are not literal facts, but metaphors and symbols, and, therefore, not ontological entities or origins but mere relations and functions. Therefore, there is no separation between form and meaning. Language from this point of view, cannot be considered as a means, a tool, something supplementary or to be added up. It is not referential, if what we understand by the

term is, to use Art Berman's expression, 'the function of language to reproduce (describe) that which exists independent of it' (*From the New Criticism to Deconstruction* 276).

In metaphors, the relationship between word and meaning is circular, unlike the literal which is linear. Meaning is not somewhere out of the word to necessitate an extended linear movement marked by from and to, but is innate, immanent, where the beginning is the end. Therefore there is no one ultimate meaning to be discovered or found out. 'Veil after veil may be undrawn,' Shelley writes, 'and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed' ('Defence of Poetry' 500), and this is not because the inmost beauty is an unreachable presence, but because beauty is not other than these veils. It is endless, in fact, because there is no such presence, no one ultimate significance or meaning. Thus, insofar as perception is concerned there is nothing outside the linguistic system, the text. While the focus of our view is metaphors, their resources of meaning are thus endless until they change into literal facts, which is the end or death of metaphor.

Metaphors, on the other hand, have no existence of themselves but have to be understood in their relation to each other. As Hogle observes, '[a]nticipating Derrida and Michael Ryan, Shelley reminds us that no sense of that oneness could even exist without a prior relationship between signifiers that can be interpreted, after it appears, as pointing to some non-differentiated "other"' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 117). There is also no division or separation in the world of metaphors. Each metaphor as a sign has the signifier and the signified within itself, as it likewise finds its meaning in its dependence on, or relationship with others. Therefore, Shelley's conception of immanence is a world of unity, continuous change and transformation, and functions or relationships with no being.

Shelley, thus, looks at beings from two different points of view: the metaphoric and the literal. Insofar as unity is concerned and things are looked at as metaphors, the image of circularity is predominant in Shelley's thinking. Any division between signifier and signified, mind and object, is illusory and unreal. Things are signs which have their meaning within themselves. Existence has no transcendent referent, as meaning, the referent is immanent in it. Things are self-referential metaphors with endless levels of meaning. The dominant image here, as Miller puts it, is 'the concept of a centreless repetition in which no element in the series is the commanding exemplar of which the others are copies' (*Theory now and then* 93). There is no origin as there is no end in this process of signification and meaning.

Shelley's world, then, is one of relationships and not pure presence. In this world, as Carol Jacobs says, 'there is no light ... without shadow, no direct presence without the necessity of veiling and the risk of dissolution' (*Uncontainable Romanticism* 34). It is a world where, as Hogle says, 'the tug-of-war between finding resemblances and maintaining differences never ends' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 122-123). This is how the immanent side of being is presented by Shelley. It is being put into words and experienced linguistically and is there only out of relationships and pure functions.

However, this is not the way the world is always perceived. The world of metaphors and relationships is often replaced by a dualistic world of literal facts, ontological entities, and dead metaphors. Dualism and diversity, in fact, are consequences of taking metaphors as literal facts with one fixed and pre-determined meaning. Thinking of beings as literal signs, inevitably there will occur a division between word and meaning and sign and its signification. Neither things nor thoughts will be determined in their relation to each other as they will have their independent and already fully-formed and fixed meaning and existence. It is beings in this sense that Shelley calls illusory and often argues that in order to see the truth the veil of beings must be removed. It is necessary, he thinks, in order to see and hear what is lost in the

clamorous noise of day and the glaring cold light of life, to penetrate the 'veil of familiarity', or literality and to return like the 'sacred few' to the 'native noon' of metaphor and relationship.

There are certain similarities between Shelley's thought and those of Plotinus, Spinoza, Derrida, and Ibn Arabi. The first three cases in the following subsections present similar cases with real differences. The fourth case, however, shows overwhelming similarities.

II. The 'Unknown Power' and the Plotinian One and its Emanation[7]

The Plotinian conception of the One is remarkably compatible with Shelley's unknown Power. Both are infinite, inaccessible, and could be described only in negative terms. 'Certainly this Absolute,' Plotinus writes, 'is none of the things of which it is the source--its nature is that nothing can be affirmed of it--not existence, not essence, not life--since it is That which transcends all these' (*Enneads* 2: 134). The incomprehensibility of the One, Plotinus observes, is due to its transcendence of the linguistic system. It cannot be described by any word or Name, even the One, the Good or the transcending Being. He writes:

> Note that the phrase "transcending Being" assigns no character, makes no assertion, allots no name, carries only the denial of particular being; and in this there is no attempt to circumscribe it: to seek to throw a line about that illimitable nature would be folly, and anyone thinking to do so cuts himself off from any slightest and most momentary approach to its least vestige....
> Its definition, in fact, could be only "the indefinable": what is not a thing is not some definite thing. We are in agony for a true expression; we are talking of the untellable; we name only to indicate for our own use as best we may. And this name, The One, contains really no more than the negation of plurality ... the designation, a mere aid to enquiry, was never intended for more than a preliminary affirmation of absolute simplicity to be followed by the rejection of even that statement: it was the best that offered, but remains inadequate to express the Nature indicated. (ibid. 4: 54-55)

On the other hand, in the Neoplatonic philosophy, instead of creation there is a system based on emanation which ensures the continuity between different layers of existence. Emanation which Plotinus often expresses in the images of radiance of light from its source, streams from a common source, perfume from a flower, heat from fire and cold from snow, is, in fact, based on certain relations and not the creation or emergence of certain beings. It should be considered, however, that although Plotinus starts the process of emanation from the One and there is the sense of relatedness or relationship between an ontological Supreme and other strata of being, the One remains beyond all needs or relationships. In other words, emanation is an Act whereas the One does not Act. All the images of light, streams, perfume, heat and cold necessitate the other, a receptacle, a 'perceiver or receiver' ('Dialectic of Emanation' 60). Therefore, all images of sources are incomplete unless supplemented by others. So, it seems logical that even in the Plotinian system creation is preceded by otherness. Emanation, in other words, is the result of this relationship.

On many occasions, Plotinus also obliterates the separating lines between subject and object, the external and the internal or the Supreme and the self. Of certain moments of metaphoric insight into the divine and the world of beings, he speaks of the 'vision [that] floods the eyes with light, but it is not a light showing some other object, the light is itself the vision. No longer is there the thing seen and light to show it, no longer Intellect and object of Intellection' (ibid. 5: 205). He further says:

> ... all right ordering, ascent within the Intellectual, settlement therein, banqueting upon the divine--by these methods one becomes, to self and to all else, at once seen and seer; identical with Being and Intellectual-Principle and the entire living all, we no longer see the Supreme as external; we are near now, the next is That and it is close at hand, radiant above the Intellectual. (ibid. 5: 204)

However, neither the Plotinian One nor unity is identical to Shelley's unknown Power or his understanding of the oneness of life and being. Shelley's Power, first of all, does not stand in contrast to the world of beings. There is no place for such dualism in

Shelley's system of thought. Moreover, in the Neoplatonic system existence is divided into different hypostases, and although they are related to each other through the process of emanation, they constitute different ontological entities. Whereas Shelley believes in only one ontological existence, and the world does not stand in its continuation or contrast, but is its expression. The world of phenomena lacks any beingness and is only relational and functional in existence.

Existence, or the Plotinian Reality, on the other hand, is hierarchical and graded into different levels. Although they all derive their existence from the same origin and through emanation make one continuity, nevertheless, there is a great distance between the One and the Matter, the two ends of this process. There is also the clear-cut dichotomy of the intelligible world and the sensible world and the two extremes of these worlds are no less different from each other than the difference between the One and the Matter: one is the Absolute Good and the other Absolute Evil. Even if we dematerialise the image, despite the sense of continuity and connection which it reflects, it still cannot be overlooked that what is emanated in its level of perfection and unity is not the same as its source of emanation. The Intelligence is not the One in its perfection, neither is the Soul as perfect as the Intelligence, and so perfection diminishes in degree until the last phase of the flow from the One disappears in the Matter which is absolute Evil and darkness. On the other hand, in Plotinus' system there is cause and there is effect and the former is always more perfect than the latter,[8] and it is unnecessary to point out how far this is from Shelley who thinks of even a 'worm' as equal to God.[9] Therefore, ontologically, we can hardly say this system reflects one being and one existence.

The Plotinian world system, moreover, is linear whereas Shelley's conception of being is circular. In Shelley's non-linear view of being, there is no beginning nor end, as there is no division or gradation. Reality in its Neoplatonic sense, however, flows from the One and after passing through different planes of being descends into the

sensible world and 'Matter'. But what ends in the world of senses or fades in Matter will remain there not to return to the One. Thus, in subsequent stages of emanation a real process of defragmentation takes place in the unity which is preserved, in its higher degrees, in the upper stages and, in its absolute purity, in the One. Insofar as the sensible world is concerned there is a breach in the circle, and the Plotinian emanation represents not a circle, but a straight-line flow of Reality. The only way of maintaining the circle is through equating the One in its infinitude and absolute simplicity with the infinite Matter as in Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). His views, at least in this particular point, hardly reflect any of the Neoplatonists.[10] In short, in the Neoplatonic system the circularity is maintained only on the level of the soul where the philosopher through meditation and virtue makes his journey onto the One and resumes his place whence he came in the Good. On the subjective nature of the experience of unity, Plotinus says:

> Knowledge of The Good, or contact with it, is the all-important: this--we read--is the grand learning.... We come to this learning by analogies, by abstractions, by our understanding of its subsequents, of all that is derived from The Good, by the upward steps towards it. Purification has the Good for goal; so the virtues, all right ordering, ascent within the intellectual.... (*Enneads* 5: 204)

Unity, therefore, in this system is subjective and it occurs only on the level of the mind or the soul.

III. The 'Unknown Power' and Spinoza's Substance and its Modes

Spinoza more than any other philosopher known to Shelley speaks of an existence one and undivided. Like Shelley who believes, as Wasserman comments, that there is 'only one Being, and the love and beauty ... are those modes of Being perceived as Existence by the senses in their perfection' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 173), Spinoza states that there is only one substance with infinite modes and attributes. Beings,

according to him, are different modifications of the one Substance, and, therefore, have no independent existence. Ontologically, then, there is only one being, and beings are not ontological entities but modes of this ontological being.

Spinoza rejects the conventional anthropomorphic conception of God and believes that 'neither intellect nor will pertain to the nature of God' (*Ethics* 44). For him God, though the essence of all beings, is nonetheless devoid of passion or other human attributes. He comments that, '[s]ome imagine God in the likeness of man, consisting of mind and body, and subject to passions. But it is clear from what has already been proved how far they stray from the true knowledge of God' (ibid. 40). In his conception of the Power and its attributes Shelley shows close similarities with Spinoza. In *Queen Mab* Shelley denies anthropomorphism or attributing human passion or wisdom to the Power (an idea which is reiterated four years later in 'Mont Blanc'):

> ... and thou
> Regardest them all with an impartial eye,
> Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
> Because thou hast not human sense,
> Because thou art not human mind.
>   (VI.215-19)

Spinoza's theories on creation and the relationship of God and beings and unity are the prototype to many of the Romantics' conceptions of the oneness of life and being. First of all he thinks of existence as one entity which is indivisible, infinite, and eternal, that he calls Substance or God. The Substance is invested with attributes each of which is likewise infinite and eternal and 'expresses the essence of the Divine substance' (*Ethics* 46). The attributes, on the other hand, are expressed in their affections which are called modes, and beings are manifestations of these affections. In Spinoza's pantheistic system, thus, there is no place for anything other than God. Existence is limited to his essence, attributes and modes which all are one and

inseparable. He proceeds logically first from the dichotomy of substance and modes, the One and the many, saying that 'nothing exists but substance and its modes,' but very soon empties the latter of any substantiality adding that 'modes are nothing but affections of God's attributes' (ibid. 50). Beings, therefore, have no existence of their own. In one of his letters he further explains their non-existence arguing that by affections of Substance he means modes. 'The definition of Modes,' he concludes, 'in so far as it is not a definition of Substance, cannot involve existence. Therefore, even when they exist, we can conceive them as not existing' (*Letters* 102). By restricting existence to Substance and modes and then qualifying the existence of the latter Spinoza lays the foundation for his pantheistic theory that '[w]hatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God' (*Ethics* 40). There is no real separation, therefore, and no place for the many as separate, independent ontological entities in this system. Spinoza, however, does not reject the existence of beings as 'modes wherein the attributes of God find expression in a definite and determinate way' (ibid. 49). What he rejects is the existence of any real division in the Substance, the manifold of substances, and not the modes. If we look at matter, he says, as 'far as it is substance' there is no division in it, but if we look at it as an expression of the different modes of substance then 'its parts are distinct,' however, 'not really but modally' (ibid. 42). Spinoza, thus, thought of Reality or God as the one Substance and beings as attributes within this Substance, a 'substance consisting in infinite attributes' (ibid. 31). Beings have no existence of their own, and there is nothing outside God.[11] 'Particular things,' according to him, 'are nothing but affections of the attributes of God' (ibid. 49) with no independent or substantial existence. Shelley also thinks of beings as 'rapid waves' or bubbles on the river of being, hinting at their insubstantiality and nondurability:

> Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
> From creation to decay,
> Like the bubbles on a river
> Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
>
> (*Hellas* 197-200)

Immediately after, however, he qualifies his assumption that what is to be taken as bubbles are beings in their individuality, reifications of metaphoric expression; otherwise, as metaphors:

> ... they are still immortal
> Who, through birth's orient portal
> And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
> Clothe their unceasing flight
> In the brief dust and light
> Gather'd around their chariots as they go....
> (*Hellas* 201-206)

Having this image in mind, in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 10 December 1811 he writes: 'Yet are we, are these souls which measure in their circumscribed domain the distances of yon orbs, are we but bubbles which arise from the filth of a stagnant pool, merely to be again reabsorbed into the mass of its corruption? I think not. I feel not' (*Letters* 1: 201).

Creation for Spinoza is inevitable and unrelated to the Divine will. He puts this clearly in one of his propositions that '[f]rom the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinite things in infinite ways (*modis*), (that is, everything that can come within the scope of infinite intellect)' (*Ethics* 43). Though he believes God to be the 'first cause' and the 'sufficient cause' of beings, yet they exist not due to his will or decision but 'follow, absolutely, solely from the necessity of divine nature' (ibid. 44).

Spinoza, however, in his pantheistic system leaves no place for the transcendence of God, and dissolves it as a Substance within the world. He brings the ontological Substance and relational beings together in one text. Looked at as a whole, the text represents an ontological presence, a God. As diverse entities, however, it is made of insubstantial, relational modes or beings. Although beings have no independent existence, yet, as a whole, the world, call it Substance or God, is ontologically present.

There is a centre, a core within existence, and, therefore, it cannot be regarded as metaphoric but as a literal fact. There is an ultimate meaning, an end to be reached or deciphered. The dynamism of Spinoza's world soon turns to stasis, and the modes and attributes of the Substance become dead metaphors. Whereas Shelley, as Timothy Clark comments, is 'in quest of a unity that must not be static but which remains open-ended as the very process of *poesis* itself' ('Shelley after Deconstruction' 93).

Another major difference between Shelley and Spinoza is related to their opposite views on the role of imagination in affecting unity or diversity. Spinoza thinks it is the predominance of imagination that makes man think of existence in terms of duration and quantity. Imagination considers the modes which are separated by nature and cannot find its way to the Substance which is one, infinite, and indivisible. It is intellect that can contemplate the Substance in its unity and eternity, although he admits it will not be an easy task (Cf. *Ethics* 42). The remedy from Spinoza's point of view, therefore, lies in grounding our judgement on the 'ideas' of the intellect, and overlooking imagination and its false 'images'. Shelley's diagnosis of the problem leads precisely to the opposite conclusion. He has no doubt whatsoever that the fall from unity into diversity is not so much the result of a decline in intellect as it is the unfortunate outcome of a weak and degraded imagination.

IV. The 'Unknown Power' and Derrida's *Différance*

Derrida's deconstruction and especially his conception of *différance* and trace come closest to Shelley's philosophy and need here more elaboration. More or less, Derrida's idea of *différance* is based on Saussure's conception of language as a sign system with no pre-determined meaning or positive existence. Saussure writes: '*In the language itself, there are only differences....* [T]he language includes neither ideas nor

sounds existing prior to the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonetic differences arising out of that system' (*Course in General Linguistics* 118).

The two major characteristics of the language system, according to this linguistic theory, are its arbitrariness and differentiality. It is arbitrary because there is no positive existence behind signs, and differential since meaning arises not from extra-linguistic entities, but only from differences. Derrida in his comment on this passage writes:

> The first consequence to be drawn from this is that the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences. Such a play, *différance*, is thus no longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of conceptuality, of a conceptual process and system in general. For the same reason, *différance*, which is not a concept, is not simply a word, that is, what is generally represented as the calm, present, and self-referential unity of concept and phonic material. ('Différance' 11)

Derrida like Saussure and Shelley thinks of meaning, the signified as being differential and relational rather than an ontological presence. As Douglas Tallack comments '[m]eaning arises differentially, through the relations between arbitrary signs, and not through the reference of a sign to something that pre-exists it' ('Deconstruction' 161). Therefore, there is no positive being behind each sign: 'The difference which establishes phonemes and lets them be heard remains in and of itself inaudible, in every sense of the word' ('Différance' 5). It is neither a 'word nor a concept' (ibid. 3). Derrida's assumption, in other words, bears the argument that *Différance* has no essence or being; on the contrary, it is that which threatens the authority of 'the presence of the thing itself in its essence. That there is not a proper essence of *différance* at this point, implies that there is neither a Being nor truth of the play of writing such as it engages *différance*' (ibid. 25-26).

Derrida's concept of *différance* to a certain extent is similar to Shelley's concept of relationship within metaphor. Metaphor is relational with no ontological existence or central meaning. Insofar as beings are considered as metaphors, they constitute a text with no presence. Derrida takes the same theme of absence of a centre and argues that:

> ... in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse ... that is to say, when everything became a system where the ventral signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay or signification *ad infinitum*. ('Structure, Sign, and Play' 249)

Timothy Mooney in his comments writes:

> *Différance* is the productive movement of differing and deferring. Every concept is deferred in signifying a plenitude without realization and differed in gaining identity from that which it is not. *Différance* is not a concept, but that which makes concepts possible. It is not an essence, for it assumes a different form in each relation and does not exist before these. ('Deconstruction and Derrida' 463)

However, there is a major difference between the two concepts of differentiality invoked by Shelley and Derrida. While Shelley thinks of difference as metaphorical relationships with no presence but not necessarily in contradiction of a presence with no relationships, Derrida limits being to *différance* and empties the concept of any real existence. *Différance* is equivalent to the rejection of any ontological existence. 'It is the domination of beings,' Derrida argues, 'that *différance* everywhere comes to solicit, in the sense that *solicitare*, in old Latin, means to shake as a whole, to make tremble in entirety. Therefore, it is the determination of Being as presence or as beingness that is interrogated by the thought of *différance*' ('Différance' 21-22).

On the insubstantiality of the phenomenal world, however, both Shelley and Derrida express a similar view. Shelley thinks of beings as metaphors made only of relations with no positive existence. Derrida also thinks that *différance* has no being, rules over nothing, and is privileged with no authority over beings. He comments that,

'*différance* is not. It is not present being, however excellent, unique, principal, or transcendent. It governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority. It is not announced by any capital letter. Not only is there no kingdom of *différance*, but *différance* instigates the subversion of every kingdom' (ibid. 21-22).

Derrida rightly observes that despite the similarity of *différance* and the God of the negative theology, they are not the same at all, as the former lacks any beingness, while the latter is ontologically present, albeit unknown and inaccessible. He writes:

> So much so that the detours, locutions, and syntax in which I will often have to take recourse will resemble those of negative theology, occasionally even to the point of being indistinguishable from negative theology. Already we have had to delineate *that différance is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being (*on*) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything *that* it *is not*, that is, *everything*; and consequently that it has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent. And yet those aspects of *différance* which are thereby delineated are not theological, not even in the order of the most negative of negative theologies, which are always concerned with disengaging a superessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge his superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being. (ibid. 6)

So, there is a big difference between the unnameable *différance* and Shelley's unknown Power and the ineffable One of Plotinus. While the latter two are unknown because they can bear no predicate, the former has no being to see if it can be predicated or not. Derrida further adds:

> This unnameable is not an ineffable Being which no name could approach: God, for example. This unnameable is the play which makes possible nominal effects, the relatively unitary and atomic structures that are called names, the chains of substitutions of names in which, for example, the nominal effect *différance* is itself enmeshed, carried off, reinscribed, just as a false entry or a false exit is still part of the game, a function of the system. (ibid. 26-27)

Consciousness, Derrida would say with Shelley, is a rhetorical device, a function of language. On Saussure's proposition that 'language is not a function of the speaking

subject' (quoted Derrida 'Différance' 15), Derrida comments: 'This implies that the subject ... is inscribed in language, is a "function" of language, becomes a *speaking* subject only by making its speech conform ... to the system of rules of language as a system of differences, or at very least by conforming to the general law of *différance*' ('Différance' 15). Language, in short, becomes the world where we live, speak and think, or, as Rorty points out, it is '*not* a tool, but that in which we live and move' ('Philosophy as a Kind of Writing' 100).

In one place Derrida comes very close to Shelley in thinking that Being has no meaning except through beings. Being, he observes, 'has never had a "meaning," has never been thought or said as such, except by dissimulating itself in beings' ('Différance' 22). However, the big difference remains in the fact that while Derrida gives being no ontological preference, Shelley thinks of it as ontologically present, and Derrida's argument that there is no ontological Being because 'it' has no meaning could not be acceptable to Shelley. Meaning exists where there is a sign, where there is perception. Shelley, thus, differentiates the ontological realm and the realm where meaning resides.

Providing that we understand 'text' as it is defined by Derrida, 'a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces' ('Living On' 84), Shelley, then, could agree with him that 'there is no outside text' (*Of Grammatology* 158), in the sense that there is no meaning outside text, but he could not possibly think with Derrida that 'there is nothing outside of the text' (ibid. 163) or that 'there is no presence before and outside semiological difference' ('Différance' 12). Shelley, certainly, could understand that 'reading' can in no way find a way outside the text, but to conclude that there is nothing outside the text is inappropriate. Thus, he would readily agree with Derrida that reading

> ... cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward the
> referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a

signifier outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. (*Of Grammatology* 158)

But certainly not with Derrida's concluding remark of the same passage that there is nothing outside of the text if what we understand by it is the denial of presence where there is no text.

Knowing that terms like 'outside text,' 'before and after semiological differences,' as well as transgressing 'the text toward' something do not in fact make sense in Shelley's philosophy as they imply dualism and separation between sign and meaning and text and its ultimate signification, in dealing with Shelley's poetry the important distinction which we have to make is to differentiate between meaning and being. Meaning is a matter of recognition, an epistemological issue, a perceptive fact which is not necessarily ontological or characterised by being or beingness. Although Shelley denies the existence of any meaning outside the realm of perception and the linguistic system, and considers all meaning to be immanent in nature, yet he never denies the presence of a being outside both perception and the linguistic system. In fact, he considers being exclusively as a presence and meaning to be a linguistic affair. Therefore, although he agrees with Derrida that there is no meaning outside the linguistic system, yet he undoubtedly confirms the presence of an unknown Power, a being outside it.

Confounding these convictions will result in contradictory claims for Shelley's perception of reality as being either transcendent or immanent, and lead consequently to recommending one and denying the other. Wasserman, for example, thinks of the Narrator and the Poet in *Alastor* as representing two views based on transcendence and immanence respectively. He argues that 'the disparity between one's exclusive devotion to the Spirit of Nature and the other's aspiration to a transcendent Self directs the course of the poem' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 34). He later assumes that 'the

Visionary [Poet] represents Shelley's yearning for the ideal Self, the Narrator is the contrary, mundane half of the sceptical Shelleyan self' (ibid. 34). However, the two do not represent conflicting aspects of Shelley's aspirations, but are both within the immanent sphere of his philosophy. They reflect two kinds of perception, two methods of searching for the truth, and insofar as perception and truth are concerned they fall within the immanent sphere of Shelley's philosophy. In other words, where positive knowledge in the form of ideals *and* scepticism is concerned there is no place for transcendence. For scepticism, like knowledge, forms a kind of cognitive effort with the end of finding the truth. Scepticism for Shelley, as Wasserman himself admits, 'does not refer to distrust of reason, nor is its end the Pyrrhonic quietude resulting from a suspension of judgement; rather it designates a methodical equipoise of arguments whereby irresolvably conflicting positions are deployed against each other without excluding the possibility of either, for the purpose of an open-ended inquiry into truth' (ibid. 12). The misconception resulting from mistaking what belongs to the realm of knowledge and perception for transcendence, as is pointed out by Cameron, is responsible for Wasserman's contradictory remarks on Shelley's philosophy, which he defines as 'objective idealism dependent on a nontheistic and nontranscendent Absolute' (quoted Cameron 364), while also maintaining that the 'central assumption of Shelley's poetics is, of course, the transcendent Absolute, the perfection which, in various perspectives, may be called by such various names as the True, the Good, the Beautiful, Intellectual Beauty, Liberty, or any other of the unifying modes of mental perfection' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 205).

Reflecting on the conceptions of Power in the two poems 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' and 'Mont Blanc', Bloom says:

> ... the ravine itself is an emblem of a mind more comprehensive than the poet's, a power akin to the light that sweeps through the world in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. But the powers, though close, are not one. The Intellectual Beauty compels the heart's response, but "the secret Strength of things" in *Mont Blanc* addresses itself to the mind, and terrifies the heart. Shelley is verging on a strange revelation of a divided

Godhead, half of it totally withdrawn and indifferent to us, but nevertheless governing thought; the other half free-floating, sometimes among us, benevolent, and governing the emotions. (*Visionary Company* 287).

However, Shelley is not speaking of two Godheads, but one Power from two perspectives: Power as a presence but beyond perception and outside the linguistic experience, and Power as a linguistic phenomenon, relational and existing in relation to beings, which is both destructive and constructive. The former is the Power which is 'withdrawn and indifferent to us' and *does not* govern thought. The latter is the linguistic expression of the former and it does govern thought; it is thought itself, and regarded by man could be benevolent or otherwise. Therefore, it is Power as immanent that can be described as constructive, the rainbow and the life-giving-torrent, or destructive, the Ahrimanic glaciers in 'Mont Blanc'.

Shelley's treatment of the two conceptions of Power reflects this distinction, and consequently his treatment of either aspect becomes appropriately different. While thinking of the Power on its abstract level, in its being and by itself, he describes it in transcendental terms and places it beyond any passion or feeling; in contemplating its relation to beings, however, his description becomes highly impassioned and tinted with extraordinary enthusiasm. The cold and dispassionate definitions such as 'Necessity' or the 'unknown Power' give place to emotional titles like 'Spirit of Nature' and 'Soul of the Universe' and 'Intellectual Beauty'. The imageless Power becomes the messenger of Love and Beauty and the Power 'Which wields the world with never wearied love,/ Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above' (*Adonais* 377-78). It is the 'Power', 'which interpenetrates all things, and without which this glorious world would be a blind and formless chaos' ('Colosseum' 227):

> Spirit of Nature! thou
> Life of interminable multitudes;
> Soul of those mighty spheres
> Whose changeless paths through Heaven's deep silence lie;
> Soul of that smallest being,
> The dwelling of whose life

Is one faint April sun-gleam....
(*Queen Mab* III.226-32)

It is the Spirit of light and beauty which acts on close terms with beings, and on beings, as the harmonising force that brings all of them together and makes them share one life and common significance. It is

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst....
>
> (*Adonais* 478-85)

The transcendent Power, on the other hand, although it is present, nonetheless, is not known. It is more importantly not God nor divinity. The conventional conception of God, Shelley believes, is not outside this sign system; it is a part of the web of language, a metaphor. God, he thinks, is the result 'of a vulgar mistake of metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing' ('Necessity' 111-12). God, as the immanent Power, is not the originator who exists outside creation. Shelley thinks of God, as he thought Jesus did, as the Power 'mysteriously and illimitably pervading the frame of things' ('On Christianity' 201). He found the idea of a transcendent God ruling the universe from above as unacceptable as any other idea dualistic in nature. Nor could creation be a valid idea for him since it, first, contradicts the infinity of being and, second, because of the dualism implied in the concept.[12] 'It is easier,' he says, 'to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive a being capable of creating it' ('Necessity of Atheism' 38). Creation for him represents the relationships within the Power. It is the relationship between Spirit and Nature, or Being and beings, the existence of one would be inconceivable without the other.

There is no 'transcendental signifier', as Rorty says in a note, in the sense that there is 'an entity capable (per impossible) of halting the potential infinite regress of interpretations of signs by other signs' ('Deconstruction' 175). Carol Jacobs also argues that '[a]s in "The Necessity of Atheism", eternity (or necessity) is the questioning of the concept of origin; it is the pronounced incomprehensibility of first cause and, it goes without saying, then, of telos' (*Uncountainable Romanticism* 57). In contrast to Coleridge's assumption of God-creator, Shelley in 'Mont Blanc', Hogle says, 'offers no more than a movement of transfers between differences that has no one original point of departure and recalls no singular author' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 114). Therefore, Wasserman's claim that in contrast to the visionary Poet '[f]or the Narrator of *Alastor* ... the divinity is not transcendent but immanent in Nature' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 197), could only be partially true because for Shelley divinity is always immanent. Outside the linguistic system there is a Power but it is beyond perception: it is not divinity. What differentiates the Narrator from the Poet in *Alastor* is not their different conceptions of divinity as either transcendent or immanent, but the way they take things as metaphors or literal facts both in the realm of immanence and within the text.

V. The 'Unknown Power' and Ibn Arabi's Reality and its Names and Attributes

In their conceptions of transcendence and immanence, the ontological nature of the former and the differentiality and insubstantiality of the latter, Shelley and Ibn Arabi reveal an astounding similarity to each other. Shelley's monism and his conception of the unknown Power is much closer to Ibn Arabi than to any of Plotinus, Spinoza, or Derrida. Ibn Arabi's understanding of Reality, in turn, in its essence and attributes, is very compatible with Shelley's conceptions of Necessity, the 'unknown Power' or the

'deep truth' which is 'imageless' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.116), and 'inaccessible' ('Mont Blanc' 97)

Ibn Arabi differentiates between two levels of being. In the transcendent being, there is no relationship, no opposition, and no sign or signification. The One is 'the Sanctuary of the Incomprehensible (*aziz*) and the Unknowable (*mani*), who has never ceased to be in the Obscurity (*ama*), and to whom no transformation can ever be attributed' ('Book of Unity' 17-18), and from whom 'the veil of incomprehensibility is never removed' (ibid. 16). It is pure presence, being with no expression, as, to use Peter Young's words, its 'Ipseity is precisely beyond words' ('Ibn Arabi' 4),[13] or as Michael Sells comments, it is the 'absolute unity beyond the dualistic structures of language and thought, and beyond all relation' ('Ibn Arabi's Polished Mirror' 128). Ibn Arabi in *Lubb al-Lubb* says: 'No qualification or Name is possible at this stage. Whatever word is used to explain this stage is inadequate because at this Presence the Ipseity of God is in Complete Transcendence from everything because He has not yet descended into the Circle of Names and Qualities' (quoted Peter Young 4). It is the origin of all signs and sign systems, yet, it is not a sign itself. 'To give it any name,' as Michael Sells explains, 'even to dominate it by the term "self" or "the unlimited," is to pose a delimited entity. We cannot even call it "it", since the pronoun implies a delimited entity marked off from other referents' ('Ibn Arabi's Polished Mirror' 129).

The phenomenal being, on the other hand, is considered by Ibn Arabi to be relational with no ontological existence. All beings are understood in their relationship to their other which are the divine Names and attributes. As Masataka Takeshita explains, the theory of creation from the point of view of Ibn Arabi 'follows the chart of the relations between the Names of God and the phenomenal universe' ('An Analysis of Ibn Arabi's *Insha al-Dawair*' 257). Each Name is defined and understood in its relation to the beings. Names are meaningless without the universe, and the universe is no other than these Names *in concreto*. Phenomena are only the expression of this

relationship, and as they are, they are relationships with no positive entities, or anything real behind them. The phenomenal world, thus, is considered by Ibn Arabi as the result of an act of self-expression, and expression of the ontological being in words and signs. Thus, not one of the phenomena or whatever is conceived within discourse has an identity beyond the relational identity of words. Even 'God,' Ibn Arabi says, 'is, in reality, but a [verbal] expression' (*Fusus* 231). No extralinguistic meaning can be cited for beings, and thus, there is no objectivity in the sense of finished and static objects, or final image or meaning for signs, as there is no duality between the sign and its meaning. As Michael Sells argues, '[i]n Ibn Arabi being is continually transformed from the "objective" to the dynamic. Ibn Arabi does not really give an account of "the world" since for him being cannot be objective' ('Ibn Arabi's Polished Mirror' 140). At every moment creation and beings are renewed, changed, transformed and transfigured. Behind every image there is another image to be deciphered or interpreted. There is no end to interpretation, for there is no ultimate meaning or final signification in perspective.

Ibn Arabi differentiates between two states of unity: unity of essence which is transcendent, ontological and incomprehensible, and unity of Names which is relational and comprehensible, and in Shelley's terminology is metaphoric. Although the One is absolutely unknown in its state of Oneness, it is no doubt knowable and comprehensible in its relation to beings, and according to the capacity of each of them. 'God's unity,' he argues, 'in respect of the divine Names that require our existence, is a unity of many, while in respect of His complete independence of the Names and us, it is unity of Essence, for both of which the Name the One is used' (*Fusus* 126). He calls the latter *Ahadiyat*, which he regards as the unity of Essence, and the former *Wahdaniyat*, which is the unity of Names and attributes. In *Ahadiyat* Reality is absolutely infinite and undifferentiated. It is beyond any description or knowledge and in this state it can never be known or defined in any positive terms. Ibn Arabi, in contradistinction to negative theology, even goes so far as to say that

negative terms fall short of giving any hint of the nature of the Essence as 'It is too great ... to be defined by negative conditions' ('Majesty and Beauty' 50). Neither could it be, contrary to the God of orthodoxy, the subject of love or worship, for likewise 'His essence is too great ... to be the basis for creeds' (ibid. 49). In *Wahdaniyat*, however, Reality is known through its relation to beings which are its manifested attributes. It is even defined through their attributes. 'In the divine knowledge,' Ibn Arabi says, 'God is described as pleased, angry, and by other attributes' (*Fusus* 214). These attributes, anthropomorphic in nature, are related to Reality not in its essence as ontological presence, but as immanent in beings and defined in its relation to them. He sums up: 'When one considers the Reality in His transcendence from the Cosmos, then He is far removed from such notions thus limited [by human experience]. If, however, the Reality is the Identity of the Cosmos, then all determinations are manifest from Him and in Him' (ibid. 215).

In Ibn Arabi's thought system, however, there is no place for diversity. His conception of being is one of oneness, and then he divides this oneness into two states: unity and uniqueness. What divides them is their ontological presence or absence. The 'Unity is the very essence of the "Essence of the Identity" (*dhatul huwiya*), whereas the Uniqueness is a name which appertains to It, by which the duplication (or self-reflection) of the One is designated' ('Book of Unity' 16). The two key words describing the two states of unity and uniqueness are the terms 'essence' and 'names'. It is clear that what he means by 'essence' is the 'ontological presence' of unity, and by 'names' the 'ontological absence' of uniqueness. Unity is an ontological state which is beyond perception and there is no place for otherness or any relationships within it. 'The Absolute richness beyond need,' he observes, 'belongs exclusively to the Unity' (ibid.). Uniqueness, on the other hand, is the state of unity within relationships, and as such it belongs to man: it is perceptible and exists within the sign system.

Diversity or what comes under the domination of perception, in Ibn Arabi's philosophy, is related not to unity but uniqueness. However, there is no diversity as such. What appears as many are in fact different modes or manifestations of the unique One. Ibn Arabi argues that 'the worshipped in every tongue, or time, is the Unique One; moreover, the worshipper within every worshipper is the Unique One' ('Book of Unity' 21). Ibn Arabi bases this theory of uniqueness on numerical grounds. The only number that exists is the one; other numbers are no more than the repetition of this number. 'There is nothing,' he says, 'but the Unique One, (or with regard to number, nothing but the number one--*al wahid*). The number two is none but the number one, and so are the number three, the four, the ten, the hundred, the thousand and to infinity. Nothing exists beside the number one, not (even) in the case of multiplicity, since (all that the multiplicity implies is that) the number one appears in two conceptual degrees, wherefore it is referred to as two' (ibid. 21), and 'the Uniqueness is effective (in all of them) and there is none but It' (ibid. 22). Diversity, however, exists as relationships demanded by the state of uniqueness which is itself ontologically non-existent, yet (is) there as certain measures. 'As for the polarisation (*tathniya*) itself,' Ibn Arabi observes, 'it is rather like a state (*hal*); that is, it is neither existent insofar as the Reality denies it, nor is it non-existent insofar as God establishes it' (ibid.). Thus Ibn Arabi already denies the existence of any division and consequently any claim for unification. He concludes: 'So beware of unification which takes place under such notions, since there is no unification, as the two essences do not become one, rather they are two uniquenesses which are the Unique One in two degrees' (ibid.).

Fana or 'annihilation', for many students of mysticism and Orientalists means unity with God, or as Steven Katz puts it, 'to merge with Allah in ecstatic union' ('Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism' 44). Many Persian Sufis prior to Ibn Arabi and Hindu mystics indeed, as Sir Willaim Jones comments, contend that 'by abstracting our souls from *vanity*, that is, from all but GOD, approximate to his essence, in our final union

with which will consist our supreme beatitude' ('On the Mystical Poetry of the Persians and Hindus' 220). But this is especially not the case with Ibn Arabi. In Ibn Arabi's school there is no pre-existing or an already assumed duality to end with unity. All that exists is one Reality. *Fana*, therefore, does not mean ceasing from self and merging with God, but ceasing to see things other than God. Ibn Arabi says, 'most of those who know God ... make a ceasing of existence and the ceasing of that ceasing a condition of that attaining the knowledge of God, and that is an error and a clear oversight.... For things have no existence, and what does not exist cannot cease to exist. For ceasing to be implies the positing of existence, and that is polytheism' (*Treatise on Unity* 2).

To sum up. The One and the many remain two names for one Reality; considered in its essence it is the One, and looked at in its manifested forms as Names and attributes, it is the many. We can say of the first it is transcendent, not compared to any but to itself, and of the second, it is immanent in the beings, which are still none but itself. In other words it is transcendent in itself, immanent in relation to beings (*Fusus* 85).[14]

For Ibn Arabi, Reality in its stage of Oneness is infinite and indefinable. Reality, however, should not be mistaken for the conception of God since it is absolutely unknowable and it is not in any possible way a subject of love or worship.[15] The One, he believes, 'does not accept any association, and thus worship cannot appertain to It. It must appertain only to the Lord' ('Book of Unity' 17) which is only one of its designations, a Name denoting certain kind of relationship. It is neither a state of immanence nor transcendence as there is no being so that it should be either immanent in it or transcend it. The One cannot be known through the mind since the mind divides in order to know and Reality is indivisible. It enters no sign system and is not determined by relationship. 'Whoever holds to the Unity,' Ibn Arabi points out, 'is with the Reality in His Essence as Self-sufficient beyond all worlds. Being Self-

sufficient beyond all worlds, He is independent of and beyond all nominal relationships (*Fusus* 126). He concludes: 'The Unique One transcends all these attributes, having no need of them or of us' (ibid. 126).[16]

The relation of the One to the many is discussed by Ibn Arabi in his theory on *fayd* which keeps the sense of continuity of Plotinus' emanation without falling into dualism. Contrary to its corresponding Plotinian conception of creation, in Ibn Arabi's theory of *fayd* there is no sense of otherness which is implied in the images of light, smell, cold, and heat and apparent in Plotinus gradation of the One into three Hypostases according to their perfection and to the degree of unity they reflect. Unlike Plotinus who thinks of emanation as a straight-line outpouring of the many from the One, Ibn Arabi thinks of the One and the many as a result of a double perspective of one Reality, one characterised by beingness, whereas the other is only relational.

Ibn Arabi, in general, believes that Reality is invested with certain Names and attributes which act as prototypes to beings and beings are their concrete manifestations. The divine Names are defined aspects of the essence and the attributes are Names manifested in concrete forms. Both Names and attributes, however, are no more than certain relationships within the essence with no ontological existence. To eliminate any misconception and the possibility of mistaking any kind of duality between the One and either its Names or attributes, Ibn Arabi argues that these are not beings beside Reality, but certain relationships within the divine essence. 'The divine Names,' he argues, 'are things and stem from one essence' (*Fusus* 223), whereas the attributes 'have no essential reality other than that of Him to Whom they are attributed. They are merely relationships and ascriptions relating the One to Whom they are ascribed with their intelligible essence' (ibid. 226). Their non-being, however, should not be understood as being equal to their non-existence; they exist but as certain measures and relations within the essence of Reality: 'Indeed, the states (of

Names and attributes) cannot be said to be existent or nonexistent. In other words they are simply relationships, having no true existence' (ibid. 225).

By stressing this difference Ibn Arabi first denies any kind of duality between the One and its attributes, and then argues that what appears as an infinite number of forms in the exterior are not separate, independent things, but attributes in essence no more than measures externalised and manifested. The 'Unique One (*al-wahid*),' Ibn Arabi says, 'does not ever polarise Itself through other than Itself, yet It manifests number and plurality by Its actions in degrees (*maratib*) which of necessity must be only intelligible and devoid of existence' ('Book of Unity' 18). Thus, it turns out that the phenomenal world is the manifestation, the outward aspect of Reality, not beings beside Reality, or creatures of the orthodoxy created by God who is absolutely separate and different from them. A corollary is that creation from the point of view of Ibn Arabi is not the emergence of something out of nothing, but an externalisation of what was internal. Ibn Arabi denies any deliberation or will and decision on the part of Reality in creation. Creation to him is as inevitable as breathing which is his favourite image for the Divine creativity. He thinks of creation not in terms of emanation, which, although it reflects the inevitability of the process and its continuity, nonetheless betrays the conditionality implied in the term as well as its slow process, but as giving a vent to air long withheld in the chest, a forceful respiration, a sigh, and calls it the 'the breath of the Merciful'. Therefore, Reality cannot but create, and creation in this sense and inasmuch as the image informs us, is as old as Reality itself, and if there is any precedence for the latter it has to be logical not temporal. There is no creation in its conventional meaning, therefore, in a system where the creator and the created, the cause and the effect are one and the same. 'The truth,' Ibn Arabi says, 'is that the Reality is manifest in every created being and in every concept, while He is [at the same time] hidden from all understanding, except for one who holds that the Cosmos is His form and His identity' (*Fusus* 73). The relationship is more evident in man, the microcosm, who is a diminutive picture of all

divine attributes. Ibn Arabi says, 'you are His form and he is your spirit. You are in relation to Him as your physical body is to you. He is in relation to you as the spirit governing your physical form' (ibid. 74).

To see the compatibility of the two theories of Shelley and Ibn Arabi on the relationship of the One and the many, it is enough to change the terms Nature or Universe in Shelley's philosophy to 'diversity' or the outward and the apparent side of Reality in Ibn Arabi's system, and we will see that both think of God or the immanent Power as the Soul of Nature, not separate in any time from beings. Shelley further confirms this in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 2 January 1812 as he reflects on his conversation with Southey, saying, 'I believe that God is another signification for the Universe' (*Letters* 1: 215).

For both Shelley and Ibn Arabi unity or metaphoric perception is what originally existed. What happens later is a change of insight where unity turns into diversity and metaphors become reified objects. The mistake of assuming any existence of otherness beside Reality Ibn Arabi attributes to the analytical mind which fails to grasp the unity behind the diversity in the universe. Diversity emerges because 'the intellect restricts and seeks to define the truth within a particular qualification, while in fact the Reality does not admit of such limitation' (*Fusus* 150).

Ibn Arabi discusses the issue of unity and dualism or metaphor and literality in the image of the mirror and the concept of perspective shifting. In his comments on the first chapter of *Fusus al-Hikam*, Michael Sells says, 'while looking at a smudged mirror what the viewer sees is the mirror. If in the act of looking the mirror is simultaneously polished, a perspective shift occurs. The mirror is no longer noticed at all, only the image of the viewer reflected in it. Vision (the viewing by a subject of an outside object) has become self-vision' ('Ibn Arabi's Polished Mirror' 121). The moment of perspective shifting or metaphor Ibn Arabi calls *fana*. In *fana* the dual

relationship of subject-object gives place to a subject observing itself or revealing itself to itself (Cf. ibid. 131).

And finally Ibn Arabi, much like Shelley, speaks of the impossibility of taking the veil of incomprehensibility off being. 'Indeed, God,' Ibn Arabi says, 'is never without an attribute in which He is manifest' (*Fusus* 231). And the attributes are the very existence which covers and disguises Reality. Thus, removing that veil will be equal to the destruction of man and the world of beings. Unity or being in its ontological existence is the plane without relationships, with no division or even distinction. Beings have no place in that presence. Therefore, such unity is the obliteration of all boundaries and the destruction of whatsoever phenomenal existence that can be perceived. What man can do at best is to aspire to the state of uniqueness which, in Shelley's terminology, is the position of seeing things not as reified objects, but relational, insubstantial metaphors. Ibn Arabi warns: 'Therefore my brothers, do not aspire to the lifting of this veil, for then you will be acting in an ignorant fashion and wear yourselves out; but strengthen your aspiration to the attainment of the Uniqueness, for it is in It that you are conceived and It is the inclination which is proper for you' ('The Book of Unity' 18). And how strikingly is this admonition and advice close to Shelley's warning in his Sonnet:

> Lift not the painted veil which those who live
> Call life; though unreal shapes be pictured there,
> And it but mimic all we would believe
> With colours idly spread,--behind, lurk Fear
> And Hope, twin destinies; who ever weave
> Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.
> I knew one who had lifted it--he sought,
> For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
> But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
> The world contains, the which he could approve.
> Through the unheeding many he did move,
> A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
> Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
> For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.
>
> ('Sonnet', 1-14)

Truth, therefore, for both Ibn Arabi and Shelley, is not transcendent in nature, but is an immanent, experiential event which 'exists' in and is related to the phenomenal world. Both Shelley and Ibn Arabi think of the necessity of changing the human insight and getting a rather different attitude to see things not as separate, ontological objects, but as metaphors, essentially one but empirically and experientially different with infinite layers of meaning. And, finally, both believe that the only means to such perception is not the intellect which restricts, divides and reifies, but the reconciling, interpretative symbolic imagination which is the subject of the next chapter.

VI. Case Study I: 'Mont Blanc': Transcendence in Shelley's Relational System

Shelley speaks of transcendence in certain unmistakable images; among which Mont Blanc, the symbol of the unknown Power, and the ineffable deep truth are the most important. Mont Blanc is the symbol of thingness, thing without referentiality; a sign, though it cannot properly be called so, with no signified. It exists where there is no linguistic or sign system, and therefore, it is beyond understanding. It is simply out there, a pure presence and no more. Power as such has no relationship with man or anything else. Unlike what Harold Bloom says in *Shelley's Mythmaking* (20) and *The Visionary Company* (286) Mont Blanc as a transcendent Power has nothing to do with the 'motion' and 'spirit' of Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' nor the familiar spirit of the last stanza of 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' or the Power in the 'Ode to the West Wind'.[17]

In 'Mont Blanc' there are two conceptions of Power: an ontological and inaccessible transcendent Power conveyed by the image of Mont Blanc and a Power immanent in Nature with no one definite image but captured in a series of images which are related

to each other: 'Power like the Arve'. The mountain as the symbol of the unknown Power is alone and remote and is considered in itself as a presence. The river, however, is regarded in its relation to the ravine and its riverbed. The 'universe of things' in the image of the Arve is also considered in its relation to the universal Mind in the image of the ravine. Thus, there is no pure presence; everything is considered as a supplement to and in relationship to the other.

The mountain as the symbol of transcendent Power is unknowable; it exists but is imperceptible. It is an immutable essence, a pure presence. To put it in the context of perception, the mountain would have to be taken out of its presence context where there is no relation, and put in the relational context of a sign system. In this case the mountain will not be understood as it exists but as it stands in relationship to its other, which is still none but itself looked at, however, from another perspective. Here certain attributes of the mountain will emerge which insofar as perception is concerned will stand in parallel to each other. One such attribute is the height of the mountain which stands in its relation to the depth of the ravine. The mountain then will not be understood in itself as a presence but in its relation to the ravine. Moreover, what we understand here is not the mountain or the ravine as two different beings, but a mere relationship between the height of the mountain and the depth of the ravine. The relationship is not between two presences, but between two attributes or two modes of one being. The height of the mountain *is* the depth of the ravine.

Immanence, then, is an expression of transcendence; it is transcendence emptied of its ontological presence, and presented in the form of functions and relationships. It is the world of turbulent sounds and voices, in contrast to the mountain's utter silence and solitude. Shelley's favourite image of life and existence is the stream which God-like is the source of 'all that is excellent and delightful' and the Power which models as it flows 'all the elements of this mixed universe to the purest and most perfect shape' ('On Christianity' 202). This Spirit and immanent Power is usually associated with

breath, as well as sound and commotion, to reflect a linguistic experience of what Shelley regards as transcendent in origin:

> For birth but wakes the universal mind
> Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow
> Through the vast world, to individual sense
> Of outward shows....
>   ('Daemon of the World' II.248-51)

Shelley through the image of the river establishes a contrast between the commotion, fluidity, and mutability of the world of beings and the serenity of the mountain and the tranquillity of the ocean to which it returns at the end to begin its cycle once again.

Insofar as Power is considered immanently in 'Mont Blanc', things are sorted in dichotomous forms, and each is understood in its relation to its other. The Power unknown and the river Arve are related to constitute one 'Power in likeness of the Arve'. There is the river and the brook, the river and the ravine, the universe of things and the world of the mind. As Coleridge points out, 'there is no action but from like on like' (*Philosophical Lectures* 114). 'The river,' Frances Ferguson says, 'of necessity, fits the ravine perfectly--and in a way that makes it impossible to say which has priority and determines the other' ('Shelley's *Mont Blanc*' 205). In other words, signs in their existence and meaning are dependent not on their pre-existing being but are determined by their relationship. The universe of things is understood as it is perceived by the mind, or, to use Wasserman's expression, '[s]ubject and object have no real existence apart from their interdependence' (*Subtler Language* 203). Being and beings are also interdependent and related to each other. In Timothy Mooney's words, 'Being is not a meaning that commands from a lofty height. It emerges from beings and they from it. In a simpler way the intelligible needs the sensible and the natural the cultural' ('Deconstruction and Derrida' 463).

Therefore, in this cycle of mutual referentiality, there is no final referent to be the final significance or ultimate end. Thus, insofar as Power is considered in its immanence, deconstructive criticism is absolutely right in its claim regarding the absence of final referents. As Karen Weisman comments, the 'obvious deconstructive reading, of course, is that there is no stable referent to be finally achieved, and that the poem's deferrals and ambiguity in reference form an aporia which deconstructs Shelley's assertions about the transcendental status of "Power"' (*Imageless Truths* 59). However, this is only valid while Power is textualised or considered as immanent within the text. Certainly, Shelley has another view where Power is thought of as transcendent, as Weisman herself in qualifying her previous statement adds: 'This is a valid reading, but one which must be qualified by Shelley's desire to realize an articulation of what is thought to be a transcendental presence, or at least a vague intimation of one' (ibid.).

In metaphor, Shelley understands, there is no linear movement which is reminiscent of a one-to-one corresponding relationship between a sign and its transcendent signified, an obvious characteristic of literal facts or dead metaphors. Metaphor constitutes a cycle of dynamic relationship. Through the images of cloud, river, and ocean, and the motion, fluidity, and cyclic repetition implied in these images Shelley draws this pattern of circularity. The river of the 'everlasting universe of things' at the end of its journey 'Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves' to breathe finally its 'vapours to the circling air' ('Mont Blanc' 125-26). In *Prometheus Unbound* the same idea is reiterated when Shelley thinks of Existence in terms of one unity where 'all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea' (IV.402). In 'The Cloud' there is a pattern of cyclic repetition in the concepts of 'building' and 'unbuilding' which make the basis of the poem, a pattern which Shelley alludes to in his 'Address to the Irish People': 'Do we not see that the laws of nature perpetually act by disorganisation and reproduction, each alternatively becoming cause and effect' (69). It is precisely what the cloud does when

... after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

('The Cloud' 77-84)

Passiveness in Shelley's text could be interpreted as an 'effort' against search and activity as a way characterised by a linear movement for finding the truth, the ultimate signified outside the signifier. He recommends passiveness to remain within the cycle of the sign, the text. On this basis, we can interpret images which reflect the passive experience in Shelley's poetry and in Romantic literature in general. This is how Shelley's major characters sooner or later learn to be in their search for truth. Asia does not enter the cave of Demogorgon until she lets 'passiveness' prevail over her senses as she receives the call at the threshold of the cave, the place of prophecy and revelation: 'Resist not the weakness,/ Such strength is in meekness' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iii.93-94). Ironically, she finds there what she already had and is told what she knew before. Rousseau in *The Triumph of Life* goes in search but only to return and be like an 'old root' in its total passiveness. The Poet in *Alastor* is the only exception who goes actively in search of the 'veiled maid', yet, at the end of his futile search in his symbolic death he learns to fall passive like a 'fragile lute on whose harmonious stings/ The breath of heaven did wander' (*Alastor* 667-68).

In one of his finest passages Shelley describes the mystical experience of unity in passive terms, when Panthea in her absolute passiveness experiences the overwhelming presence of Prometheus:

I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro' my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorb'd....

(*Prometheus Unbound* II.i.79-82)

At the beginning of *Alastor*, the narrator describes the way to knowledge as lying in the passiveness of the soul. The true knowledge is not acquired from an external source, but lies within the self as both the form and the content, the beginning and the end in this process:

> Enough from incommunicable dream,
> And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought,
> Has shone within me, that serenely now
> And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
> Suspended in the solitary dome
> Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
> I wait thy breath, Great parent, that my strain
> May modulate with murmurs of the air,
> And motions of the forests and the sea,
> And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
> Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.
>
> (*Alastor* 39-49)

The kind of 'wise passiveness' which Shelley proclaims in letting the soul be the recipient and not the searcher of truth, is in harmony with his belief in the unity of mind and object and thought and thing. The inspiration he speaks of is in fact none other than returning to the self, abandoning the linear search and remaining within the circle of sign and meaning. Shelley usually conveys this sense of passivity in the image of a boat adrift on the waves of a river or a sea over which the sailor has no authority or control, most likely to demonstrate that the boat and whatever it stands for has no ultimate destination or significance other than itself. In *Alastor* the Poet takes 'his lonely seat' on a boat and 'felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea/ Like a torn cloud before the hurricane' (*Alastor* 314-15). The same image is reiterated in *Adonais* in the last stanza when the poet is ready to start his spiritual journey, where every thing speaks of the passiveness of the traveller. In fact, he is not going, but is 'carried away':

> The breath whose might I have invoked in song
> Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
> Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
> Whose sails were never to the tempest given;

The massy earth and sphered skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar....

(*Adonais* 487-92)

In 'Marianne's Dream' the character in her dream-vision is 'borne' away on a 'plank' to

the flames, which could be a symbolic image of intuitive knowledge:

And now those raging billows came
Where that fair Lady sate, and she
Was borne towards the showering flame
By the wild waves heaped tumultuously,
And, on a little plank, the flow
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

('Marianne's Dream' 86-91)

Asia, too, thinks of her life-long search and experience paradoxically through the

passive imagery of sitting in a boat while it is conducted not by her but another force:

My soul is an enchanted boat,
....
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it....

(*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.73-76)

This image is reiterated later in the *Witch of Atlas* where the Witch creates an

Aphrodite to be with her throughout her journey. Surprisingly the Aphrodite remains

inactive until the time of the boat's ascension when it comes to help the passive

Witch.

To return to our subject poem, 'Mont Blanc', as Ferguson has rightly observed there is

no proper name for the mountain in the first section of the poem. But, I think, it is

wrong to think of 'thou' in the second section as if it is addressed to the same entity, or

that the name 'Ravine of Arve' or 'Arve' could be related to it. In the last three lines of

'Mont Blanc', Bloom's assumption that the word 'thou' refers to the mountain as the

symbol of transcendent Power is not appropriate, since the mountain here, unlike the

mountain of the first section which stands inaccessible and solitary, like any other

phenomenon--earth, stars and sea--is dependent on imagination which is a form of perception and, indeed, is perception proper. Speaking intimately of the mountain in the second section, on the other hand, is possible only because it falls within the domain of perception and language. In the first section the mountain remains unknown, separate, and there is nothing to make it an object of understanding, let alone of love as Ferguson wrongly assumes. Therefore, the 'thou' of the second section, *pace* Ferguson, 'only one aspect of the poet's effort to convert epistemological language into love language' ('Shelley's *Mont Blanc*' 208), but to convert what lies outside language into a linguistic experience.

There is no possibility of knowing the Power in its transcendence. It is always veiled and disguised by words, by language. 'To be,' John Hodgson writes, 'is indeed to be disguised' (*Coleridge, Shelley, and Transcendental Inquiry* 59). Perception is so intertwined with language that nothing can be perceived outside this sign system. As soon as we are a step out of the realm of signs, to use Shelley's words, '[w]e are on that verge where words abandon us, and what wonder if we grow dizzy to look down the dark abyss of how little we know' ('On Life' 174). It is no less wondrous to find out how 'vain it is to think that words can penetrate the mystery of our being!' (ibid.) because the words themselves are the very veil over being. That is why the "deep truth", unlike truth which is simply a linguistic affair, must remain unknown. As Hillis Miller argues, the 'human condition is to be caught in a web of words which weaves and reweaves for man through the centuries the same tapestry of myths, concepts, and metaphorical analogies, in short, the whole system of Occidental metaphysics.' (*Theory now and then* 89). Carol Jacobs also writes, 'nowhere and certainly not by way of Demogorgon, can "the deep truth" be voiced as Asia wishes, as a presence, as the present, as here and now that endures' (*Uncontainable Romanticism* 46), not, of course, that such a presence is non-existent in origin, as perhaps Jacobs would think, but because it is impossible to bring it into words or to find it through words. There is no escape from this prison-house of language. 'Disguise,' Hodgson says, 'always lies

behind disguise, for ever ready to mock the poet's claim of recognition' (*Coleridge,*

Shelley, and Transcendental Inquiry 64). Hillis Miller is surely right in his claim that,

the 'most heroic effort to escape from the prison-house of language only builds the

walls higher' ('Critic as Host' 230), a fact which is attested by Shelley in his passionate

words on a doomed search for finding what is to remain for ever veiled and unknown:

> Woe is me!
> The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
> Into the height of love's rare Universe,
> Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.--
> I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!
>
> (*Epipsychidion* 587-91)

There is no escape from the prevalence of signs, as there is no epiphany in the sense

of coming to an unmediated vision of an extra-linguistic reality. As Hillis Miller

comments:

> The language which tries to efface itself as language to give way to an unmediated
> union beyond language is itself the barrier which always remains as the woe of an
> ineffaceable trace. Words are always there as remnant, "chains of lead" which forbid
> the flight to fiery union they invoke. ('Critic as Host' 245-46)

Unlike what Wasserman says, then, Shelley's strategy in 'Mont Blanc' is not to make

the Power known in any form or by any means, but to keep it distinct, separate, mute

and unknowable:

> Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
> Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
> And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
> On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains
> Teach the adverting mind.
>
> (96-100)

How the 'naked countenance of earth' and the 'primeval mountains' hint at the

inaccessibility of the Power is by pointing to the fact that all things which the mind

can comprehend are veils and disguises for that Power. The mutability of the

phenomenal world is the consequence of being in the realm of words and signs. It is known because of this linguistic possibility. It is mutable because there is no presence, no fixed entities, central core, or final and ultimate ends. It is the world of shadows and relations with no positive being. No matter how much the veils are lifted or penetrated, the Power behind the phenomena will remain unknown and uncomprehended.

Therefore, *pace* Wasserman, Shelley in 'Mont Blanc' does not want to bring the two worlds of the serene mountain and the ravine together. Quite the contrary, he keeps them separate and insurmountably different. What he brings together is the height of the mountain and the depth of the ravine, which are two attributes determined in their relationship and not two ontological worlds. What he brings together are the river and its river-bed, and what he makes known are no more than certain modes and relationships.

As an example of the descent of the transcendent and its fusion with the world of mutability, Wasserman speaks of the snow covering the peak of the mountain and the glide of the glaciers towards the valley or the ravine. He says:

> The symbolic scene that has given birth to the poem is splendidly equipped to represent the relation of the transcendent Power to the world of human experience: the gleaming and eternal snow of the mountain peak that symbolizes the inaccessible Power descends as glaciers, which melt into streams that become the river Arve in the ravine. (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 234)

But we have to remember that Shelley primarily thinks of the mountain rather than snow as the symbol of transcendenl Power. Snow in such an image cannot play the role of synecdoche. Even in terms of propriety of image as a vehicle to its tenor, snow, unlike the mountain, cannot be an appropriate image for Power. The glaciers are also related to the Arve rather than the mountain as its other.

The transcendent Power, thus, neither descends to the world of beings, nor creates nor produces anything. Peter Butter's remarks on Shelley's inconsistency to the effect that he 'contradicts what has gone before' by 'revolting against his own conception of the ultimate power as remote, tranquil and unloving' (*Shelley's Idols of the Cave* 122), I think, are also unjustified since there is no contradiction in this particular poem insofar as the 'glaciers' which Butter mentions as a proof of the emanation of the One, as the emanated evil and the destructive elements of the mountain, are not related to the mountain which is the symbol of the inaccessible unknown Power, but belong to the river Arve as its other.

Commenting on 'Mont Blanc' Wasserman says: 'the purpose of the poem is an ascent by means of those illusory realities to a transcendent apprehension which will show to the fullest extent the real nature and significance of the world of existence' (*Shelley: A Critical Reading* 227). But such a task is neither possible nor could be in any way Shelley's purpose in this poem, for the illusory world, if we can call it so, is a world with no substance or ontological existence, and constitutes only a series of functions within the sign system; it is a linguistic reality and there is nothing behind or beyond it insofar as language is concerned. Language is the only means of perception, and once it is removed there is no way to see or to understand this transcendent reality. The 'illusory realities', on the other hand, according to Shelley, are metaphors with no one fixed transcendent significance. Veil after veil, he believes, may fall, and yet the meaning remain unexhausted, and, therefore, there is no possibility of such an ascent, as Wasserman assumes. Ascension in such a sense is possible only where subject and object, or form and meaning are separated, and such dualism cannot be the purpose of Shelley in 'Mont Blanc' in any possible way.

The revelation of imagination does not even transcend the world of language. What it does at best is to keep us in a world of metaphors and not literal facts and fixed, final significance. It demolishes all reifications and idolatries. Therefore, Wasserman's

comment on Shelley's strategy in 'Mont Blanc' that 'by denying the distinction between external and internal, [he] has proved a basis on which dream, or imagination, can ascend to a vision of the total amplitude of Being, a universe defined not merely by our sensations and memory but also by our faith in the revelations of imagination' (ibid. 229) is only applicable to metaphors, as signs within the sign system and related to the realm of language, and does not concern the transcendent being .

Shelley is always careful to make it clear which Power descends to the world of beings. In 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' it is the shadow of the Power that descends to the realm of perception and not the unseen Power itself. Karen Weisman is right in her comments that 'the *Alastor* questor's desire to apprehend "Power" had resulted in a visualization--in the form of mistaken fantasy--of a projected form for it; the hymn immediately insists that the "Power" is "unseen," and that what is apprehended at all is its "awful shadow," its teasing reminder of an absented presence' (*Imageless Truths* 45). Michael O'Neil likewise identifies Beauty in the 'Hymn' as 'the source of meaning and value in this world' (*Human Mind's Imagining* 35) and observes that although the 'poetry preserves the unknowability of the "unseen Power", it hints at experience of its "awful shadow"' (ibid.). However, his comments on the concluding lines of the hymn are, I think, untenable. Reflecting on the word 'power' in line 78 of the poem, he says:

> Here, 'power' is seen as an attribute of 'SPIRIT', not as the ultimate principle of the Universe, a reversal of the poem's opening position that suggests the obedience of Shelley's ideas to his feelings. Having established a relationship with Intellectual Beauty, he can now regard its 'power' as available to him through prayer. (ibid. 38)

Although he is right in distinguishing between the two applications of the word Power, the reiteration of the word in the same poem in no way signifies their identification or, possibly, Shelley's change of strategy. Shelley, in my view, has not changed his position and he is consistent in thinking of Power as unknowable and

transcendental. The Power of Intellectual Beauty is the immanent power of the metaphor, and not the first ontological, inaccessible Power. The visitation of this immanent Power to the world, however, is inconsistent. It visits

> 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....
>
> (3-7)

The moment of visiting is what I understand as the moment of metaphor or metaphorical understanding, a reality that cannot be held for long. Once captured it is substituted by reifications. And this gives rise to Shelley's nostalgic laments:

> Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
> With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
> Of human thought or form,--where art thou gone?
> Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
> This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
>
> (13-17)

Despite appearances, I do not think that this nostalgia is for Shelley a logocentric expression for presence, or a search for transcendence in discourse. On the contrary, it is a wish for escape from reification, literality, anthropomorphism, and a return to the world of difference and relationship, the world of the indefinite metaphor. It is a nostalgia to see things in their relation to each other, and without the dividing boundaries or limiting borders, in their indefiniteness. 'Where indefiniteness ends,' Shelley says, 'idolatry and anthropomorphism begin' ('On Christianity' 202). It is against this anthropomorphism, reification and the conversion of the metaphor into literal facts that he wishes words to leave aside all their accumulated objectification and stand as naked:

> O that the words which make the thoughts obscure
> From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew

> From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,
> Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
> And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
> Till in the nakedness of false and true
> They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due!
>
> ('Ode to Liberty' 234-40)

As Shelley does not deny the existence of a transcendent Power or an ontological being, he also does not accept any reification or dead metaphor:

> No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
> To sage or poet these responses given--
> Therefore the name of God, and ghosts, and Heaven,
> Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
> Frail spells....
>
> ('Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' 25-29)

Faith, Hogle observes, 'can be rendered "mild" and thus peaceful in its solemnity, instead of fanatical and oppressive, by refusing to affirm the unqualified or complete adequacy of any one "likeness" (such as the word "God") in which the Power has "come down"' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 120). What Hogle here refers to, of course, is not the transcendent Power which remains unknown, but the immanent Power of the metaphor which is always at risk of being reified by restricting it to one of the images.

Therefore, Michael O'Neil's claim that the 'unspecificity of "some sublime world" casts doubt on the existence of any such world,' (*Human Mind's Imagining* 39) cannot be true. Shelley appropriately speaks of the silence and serenity of the 'sublime world' but not of its 'unspecificity' as O'Neil assumes. And this is quite consistent with the thought of Shelley who puts the transcendent Power where there is no sign system beyond any word or expression. In these lines, in short, he speaks exclusively of the world of immanence and against reification, and does not express any doubt of the existence of a transcendent Power.

Tilottama Rajan makes a similar claim to that of O'Neil in believing that 'the final claim for the autonomy of imagination is enigmatic, not apocalyptic. Silence and solitude are, after all, not very different from vacant' (*Dark Interpreter* 88). However, from Shelley's point of view, I assume, there is a great difference between silence and vacancy. Although outside the text there is no voice, there is still a being. Shelley did believe in a presence beyond linguistic expression or experience, a Power which is indifferent to meaning. Therefore, silence is not necessarily tantamount to vacancy.

Paradoxically, however, in the climactic stanza of 'Mont Blanc' it is said that the mountain has a voice that can 'repeal/ Large codes of fraud and woe' (80-81). The mountain ironically in its silence has the voice that rejects and denies any penetration within the transcendent being. What appears as ultimate meanings or beings are only dead metaphors and reified linguistic expressions with no presence or beingness.

Shelley, I think, always believed in a kind of presence, a form of absolutism beyond the play of signs and words. This is insofar as transcendence is concerned. When immanence is concerned, there is no presence, no absolutism at all. Therefore, when we hear critics like Hogle says that Shelley 'reworks the sceptical empiricism of David Hume, William Godwin and Sir William Drummond partly to counter the absolutism that, more and more, seems to dominate the so-called "first generation" of English Romantics' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 108), it is important to know which kind of absolutism and where. Shelley, it seems to me, does not reject absolutism outside the domain of language or perception. 'Shelley,' as Weisman argues, 'reviles institutionalized forms of religion, but his belief in the real presence of a "higher omnipresent power" stays with him for the rest of his days' (*Imageless Truths* 45). Apparently what Hogle has in mind is Power in the realm of perception which Shelley considers as metaphoric, and without any possible absolutism. For example, in a passage like the following Hogle's conception of Power could not be other than an immanent metaphoric or relational Power, an entity, if we can call it so, with no

'essence' and which could accept no anthropomorphic descriptions or reification. In fact, to a great extent it is reminiscent of Derrida's concept of *différance*:

> Shelley's Power consequently becomes a largely invisible *natura naturans* that is assumed only because the speaker perceives a series of impressions, a 'com[ing] down' of ice turning to water 'in likeness of the Arve'.... Such an impetus, as something that differs from what is visible yet operates through it, need not be an anthropomorphic supremacy nor be known as an 'essence' at one with itself nor even be contained in what appear to be its products. This 'presence', once proposed in so rebellious a fashion, actually helps 'repeal' such monarchical 'codes of fraud and woe', unsettling the most established Western beliefs....' ('Shelley as Revisionist' 109)

This establishes the great and at the same time the subtle difference between Shelley's and Coleridge's and Wordsworth's treatment of Power. In this way, and by making a distinction between the transcendent and the immanent, on the one hand, and differentiating between two conceptions of Power within the immanent, the metaphoric and the literal, on the other, Shelley appears, as Hogle thinks, to break the 'icons re-established by Coleridge and Wordsworth and does so in a poetic process that deliberately repeats those forms' (ibid. 110). Hogle, however, makes the same mistake of confounding transcendence with immanence, Power with its linguistic experience. 'Instead of being a presence strictly at one with itself,' he argues, 'the Power is a sheer "becoming other" or a going out of itself in self-extensions of its "electric life"' (ibid. 117). On this misconception, insofar as it is related to the transcendent and not the immanent Power, he bases his conclusion later that the 'Power that is transference and "comes down" by way of its own "becoming other" thus cannot be viewed legitimately as an immutable Essence lending an exact and repeatable pattern to whatever it generates' (ibid. 123). However, he is right in saying that Shelley overthrows 'any idea of a Oneness which can be viewed as commanding all transformations from a position completely beyond them' (ibid. 118).

Shelley already assumes that metaphoric unity is not the final, fixed and permanent state; it is replaceable and exists beside and as an alternative to the many, the diversity

of the literal facts. Language which is metaphoric in origin changes into signs for literal facts and significations, until it is revitalised by being purged from literality. Shelley says:

> ... language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them become, through time, signs for portions of classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganised, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse. ('Defence of Poetry' 482).

The triumph over literality in any Romantic text is short-lived. Sooner or later the many resumes its place as an alternative to the one Life and the oneness assumed to be eternal and inevitable. Metaphors change into dead metaphors or literal facts, and, thus, linguistic conceptions become reified and objectified hypostases. Therefore, there is no prospective for permanent union. The 'verbal signs for union,' Hillis Miller writes, 'necessarily rebuild the barrier they would obliterate. The more the poet says they will be one the more he makes them two by reaffirming the ways they are separated' ('Critic as Host' 245). Language will for ever run in two completely different directions: unity and diversity, metaphors and literal facts. As Hillis Miller appropriately observes, '[t]hose lips may eclipse the soul that burns between them, but they remain as a communicating medium which also is a barrier to union' (ibid. 245). In contrast to the circular movement of the metaphor the mind starts a linear movement based on dualism. Thinking itself is simply an act of reification, or, to use Coleridge's expression, 'to think is to thingify' (quoted Wheeler '"Kubla Khan" and the Art of Thingifying' 135). 'When we think,' Wheeler says, 'we delimit the boundaries of concepts, and discriminate distinctions' (ibid.).

If we could think of nihilism and metaphysics as two expressions respectively for the metaphoric and the literal, or to use Shelley's distinction again, poetry and history, one characterised by chaos and timelessness, and the other by time and order, language, as

Hillis Miller puts it, 'is the expression of the inherence of nihilism in metaphysics and of metaphysics in nihilism. We have no other language. The language of criticism is subject to exactly the same limitations and blind alleys as the language of the works it reads' ('Critic as Host' 230). As Carol Jacobs observes of *Prometheus Unbound*, '[n]othing is uttered here without the difference implicit in a recall that is at once repetition and renunciation, restoration and revocation' (*Uncontainable Romanticism* 49), or, in short, in Derrida's expression, there is the possibility of 'constantly risking falling back within what is being deconstructed' (*Of Grammatology* 14). Derrida in 'Structure, Sign, and Play', writes:

> *There is no sense* in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics. We have no language--no syntax and no lexicon--which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest. (250)

In other words, as Simon Critchley puts it, 'the only language that is available to deconstruction is that of philosophy or logocentrism. Thus to take up a position exterior to logocentrism, if such a thing were possible, would be to risk starving oneself of the very linguistic resources with which one must deconstruct logocentrism' ('Deconstruction and Derrida' 448).

Shelley's belief in the cyclic repetition of history and the continuous fight between Good and Evil is more likely built on this conception of the struggle of metaphoric interpretation against reification and literal perception. Obviously in Shelley's poetry tyrannical systems and benevolent movements represented in social and political reforms intermittently replace each other. This is quite apparent in the stress which Shelley puts on the thrice repeated word 'again' when he says:

> ... and men
> Were trampled and deceived again,
> And words and shews again could bind
> The wailing tribes of humankind

In scorn and famine...
... for all, though half deceived,
The outworn creeds again believed,
And the same round anew began,
Which the weary world yet ever ran.
                    (*Rosalind and Helen* 703-20)

The Eagle in *The Revolt of Islam* as the symbol of Evil is in a continuous fight with the snake which stands for the Good. Their movement as they fight is a recurrent circle or circles with no imaginable stop or end. Almost all the words in the following two lines bear the senses of circularity and motion, denoting an unending process of change and replacement of two attitudes:

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
Incessantly....
                    (*Revolt of Islam* I.82-85)

It would be no exaggeration if we say that almost all Shelley's major poems are footnotes to these two lines, elaborating on the struggle of Evil and Good to replace each other. He further complicates the situation by choosing equivocal images to represent Good and Evil. Each of the two images can be taken for the other as they traditionally represent the opposite of their present significance.

Significantly the Castles of the tyrants in *Prometheus Unbound* are also left undestroyed after the regeneration to hint at the possible return of Evil, and Demogorgon, perhaps, in the midst of the joy of the newly gained freedom foresees the possible return of Evil and recommends 'Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and endurance' as 'the spells by which to re-assume/ An empire o'er the disentangled doom' (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.568-69).

Mahmud, too, who could see the decline of his empire and sense the approach of the end of a fading glory, unconsciously lays his finger on this cycle of 'build' and 'unbuild', hinting at the cyclic repetition of history and the intermittent change of Good and Evil, himself being a stage in this change, and thus says to Ahasuerus:

> Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
> The birth of this world through all its cycles
> Of desolation and of loveliness....
> *(Hellas* 745-47)

This circle is inevitable in the history of man and his perception. Every stage of Good, unity, or metaphoric perception must be followed by another one of Evil, disintegration, and literality. It will be of little advantage to ask 'O cease! must hate and death return?' *(Hellas* 1096). Love must give place to hate in its unceasing circling, and Good has to surrender at one time or another to Evil:

> And the love which heals all strife
> Circling, like the breath of life,
> All things in that sweet abode
> With its own mild brotherhood....
> ('Among the Euganean Hills' 366-69)

What is conspicuous in this pattern of struggle and replacement, unity and separation, is that the last perception is always more metaphoric and marked by less reification than its preceding one. Shelley could not possibly be in agreement with Hillis Miller that '[i]f history has no origin and no goal, then it is not going anywhere, getting neither better nor worse' *(Theory now and then* 93). Neither will he agree with Carol Jacobs in her comment on *Prometheus Unbound* that, it 'is not "about", a restoration to his proper place and proper authority of Prometheus as the origin of speech and thought, a movement towards apocalypse or utopia, a millennium or redemption, but rather the performance of perpetual if unpredictable revolution' *(Uncountainable Romanticism* 57). And finally, although he agrees with Derrida on the absence of a transcendent truth, or in Hillis Miller's terminology an origin, and telos in the sense of an ultimate transcendent meaning or vision, he cannot believe that there is no orientation in the movement of history or the perception of man. Derrida would argue that '[i]n the delineation of *différance* everything is strategic and adventurous. Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple

strategy in the sense that strategy orients tactics according to a final goal, a telos or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field' ('Différance' 7). Shelley, however, would agree with Derrida in his first proposition on the absence of any theological presence within the text, yet he believes in development in human history and apocalypse.

Although Shelley does not believe that there is any ontological final meaning to be unveiled, he thinks that there is an oriented change, an apocalypse marked by the change of man's attitude characterised by the enhancement of his metaphoric perception. The progress is the increase in the power to see things as insubstantial, multidimensional metaphors, rather than ontological, one-sided literal facts and reified objects. Unlike Hillis Miller and other deconstructionists, then, he would not say that all readings are equally right in the sense of being equally undecidable. If we think of the literal reading as one determined by meaning which is outside the text, and the metaphorical as one where meaning resides in the very text, then that reading will be 'more' correct which is more 'textual'. To use John Baker Jr.'s words, 'the most challenging and provocative reading is that which would merely read the text as text' ('Grammar and Rhetoric' 120). In every reading or cycle, therefore, there would be a change, a 'residue', something added or produced. In his passing comments on *The Triumph of Life*, Timothy Clark argues that 'each scene, as a conceptual and figural displacement of the others, is not merely negating; it also affirms at the same time that very movement of relating as a productivity which is the process of textual generation and displacement' ('Shelley after Deconstruction' 98). In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 19 October 1811 Shelley speaks of the progression of the human mind and the endless cycle which it goes through simultaneously to denote the intermittent appearance of Good and Evil. Although he believes the 'series is *infinite*, can never end' (*Letters* 1: 152), yet, there is a perceptible change for the good in the human mind 'whose progression in improvement has been so great since the remotest tradition tracing general history to the point where now we stand' (ibid.) On the practical level

in his poetry we see that the initial unity of Cythna and Laon is marked by its simplicity and based on human sympathy represented in the immature characters of the two lovers. The final reunion, however, is described in terms of a highly sophisticated experience of mystical nature. The difference of the two states is explained by Cythna as in the second union they are 'Happy as then but wiser far' (*Revolt of Islam* VII.294). Knowing that the senses are mainly concerned with objectifications and reified concepts, in contrast to their first union which was characterised by sensuality, in the latter there is much less place for the senses. In one passage Laon describes the experientially transformed Cythna more as a disembodied figure. The description he gives is closer to that of a spirit, a pure intelligence, to underline the transfiguration the two lovers have undergone in their new union:

> I stood beside her, but she saw me not--
> She looked upon the sea, and skies and earth;
> Rapture, and love, and admiration, wrought
> A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
> Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
> From common joy; which, with the speechless feeling
> That led her there united, and shot forth
> From her far eyes, a light of deep revealing,
> All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.
>
> (*Revolt of Islam* XI.28-36)

The reunion of Prometheus and Asia is marked by further knowledge of the two represented in Asia's descent in the cave of Demogorgon and Prometheus' abandonment of his hate. That is why the second reunion could hardly be disrupted by evil forces, making Prometheus relatively sure that 'Henceforth we will not part' (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iii.10).

The periodic return of Evil or its replacement by Good, therefore, has not to be taken as a complete circle and thus without any change in the status of the universal Good. Shelley thinks that although the two attitudes act in cyclic mode, yet the end of each cycle is not equal to its beginning, and this reflects some sort of enhancement in the situation of the Good in the world. We can think of the circular movement, therefore,

not as a perfect circle but a spiral movement, the end of each circle being higher than its beginning. In this way, although Shelley retains the place of Evil in the universe, he, nonetheless, justifies his claim for predicting a better future for man.[18]

And finally, despite the distinction Shelley makes between the metaphoric and the literal, there is still no dualism in his philosophy: these are not two languages, but two dimensions of one language. The literal itself is a metaphor, albeit a dead metaphor. Wheeler writes:

> ... the literal is itself a figure of speech, a dead metaphor.... Metaphor it is, but in its tired, familiar, worn-out phase. No duality exists between the literal and the metaphorical, but only a distinction between rhetoric in its stimulating, integral phase, and worn-out rhetoric which has lost the power to stimulate the imagination. (*Romanticism, Pragmatism and Deconstruction* 12)

VI. Case Study II: *The Triumph of Life*: The Endless Question of Life and Meaning

The other major poem which develops this double perspective of the metaphor and the literal is *The Triumph of Life*. The poem is structurally based on a series of questions which mainly evolve from the question 'what is life?' that remains till the end, if there is an end, an unanswerable question. The meaning of life remains unknown, perhaps to suggest that there is no one ultimate meaning for life. Each question on life is answered by another question and this process is continued. It is unfinished, as there is no predictable end to the poem itself.

In *The Triumph of Life* Shelley discusses life from two perspectives: the life of the sacred few, and the life of the multitude and the 'deluded crew', although the last two should also not be taken as equal at all. These two lives reflect two different outlooks based on either metaphoric perception or literal facts and reification. The vast majority are those who are governed by their senses and think in terms of reification

and separation. What the universe suggests to them is an aggregation of differentiated beings each independent in its life and existence. The 'sacred few' on the other hand see life as one, dynamic and undifferentiated.

Shelley begins the poem by depicting two scenes representing two different ways of life, two attitudes. The first description displays a harmonious picture as if of one entity. As the 'mask of darkness' falls 'from the awakened earth' we begin to feel the life and unity of purpose in the picture revealed. We see with what splendour and harmony the different components of the picture gradually emerge into each other and take the shade of each other's colour. Every thing is invested with the same spirit which is commonly shared by others and makes them appear as different organs of one being.

In the very first few lines we have a Romantic picture of the sky, the mountain, and ocean interfused into each other and united by the light of day. The sense of harmony is strongly felt in the picture: the 'birds' temper their matin lay' to the 'ocean's orison', the 'flowers of the field' unclose 'their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day' sending 'their odorous sighs up to the smiling air.' Everything in the picture speaks of a permanent continuity where the incense, much like Keats' unending pursuit in 'The Grecian Urn', burns slowly and 'inconsumably.' The unity of the picture is also reflected in its harmonious motion. There is at first a gentle movement in the elements represented in the gradual awakening of the day, the unclosing of the trembling eyes of the flowers, and the slow burning of the incense, and the ascent of the odorous sighs unto the smiling sky. The movement is given more impetus by the strong verb 'rise' at the end where the elements suddenly and simultaneously 'rise as their father rose.' Different images of vision, touch, smell, and sound contribute to the unity and comprehensiveness of the picture.

The second picture, on the contrary, is characterised by incoordination and disparity between its units. It lacks the harmony and smoothness already felt in the first picture. The first thing which makes itself incumbent over the feeling is the separation and diversity of the components of the picture. Now and then the reader is reminded of the fragmentation created in the juxtaposition of dichotomous words such as 'all ... none', 'one ... multitude', 'old age and youth', and 'manhood and infancy'. Shelley here gives a very effective picture of things which are infinite in number; and although annexed to each other and held together within the frame of one picture, their juxtaposition is mechanistic, as each remains imprisoned within itself. Although they move in a stream-like current, and

> All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
> Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
> He made one of the multitude, yet so
> Was borne amid the crowd as through the sky
> One of the million leaves of summer's bier.
> *(Triumph of Life* 47-51)

Unlike the first picture which is marked by sympathy and mutual love between its different elements, where the flowers 'unclosed/ Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,' and 'sent/ Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air,' here egotism binds all to their limited closure and makes them in their horror and despair search for things they can never find:

> Some flying from the thing they feared and some
> Seeking the object of another's fear,
> And others as with steps towards the tomb
> Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
> And others mournfully within the gloom
> Of their own shadow walked, and called it death...
> And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
> Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath.
> *(Triumph of Life* 54-61)

The waste and barrenness of this life, too, comes into sharp contrast with the vitality and fertility of the first. The gloomy picture of the 'public way/ Which strewn with

summer dust' and 'that path where flower never grew' reflect nostalgically on the 'rejoicing' of the sun in its splendour, the 'flamed' snows, and the 'crimson clouds'.

The contrast between the two lives is also reflected by the followers of these two ways. Shelley pictures two groups of people who are under the spell of the Car of Life as a symbol of the first kind of life, the multitude and 'the wise, the great, the unforgotten'. The former group are the many who lead an insignificant life and 'who are [as] numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,' and 'Like moths by light attracted and repelled,/ Oft to their bright destruction come and go.' Alongside the insignificance of their life their destruction is so quick that

> Yet ere I can say *where*, the chariot hath
> Passed over them; nor other trace I find
> But as of foam after the Ocean's wrath
> Is spent upon the desert shore.
> (*Triumph of Life* 161-64)

Aside from the passing treatment of the multitude, Shelley is mainly concerned with the 'wise, the great, the unforgotten', Rousseau being one of them, who are chained to the triumphal car.

The description which he gives of this typical character of the 'deluded crew' is interesting for an understanding of the way of life and attitude that Shelley believes to be insufficient in leading to the whole truth. The picture which he gives is one of a deformed character.[19] The deformity of Rousseau corresponds to his distorted outlook on life and existence, and brings to mind the figure within the Car of Life whose shape is also deformed:

> So came a chariot on the silent storm
> Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
> so sate within as one whom years deformed...
> (*Triumph of Life* 86-88)

The blindness of Rousseau or the covering of his eyes is symbolic, and compatible with the 'Janus-visaged' shape of the charioteer who ironically guides the Car of Life and yet already has all his four faces' eyes banded and, thus, despite all these eyes, or perhaps because of them, lacks the eyesight to see the truth. The tyranny of the eyes over man's perception is mainly because of their power to objectify things and see beings in their appearance as reified facts rather than insubstantial, relational metaphors. Rousseau hints at the possibility of leading a better life if he had not been deceived by this outward show of things:

> ... if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
> Earth had with purer nutriment supplied,
> Corruption would not now thus much inherit
> Of what was once Rousseau....
> (*Triumph of Life* 201-204)

These two groups, the multitude and the wise 'deluded crew', are typical of what Shelley considers as the consequences of the fall of language into dead metaphors and reified, literal facts. There is another group, however, who see things or language as metaphors, relational in meaning and without ontological core. These are the 'sacred few' whose life is characterised by a recurrent return to the original state of beings, as metaphors based on certain relationships. So, as soon as they are touched by the frosty hand of literality and the binding earthly life, they fly to their 'native noon' to see things in their free metaphoric state.

Thus Shelley, and this is very noteworthy, does not assign a fixed, final state even for this group but their life is one of coming to evil and returning to truth. They do not look for an unmediated vision of reality or to go beyond the realm of signs or to free themselves from the prison-house of language. All that differentiates them from others is that they do not bind themselves to the literal or accept things as, due to habitual life, they appear to them. Unlike the other two groups who remain unable to

penetrate the bounds of their world of fixed, ontological realities and established
meaning, the 'sacred few'

> ... could not tame
> Their spirits to the Conqueror, but as soon
> As they had touched the world with living flame
> Fled back like eagles to their native noon....
>
> *(Triumph of Life* 128-31)

Notes to Chapter Two

[1]See, for example, Earl Wasserman, 'The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge,' *Studies in Romanticism* 4 (1964): 17-34, and J. Hillis Miller, *Theory Now and Then* 7.

[2]Cf. 'A Treatise on Morality' 183.

[3]Cf. *Adonais* 460-464.

[4]Cf. *Hellas* 769-785.

[5]See 'There is no God', 'On Christianity', 'I will beget a Son', and 'Necessity! Thou Mother of the World'.

[6]Wilfrid Sellars, *Science and Metaphysics* 160.

[7]Much research has been done on Shelley's Platonism and Neoplatonism. Lillian Winstanley's article 'Platonism in Shelley' (1913) represents one of the early attempts in this field. George Santanaya in the same year (1913) in his critical article on Shelley writes that Shelley 'early became an idealist after Berkeley's fashion, in that he discredited the existence of matter and embraced a psychological or (as it was called) intellectual system of the universe' ('Shelley' 161). He later qualifies his views:

> But Shelley was even more deeply and constantly an idealist after the manner of Plato; for he regarded the good as a magnet (inexplicably not working for the moment) that draws all life and motion after it; and he looked on the types and ideals of things as on eternal realities that subsist, beautiful and untarnished, when the glimmerings that reveal them to our senses have died away. From the infinite potentialities of beauty in the abstract, articulate mind draws certain bright forms--the Platonic ideas ... and it is the light of these ideals cast on objects of sense that lends to those objects some degree of reality and value.... (ibid. 162)

Carl Grabo's *The Magic Plant: The Growth of Shelley's Thought* (1936) represents an example of a Neoplatonic approach to Shelley's thought and philosophy. Carlos Baker in his *Shelley's Major Poetry* discusses Shelley's philosophy of both Platonism and empiricism. However, the most thorough research on the subject is presented by James A. Notopoulos's *The Platonism of Shelley* (1949). Notopoulos traces three kinds of Platonism in Shelley's thought: natural, direct, and indirect (see *Platonism of Shelley* 14). Shelley's natural Platonism, he observes, comprises those Platonic elements which exist due to 'an operation of his own mind, untouched by the external influence of Plato or the Platonic tradition' (ibid. 14). The direct Platonism of Shelley is the result of his 'reading, translation of, and observation on Plato' (ibid. 29). And finally, Shelley's indirect Platonism is affected by his encyclopedic reading of literature influenced by the Platonic tradition (see ibid. 78).

[8]Cf. R. T. Wallis, *Neoplatonism* 2.

[9]'The spirit of the worm beneath the sod/ In love and worship, blends itself with God' (*Epipsychidion* 128-29).

[10]See Wallis, *Neoplatonism* 172.

[11]See *Ethics* 40.

[12]See *Queen Mab* VII.15-24.

[13]Peter Young further comments: 'The Word of God, the Logos, is described by Ibn Arabi as the First Epiphany of God to Himself.... Since His Ipseity is logically prior to the Word nothing may be said of It' ('Ibn Arabi' 4).

[14]Ibn Arabi says: 'The Elevated is one of God's Beautiful Names;' then he immediately asks, 'but above whom or what , since only He exists? More elevated than whom or what, since only He is and He is Elevated in Himself? In relation to existence He is the very essence of existing beings.' Ibn Arabi further explains that, 'Naught is except the Essence, which is Elevated in Itself, its elevation being unrelated to any other. Thus, from this standpoint, there is no relative elevation, although in respect of the aspects of existence there is [a certain] differentiation. Relative elevation exists in the Unique Essence only insofar as It is [manifest in] many aspects' (*Fusus* 85).

[15]Cf. *Fusus* 126, and 94-95.

[16]For a similar treatment of the One and the corollary negative theology in Neoplatonism see Wallis, *Neoplatonism* 58.

[17]The lines which are often quoted as reflecting this influence and similarity and Bloom himself quoted them in *Shelley's Mythmaking* (20), are these:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfuse,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.
>   ('Tintern Abbey' 93-102)

[18]For a similar treatment in Ibn Arabi's conception of circularity, Cf. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom* 29.

[19]... I turned, and knew
(O Heaven have mercy on such wretchedness!)
That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill side
Was indeed one of that deluded crew,
And that grass which me thought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
And that the holes it vainly sought to hide
Were or had been eyes.
                    (*Triumph of Life* 180-88)

III

Imagination: Interpreting the Signs and Reading the Relationships

The boundless ocean like a drop of dew
Will be consumed--the stubborn centre must
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.
And ye with them be perish, one by one....
(Witch of Atlas 182-85)

I. Imagination: An Early Assessment

There is a certain relationship in any world view between what the conception of the world is and how it is conceived. For the mechanistic world view of the empirical classicists, the world represents an aggregation of fully formed and already complete and independent entities. Logically the mind will have no role in its making; it conceives such a world through passive reflection of its objects. The subject of knowledge in a system like that is the truth present in real objects or ideas which represent these objects. Thoughts, in other words, are ideas or representations of the external objects, and, consequently, reason has the supreme authority as the main faculty that analyses and judges these ideas. Any other faculty is thought of either as an aid of secondary importance to reason or overlooked as a source of illusory ideas and misconceptions. Imagination in particular as the major source of false ideas and misrepresentations is usually frowned upon. In its extreme cases it is considered as only the cause of deceptive representations and error in judgement. John Smith, one of the Cambridge Platonists, represents such an extreme in thinking that imagination can only 'breathe a gross dew upon the pure Glass of our Understanding' (quoted Tuveson 11). Looked at more favourably imagination was thought of as an aid to reason and as a means of presenting sense impressions for further consideration or judgement by the mind.

Although the sovereignty in any intellectual activity was given to the analytical mind, the mind was then thought to be assisted by two faculties, the memory and imagination, which act by recalling the ideas or presenting them into images and pictures. The Renaissance thought system, for example, as Tuveson observes, would 'enlist the imagination in the service of the higher power so as to influence the will' (*Imagination as a Means of Grace* 80). Imagination, on the other hand, in its classical conception was considered as the source of feelings and pleasure accompanying or

added to the truth of reason and thinking. Samuel Johnson, writing on Milton, defines poetry as 'an art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason' (*Lives of the English Poets* 1: 117). In his sixth Meditation Descartes explains that besides understanding imagination is one source of knowing about the existence of material things. 'The conclusion that material things exist,' he argues, 'is also suggested by the faculty of imagination, which I am aware of using when I turn my mind to material things' (*Meditations* 50). He defines imagination 'to be nothing else but an application of the cognitive faculty to a body which is intimately present to it, and which therefore exists' (ibid.). Descartes, nonetheless, thinks of imagination as the means of presenting ideas in picture in the mind:

> To make this clear, I will first examine the difference between imagination and pure understanding. When I imagine a triangle, for example, I do not merely understand that it is a figure bounded by three lines, but at the same time I also see the three lines with my mind's eyes as if they were present before me; and this is what I call imagining....
> (ibid. 50-51)

Moreover, in Descartes' philosophy imagination, compared to understanding, holds a subsidiary position. Unlike reason, it is not a constituting component of the self, and is not considered a necessary part of the mind's essence. For, Descartes observes, 'if I lacked it, I should undoubtedly remain the same individual as I now am; from which it seems to follow that it depends on something distinct from myself' (ibid. 50). Imagination, thus, is reduced to the minor position of considering the external, or the body, which in Descartes' idealism, where ideas are the main constituents and which are judged by reason, is secondary and of little importance. 'When the mind understands,' Descartes argues, 'it in some way turns towards itself and inspects one of the ideas which are within it; but when it imagines, it turns towards the body and looks at something in the body which conforms to an idea understood by the mind or perceived by the sense' (ibid. 51). Reason, then, concerns the internal ideas of the mind which are necessary to its operation, whereas imagination deals with the

external objects which are unnecessary, and, even, to be assimilated, have still to conform to one of the ideas of the mind.

II. Locke and Imagination as the Power of Forming Complex Ideas

The general view on imagination began to change with the introduction of Locke's theory on simple and complex ideas. For Locke truth displaced itself from being an external object or a transcendent idea into ideas within the human mind. He believes that all our knowledge is founded on experience. 'Our Observation,' he argues, 'employ'd either about *external, sensible Objects; or about the internal Operations of our Minds, perceived and reflected on by our selves, is that, which supplies our Understanding with all the materials of thinking*' (*An Essay* 104). According to him, the essence of external objects cannot be uncovered by man, and all that he is capable of knowing are impressions which he receives from the outside world. Our understanding, he believes, is supplied by two sources. The first is our perception of the external objects which are transferred to us through sense impression and which he calls sensation (ibid. 105). The second source is our internal 'perception of operation of our own minds', which he calls reflection (ibid.).

All experiences, Locke observes, are based on and derived from sense impressions. External and internal sensations, he believes, 'are the only passages that I can find, of Knowledge, to the Understanding' (ibid. 162). Of sensations he says: 'These alone, as far as I can discover, are the Windows by which light is let into this *dark Room*. For, methinks, the *Understanding* is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or *ideas* of things without' (ibid. 162-63). The mind, accordingly, is totally passive in receiving the sense impressions. These sensations over which the mind has no control and cannot choose or resist at will Locke calls 'simple ideas'. He says:

These *simple Ideas*, when offered to the mind, *the Understanding can* no more refuse to have, nor alter, when they are imprinted, nor blot them out, and make new ones itself, than a mirror can refuse, alter, or obliterate the Images or *Ideas*, which, the Objects set before it, do therein produce. As the Bodies that surround us do diversely affect our Organs, the mind is forced to receive the Impressions, and cannot avoid the Perception of those *Ideas* that are annexed to them. (ibid. 118).

However, the material of thought is not supplied by only these 'simple ideas'. Perception, as Locke argues, is only 'the first step and degree towards Knowledge, and the inlet of all the Materials of it' (ibid. 149). There is another step to Understanding which Locke calls the 'secondary Perception' (ibid. 152) in which 'the Mind is oftentimes more than passive' (ibid.). He believes, in its 'faculty of repeating and joining together its *Ideas*, the Mind has great power in varying and multiplying the Objects of its Thoughts, infinitely beyond what *Sensation* or *Reflection* furnished it with' (ibid. 164). The mind combines, sets together, or separates the simple ideas to construct 'complex ideas'. He says:

... as the mind is wholly Passive in the reception of all its simple *Ideas*, so it exerts several acts of its own, whereby out of its simple *Ideas*, as the Materials and Foundations of the rest, the other are framed. The Acts of the Mind wherein it exerts its Power over its simple Ideas are chiefly these three, 1. Combining several simple *Ideas* into one compound one, and thus all Complex *Ideas* are made. 2. The *2d.* is bringing two *Ideas*, whether simple or complex, together; and setting them by one another, so as to take a view of them at once, without uniting them into one; by which way it gets all its *Ideas* of Relations. 3. The *3d.* is separating them from all other *Ideas* that accompany them in their real existence; this is called *Abstraction*: And thus all its General *Ideas* are made. (ibid. 163)

It is true that Locke discredits the theory of innate ideas--those 'Characters, as it were stamped upon the mind of Man, which the Soul receives in its very first Being; and brings into the world with it' (ibid. 48)--and argues that without the innate ideas man by using only his 'natural Faculties, may attain to all the knowledge' he has, and that 'without the help of any innate Impressions;' he 'may arrive at Certainty, without any such Original Notions or Principles' (ibid.). Nonetheless, he still believes that the mind has its own power to combine the external and internal simple ideas into

complex ideas. The process of this formation, unlike what is commonly thought, is not mechanistic, and the mind is not totally passive and plays an active role in this procedure. The mind, Locke argues, is endowed with an innate power to produce complex ideas, the theory which, according to Engell, 'would crystallize in later authors as the "imagination"' (*Creative Imagination* 19-20). Locke's ideas, despite what is generally attributed to empiricism and its antagonism to imagination, thus, led the common attitude to imagination in a new direction. Locke and his followers directly or indirectly elevated imagination to an unexpected level almost equal to reason. Engell says:

> Because of a stress on the five senses and on concrete reality, the empirical school might seem the natural enemy of imagination. But British empiricism escapes the prevailing rationalistic method of Continental thought in the late seventeenth century. This rationalism, found to varying degrees in Descartes, Malbranche, Spinoza, and Leibniz, identifies reason as the highest faculty in the mind and generally discredits the imagination. The empiricists, on the contrary, view the imagination as a power that might replace or complement "reason." (ibid. 20)

III. Hume and Imagination as the Foundation of Thoughts and Actions

For sceptics like Hume reason certainly is less privileged by the supremacy which it used to enjoy, as the mind can neither trace the origin of all its sense impressions or ideas nor see if the same ideas are reflecting the exact impressions transferred through the senses. He says:

> As to those *impressions*, which arise from the *senses*, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason, and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the Author of our being. (*Treatise* 1: 113)

Things have no knowable connections with each other (see ibid. 1: 137), and the identity of the human mind could be no more than a fiction (see ibid. 1: 320). Therefore, Hume thinks that truth has to be viewed sceptically as there is no way to find the origin of things nor the correspondence between representations and objects. 'In all the incidents of life,' he states, 'we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe that fire warms, or water refreshes, it is only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise' (ibid. 1: 333).

Hume accepts that our ideas are formed by our impressions received from the outside world, but there is no means to be certain if they correspond to the external things or not. How far they represent their source of impression, we simply do not know. Reason cannot establish a sure means of connecting the ideas with the impressions. Imagination, hence, in the epistemology of Hume assumes its importance in the role which it plays in filling the gap between sense impressions and fully formed ideas.

Hume divides our conceptions of the external world into impressions and ideas whose difference, he concludes, corresponds to the difference between feeling and thinking (see ibid. 1: 15). What differentiates them is the degree of 'force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness' (ibid.).[1] The impressions are the data which we receive through our senses and are divided into two kinds: sensation and reflection. The former, Hume argues, 'arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes,' whereas the latter is 'derived, in a great measure, from our ideas' (ibid. 1: 22). The ideas, on the other hand, are the mental reproduction of these impressions. They have to be similar and somehow correspond to the impressions received from the objects. Like Locke, Hume divides perceptions (both impressions and ideas) into simple and complex impressions. The former 'admit of no distinction nor separation' (ibid. 1: 16), whereas the latter can be divided into more simple ideas. He divides the complex ideas, in turn, into 'relations, modes, and substances' (ibid. 1: 28). By dividing perceptions into

simple and complex, Hume qualifies his premise on the correspondence of impressions and ideas, observing that, 'many of our complex impressions are never exactly copied in ideas' (ibid. 1: 17), limiting the similarity and correspondence to simple impressions and ideas only: 'all our simple ideas in their first appearance, are derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent' (ibid. 1: 18).

Here Hume introduces two other mental faculties: the memory and imagination. The impressions, he assumes, repeat themselves in the mind in the form of certain ideas. However, the impressions in their repeated presence can either retain their vivacity and liveliness and repeat themselves into ideas which keep the vividness of the original impressions or lose it in different degrees and become perfect ideas. Accordingly, the 'faculty by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called the memory, and the other the imagination' (ibid. 1: 23). Insofar as memory is concerned, Hume argues, the 'difference betwixt it and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity' (ibid. 1: 114). Now if the ideas correspond to the impressions, Hume thinks, then they come directly from the memory. Memory, in other words, presents the ideas in the same order and form as the impressions received through the senses. But this is not usually the case. Imagination frequently changes and affects the impressions and presents them in rather different ideas (see ibid. 1: 24). What imagination does in this process is to mix ideas with passions. According to Hume every thought has an emotional charge and every object 'is attended with some emotion proportioned to it' (ibid. 2: 119; see also 2: 117). No ideas can affect each other unless united 'by some relation which may cause an easy transition' of the ideas and consequently their accompanying emotions from one to another (ibid. 2: 125). Imagination is responsible for the fusing of these feelings with the ideas, and giving the ideas unity and direction.

Hume, like Locke, dispenses with innate ideas, thinking that all our ideas are preceded by impressions: 'all our simple ideas proceed, either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions' (ibid. 1: 21). But he also believes that the mind has the power to unite and separate the ideas freely. This power which in one of its functions unites and separates the ideas is what Hume calls imagination. Imagination, therefore, holds an important place in Hume's system and is so powerful that nothing can escape its dominance: 'The memory, senses, and understanding are therefore all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas' (ibid. 1: 327). Without the assistance of imagination, the mind will have no evidence as to the identity of ourselves and the successive perceptions which we have of the external world. He ponders 'whether it be the *senses, reason,* or the *imagination,* that produces the opinion of a *continued* or of a *distinct* existence' (ibid. 1: 238-9). He has no doubt that the 'opinion must be entirely owing to the *imagination*' (ibid. 1: 245). Senses cannot be the origin of identity of impressions for all that they can do is to 'produce the opinion of a distinct, not of a continued existence' (ibid. 1: 239); they 'convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of anything beyond' (ibid.). Nor can our reason, Hume assumes, 'give us an assurance of the continued and distinct existence of body' (ibid. 1: 245). In moving from one impression to another, and thus perceiving the identity of these impressions, the mind must be carried over by the power of imagination. He says:

> It is evident, that as the ideas of the several distinct *successive* qualities of objects are united together by a very close relation, the mind, in looking along the succession, must be carried from one part of it to another by an easy transition, and will no more perceive the change, than if it contemplated the same unchangeable object. This easy transition is the effect, or rather essence of relation; and as the imagination readily takes one idea for another, where their influence on the mind is similar; hence it proceeds, that any such succession of related qualities is readily considered as one continued object, existing without any variation. (ibid. 1: 275)

The effect of this succession of impressions is what Hume understands as substance or the original matter which is created by imagination. 'We have,' he observes, 'no idea

of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it' (ibid. 1: 32). Reason perceives different and diverse impressions. It is imagination which relates these unrelated perceptions and turns them into one unbroken continuity. In order to bind different impressions together, Hume argues, imagination 'feign[s] something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a *substance, or original and first matter*' (ibid. 1: 276). Moreover, without the power of imagination the mind will have no evidence of the existence of an external material world. This is what makes imagination for Hume the 'ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy' (ibid. 1: 281). Both substance and mode, in fact, Hume believes, are concepts which are made by the activity of imagination: 'The idea of a substance as well as that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection' (ibid. 1: 32).

Imagination for Hume, according to Jan Wilbanks, 'is the faculty of forming, uniting and separating ideas' (*Hume's Theory of Imagination* 72). The formation of ideas, Hume believes, is neither the work of memory which is concerned with the recognition of past perceptions, nor reason which anticipates already made perceptions.[2] Therefore, only imagination has the freedom to unite and separate the ideas: 'all simple ideas may be separated by the imagination, and may be united again in what form it pleases' (*Treatise* 1: 25).

Imagination, furthermore, has the power to connect ideas and arouse the affections. It fuses the ideas with such passion that it could, in Engell's words, 'reconvert those ideas into immediate and lively impressions' (*Creative Imagination* 55). Through its power of presenting ideas with vivacity and mixing them with feelings, it is the cause of sympathy. A 'lively idea,' Hume believes, 'is easily converted into an impression'

(*Treatise* 2: 113), and 'Sympathy,' he defines, 'is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination' (ibid. 2: 180). It is the function of imagination to form such lively ideas of the 'sentiments of others as to feel these very sentiments' (ibid. 2: 132).

Hume, moreover, believes that causal inferences cannot be drawn by reason, since reason cannot trace the ideas of the mind to certain impressions received from external objects. All that we infer from the relationship between objects and what is conventionally known as causal relationship can be reduced to the elements of contiguity and succession.[3] All definitions of causality supposed to be based on reason are tautological, and according to Hume, he who tries to give such a definition, in fact, 'runs in a circle, and gives a synonymous term instead of a definition' (ibid. 1: 104). Reason, he argues, can 'never satisfy us that the existence of any one object does ever imply that of another; so that when we pass from the impression of one to the idea or belief of another, we are not determined by reason, but by custom, or a principle of association' (ibid. 1: 128-29). The link or connection between an idea and its cause or an impression and its source is possible, therefore, not through reason but through the power of imagination. Objects, he observes, have no 'discoverable connection together; nor is it from any other principle but custom operating upon the imagination, that we can draw any inference from the appearance of one to the existence of another' (ibid. 1: 137; Cf. also 2: 155). In short, inferences of causality are made neither by memory nor reason, as one deals only with presenting past experiences in the order they appear to the mind, and the other with analysing or judging each experience. It is only imagination that can pass from one experience to another and link different impressions to each other.[4]

The ideas reproduced by imagination, however, are not loose and unconnected images. In its act of connecting and separating the simple ideas, Hume points out, imagination has to be 'guided by some universal principles, which render it, in some

measure, uniform with itself in all times and places' (ibid. 1: 25). The universal principles are mainly principles of association: '*resemblance, contiguity* in time or place, and *cause* and *effect*' (ibid. 1: 26).

It is paradoxical that despite the importance which Hume gives to imagination, he rejects the ancient philosophy (which he thinks is based on substance and accident and substantial forms and occult qualities) because it has been guided by imagination. However, his stance on imagination becomes consistent once we remember that he divided the principles of imagination into two categories: the permanent and the changeable. By the former he meant the universal and irresistible principles such as the transition from causes to effects and vice versa. By the latter he understood all the weak fantasies which arise in the Human mind. Although he considered the weak principles to be unnecessary and even harmful, he considered the universal principles to be the 'foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal, human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin' (ibid. 1: 281).

IV. Kant and the Synthetic Imagination

Kant's philosophy more than any other system distanced itself from the conventional theory of knowledge and in this represents a turning point in epistemology. Kant's main opposition to the old philosophy concerns the impossibility of knowing things as they are, and that the objects of our knowledge are no more than representations of these objects. Consequently, 'outside our knowledge we have nothing which we could set over against this knowledge as corresponding to it' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 134).

His Copernican revolution in philosophy is mainly based on the point that it is the world of objects which has to conform to the rules or laws of the mind rather than that the mind should conform to the world of phenomena (see ibid. 22). In other words, it

is the mind that holds supremacy over its objects and not the opposite. Sensibility, he argues, 'gives us forms (of intuition), but understanding gives us rules. The latter is always occupied in investigating appearances, in order to detect some rule in them' (ibid. 147). However, he emphasises that understanding works in more than finding similarities in appearances in nature and formulating them into rules; in itself it is a source of law and without it the phenomena would not exist.[5]

Kant divides knowledge into *a priori* and *a posteriori*. The former rises from the mind and is characterised by clarity, necessity, and universality, whereas the latter is borrowed from experience (see ibid. 42). Like both Locke and Hume, Kant thinks knowledge is made possible only *a posteriori*, that is it is derived from experience and dependent on impressions received from external objects. He believes that 'all thought must, directly or indirectly, by way of certain characters, relate ultimately to intuitions, and therefore, with us, to sensibility, because in no other way can an object be given to us' (ibid. 65; see also 90, 93).

But these impressions or empirical intuitions constitute only one side of the process. They are related only to the appearance or the matter of the intuited object. In order to be understandable, these sensations must be put into forms which themselves are not supplied by the things and are given *a priori*. 'That in which alone,' he observes, 'the sensations can be posited and ordered in a certain form, cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all appearance is given to us *a posteriori* only, its form must lie ready for the sensations *a priori* in the mind, and so must allow of being considered apart from all sensation' (ibid. 66).

Therefore, in any act of cognition two conditions are required: intuition or sense impression which come from appearances, and concept which is given by the mind and through which an 'object is thought corresponding to this intuition' (ibid. 126). Although, then, like Locke he thinks of our experience as being dependent on the

impression we have of the objects, the intuition in order to be apprehended has to be conditioned by the mind. Objects as they are, Kant thinks, are not known to us in any possible way, and what we call external objects are only 'representations of our sensibility, the form of which is space' (ibid. 74); and 'while much can be said *a priori* as regards the form of appearances, nothing whatsoever can be asserted of the thing in itself, which may underlie these appearances' (ibid. 87).[6]

For Kant, therefore, the mind is much more active than what was presented before, and our world is partly made by the mind. Knowledge is the result of *a posteriori* experience and *a priori* conditioning of the mind, and there is no pure empirical knowledge based on sense impressions which leads to the formation of the ideas in the mind. The activity of the mind, however, insofar as extending the horizon of knowledge is concerned is the result of the application of *a priori* rules to sense impressions which is an act of synthesis and for its being is dependent on imagination.

Kant divides all judgements in which the relation of subject and predicate is considered into two types: analytic and synthetic. The former is necessary for the clarity of concepts in any subject material of knowledge. The latter, however, is much more important insofar as the extension of knowledge is concerned. 'Upon such synthetic,' Kant says, 'all our *a priori* speculative knowledge must ultimately rest; analytic judgments are very important, and indeed necessary, but only for obtaining that clearness in the concepts which is requisite for such a sure and wide synthesis as will lead to a genuinely new addition to all previous knowledge' (ibid. 51). Synthesis thus may be in need of analysis for clarity and definition, but it is only through its judgements that the data are gathered and united to make a certain content and thus make knowledge possible (see ibid. 111). As Gibbons says, for a 'representation to *be* a representation with a cognitive significance for us, it will ... have to be the product of synthesis' (*Kant's Theory of Imagination* 19). But what does Kant mean by synthesis and how is it affected by imagination?

Kant, as it is said before, denies any pure empirical knowledge. Things are not perceived by the mind as they are, but as they appear to the mind. Thus instead of speaking of thing and representation he speaks of appearance and perception: 'What is first given to us is appearance. When combined with consciousness, it is called perception' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 143). The appearance, however, is not one cognitive entity, but constitutes a manifold of impressions. Kant then argues that representations made out of these impressions have to be connected in a way, otherwise knowledge would be impossible. To put it in other words, sense in its intuition contains a manifold. The 'manifold' data of any experience has to be bound together or synthesised. This 'act of putting different representations together, and of grasping what is manifold in them in one [act of] knowledge' he calls synthesis (ibid. 111). It is only 'when we have thus produced synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition that we are in a position to say that we know the object' (ibid. 135). Synthesis, therefore, creates the very basis for human knowledge, and without synthesis knowing anything will be impossible, and as such it is 'what first gives rise to knowledge' (ibid. 111).

Now, the power that binds representations together and make synthesis possible, Kant calls imagination:

> ... since every appearance contains a manifold, and since different perceptions therefore occur in the mind separately and singly, a combination of them, such as they cannot have in sense itself, is demanded. There must therefore exist in us an active faculty for the synthesis of this manifold. To this faculty I give the title, imagination. Its action, when immediately directed upon perceptions, I entitle apprehension. (ibid. 144)

Kant, in other words, believes that synthesis is the 'mere result of the power of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should

have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious' (ibid. 112).

Based on the type of synthesis, empirical or transcendental, Kant divides imagination into two parts: reproductive and productive. The former is concerned with binding the data of an experience together in one, say, bundle. It is empirical and works on the association of ideas. In short, as James Engell comments, it 'reproduces and connects sense experiences, building a comprehensive understanding of reality' (*Creative Imagination* 130). Kant argues that an image cannot be produced and impressions cannot be connected by apprehending the intuition manifold only. A subjective ground is necessary to put the succeeding perceptions together and form a series of perceptions. This faculty he calls the reproductive imagination (see *Critique of Pure Reason* 144).

The productive imagination, on the other hand, is not empirical but transcendental in the sense that it affects an *a priori* combination of the manifold of intuition (see ibid. 143).[7] Kant observes that 'we must assume a pure transcendental synthesis of imagination as conditioning the very possibility of experience' (ibid. 133). According to him, the 'synthesis of the manifold through pure imagination, the unity of all representations in relation to original apperception, precedes all empirical knowledge' (ibid. 150). This act of binding Kant calls the transcendental synthesis or productive imagination. It constitutes the very basis for the empirical imagination without which no form of knowledge will be possible: it is the 'pure form of all possible knowledge; and by means of it all objects of possible experience must be represented *a priori*' (ibid. 143). Without this transcendental synthesis 'no concepts of objects would together make up a unitary experience' (ibid. 146). The productive imagination, then, not only binds the data into bundles, but links several bundles together and presents them spontaneously. It does not, therefore, deny the empirical side of the reproductive imagination, but applies the categories to and conditions the gathered sensory data of

the experience and imposes order on the phenomena, and is even dependent on them. Kant argues that 'even our purest *a priori* intuitions yield no knowledge, save in so far as they contain a combination of the manifold such as renders a thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction possible' (ibid. 133). In short, the productive imagination is responsible for establishing 'the affinity of appearances, and with it their association, and through this, in turn, their reproduction according to laws, and so [as involving these various factors] experience itself' (ibid. 146).

Finally, the function of the productive imagination is not limited to gathering empirical data, but, as Engell says, it takes 'certain logical principles, the *a priori* rules of time and space, as its first condition and from these produces an order which it imposes on experience itself' (*Creative Imagination* 130). In other words, it does not imitate what already exists, but works on the sense data and the material given by nature to build another nature surpassing the old one.

V. Coleridge and Perception as the Primary Imagination

As Furlong observes, 'Kant's productive imagination, though it implies novelty, a going beyond the given,' has still not the freedom of the Romantic imagination to act independently, for 'the synthesis the productive imagination makes must conform to rules of the understanding' (*Imagination* 118).

The Romantic world is synthetic, that is, it is the result of neither pure sense data, nor mental creativity or activity; and yet, it is both. The mind in its perception is dependent on sensory impression, yet it is the maker of its own world. Certainly such a world view necessitates other means of perception than the passive intellect or analytic reason. The Romantics unlike the classicists cannot rely solely on the analytic mind to find things as they are already formed and complete in nature, for the world it

observes is partly made by it. Perception is creative and the mind creates what it perceives: 'we receive but what we give' ('Dejection: An Ode' II.47).

In contradistinction to the analytical reason and the passive senses, the Romantic imagination is synthetic and active. As an epistemological means it is the only faculty or power that can penetrate the Romantic world which is both synthetic and dynamic. This is what makes imagination so important to the Romantics and puts it higher, at least for some Romantics, than Understanding, rather than making it, like Kant, conform to its rules. Imagination for Wordsworth is 'the first and last of all knowledge', and for Coleridge, besides Coleridgean Reason, it is the 'greatest faculty of the human mind' (quoted Engell 337).

Although imagination in the general sense of the term is usually considered as something other than passive perception and is associated with volition and artistic creativity,[8] from the point of view of the Romantics perception itself is essentially and primarily an imaginative process. Even, in contradistinction to perception which is thought of as primary, artistic imaginative creativity is considered only as secondary. For Coleridge, as for other Romantics, imagination is a synthesising act which primarily brings the individual 'I am' and the work of the infinite 'I AM' together, and perception is simply the result of such an act of imagination, and, indeed, it is the primary imagination. By the primary imagination Coleridge understands the 'living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 304).

Perception, therefore, is not passive. Perception is precisely imaginative because it is active and creative. Any act of perception is not a passive reflection of the world, but a partial contribution in the making of the world. It is true that imagination takes all its sensory data from the external world 'of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM', yet it repeats or creates them 'in the finite mind' of the individual consciousness.

The secondary imagination, or in Kant's terminology the productive or transcendental imagination, is an act of will and consciousness. It is an expression of the self and its creativity. It 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create;' as it also 'struggles to idealize and to unify' (ibid. 1: 304). It is essentially '*vital*, even as all objects (*as objects*) are essentially fixed and dead' (ibid.). As Engell and Bate argue in their introduction to *Biographia Literaria*, '[t]he secondary imagination creates new images and symbols and through these it reconciles the self-conscious mind to that picture of the world already formed involuntarily and provided by the primary imagination' (1: xc).

However, the creativity of the secondary imagination does not mean that the primary imagination is totally passive and is not creative. Perception, or primary imagination, is itself a creative act, since there are no fully finished entities in the outside world, and while imagination perceives things, it creates them simultaneously. Thus, Engell and Bate in their comment that there is 'no originality in the primary imagination' since it only 'repeats and copies' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: xci) could only be partially true: that is, compared to the secondary imagination the creativity of the primary imagination is necessary and spontaneous, but it is still creative as it is partially responsible for the repetition or creation of the work of the 'infinite I AM' in 'the finite mind'. The copy represented by the primary imagination of the external world, therefore, is totally different form the copy produced on the mind as a *tabula rasa* of the classicists. While the latter is a passive representation of the thing perceived, the former is a repetition made possible only by the participation and contribution of the mind. And after all, Coleridge himself, insofar as creativity is concerned, regards the two as equal and they differ not in kind but only in degree: 'The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the consciousness will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the mode of its operation' (ibid. 1: 304).

VI. Imagination as a Mediator and the Ground of Dualism

Although the classical and the Romantic conceptions of knowledge and perception differ drastically, especially as to the place of imagination and its role in understanding, nevertheless, both reflect a world view which in origin is dualistic and divided into dichotomous forms. For both the mind and object are two different entities. The classicists think of the mind as passive in the act of perception, and, therefore, thought is considered as only a representation of the external object in the mind. The Romantics, on the other hand, hold that the mind is active in perceiving its world which is partly made by it. Thought, then, is considered as a synthetic representation of the external while conditioned by the human mind. In the former the means of perception is the analytic mind, and in the latter the synthetic imagination. Imagination acts not as a means of perceiving one world but a link which connects two separate and opposing worlds. Its function is restricted to no more than a linkage between the external and the internal, the mind and the object.

The importance imagination was given in both Enlightenment and Romanticism was mainly due to its intermediary power to link the opposites. It was looked for to bridge the wide gap created by thinkers like Descartes and Spinoza between man and nature, subject and object and matter and spirit. Nevertheless, at the basis of this anxiety for unity is the presupposition of a divided world. Imagination links together what is already divided: the subject and object, God and man, the spiritual and the material, etc. As Forest Pyle argues, 'the imagination, as it undertakes an articulation or tries to speak the language of community, necessarily points to the prior existence of a rift, a fissure, a disjunction that must be crossed or healed' (*Ideology of Imagination* 2-3).

From the point of view of Kant, knowledge forms a trio: sense, imagination and apperception or understanding (Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason* 141). Upon these three

mental faculties are based '(1) the *synopsis* of the manifold *a priori* through sense; (2) the *synthesis* of this manifold through imagination; finally (3) the *unity* of this synthesis through original apperception' (ibid. 127).[9] Imagination, according to Kant, establishes the link between the sense perception and the pure understanding or the categories. By its assistance

> we bring the manifold of intuition on the one side, into connection with the condition of the necessary unity of pure apperception on the other. The two extremes, namely sensibility and understanding, must stand in necessary connection with each other through the mediation of this transcendental function of imagination, because otherwise the former, though indeed yielding appearances, would supply no objects of empirical knowledge, and consequently no experience. (ibid. 146)[10]

In other words, it is only through imagination that the concepts which belong to understanding 'can be brought into relation to sensible intuition' (ibid.). In short, as Forest Pyle argues, 'the imagination holds out the promise of bridging reason and sense, establishing the link between world and mind, and abolishing the "immeasurable gulf" between the true and the good' (*Ideology of Imagination* 6).

Imagination from this point of view establishes a link between two opposing entities. Imagination, as Pyle puts it, is trusted to 'fill in the gap opened between transcendental principles of reasons and the empirical orientation of the senses, a project of linking that might best be described as "translation"' (ibid. 8). Imagination in its two parts, works from down to up--the reproductive imagination--or from the top down--the productive imagination--and 'mediates between established or postulated categories of understanding and actual sense experiences' (*Creative Imagination* 131). However, as Engell comments, no matter if imagination 'starts from a priori transcendental principles or from empirical observations, the imagination is always heading in the other direction, always trying to bridge the gap between the two' (ibid. 132). Sarah Gibbons writes: 'One of the most general descriptions of the function assigned to imagination by Kant is that of mediation: imagination mediates between many of the dichotomies that Kant employs throughout his work--including those between

concepts and intuition, thought and sensibility, spontaneity and passivity, subject and object, and, somewhat more indirectly, nature and freedom' (*Kant's theory of Imagination* 2).

Coleridge also thinks of imagination as the necessary link between the Reason and the Senses and between man and Nature. There are 'two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive;' he calls this faculty imagination (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 124). It is that 'reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the Reason in Images of the Sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the Senses by the permanence and self-circling energies of the Reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths, of which they are the *conductors*' (*Lay Sermons* 29). Art as the highest expression of the secondary imagination is the medium which reconciles man to nature. Art, Coleridge says, 'is the mediatress between, and reconciler of, nature and man. It is, therefore, the power of humanizing nature, of infusing the thoughts and passions of man into every thing which is the object of his contemplation' (*Literary Remains* 1: 216). It is 'a middle quality between thought and a thing,' or 'the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human' (ibid. 1: 218). Coleridge further says: 'In every work of art there is a reconcilement of the external with the internal' (ibid. 1: 223), which evidently is the work of imagination that 'reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities' (*Biographia Literaria* 2: 16).

This is also true of many other Romantics who, like Wordsworth, thought of imagination as that dark

> Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
> Discordant elements, makes them cling together
> In one society.
>> (*Prel.* i.342-44)

Engell in his comments says:

> As the "high Romantics" receive and develop the concept of the imagination, it becomes the resolving and unifying force of all antitheses and contradictions. It reconciles and identifies man with nature, the subjective with the objective, the internal mind with the external world, time with eternity, matter with spirit, the finite with the infinite, the conscious with the unconscious, and self-consciousness with the absence of self-consciousness. It relates the static to the dynamic, passive to active, ideal to real, and universal to particular. (*Creative Imagination* 8)

VII. Imagination as an Act of Will

Besides its act of mediation, imagination is described by Locke, Hume, Kant and Coleridge and many other Romantics as a wilful activity. Although Locke thinks that in perception or thinking 'the Mind is, for the most part, only passive; and what it perceives, it cannot avoid perceiving' (*An Essay* 143), perception makes only the first part of understanding. Insofar as the external and internal impressions and the simple ideas are concerned the mind is passive. However, by saying that '[i]n this part, the *Understanding* is merely *passive*; and whether or not, it will have these beginnings, and as it were materials of Knowledge, is not in its own Power' (ibid. 118) Locke implies that the second part of understanding is voluntary and active. The mind in the formation of the complex ideas which could be an act of imagination works through an innate power actively and voluntarily. He argues that these 'simple *Ideas*, the Materials of all our Knowledge, are suggested and furnished to the Mind, only by ... *Sensation* and *Reflection*. When the Understanding is once stored with these simple *Ideas*, it has the Power to repeat, compare, and unite them even to an almost infinite Variety, and so can make at Pleasure new complex *Ideas*' (ibid. 119).

Hume expresses a similar view on imagination believing that 'nothing is more free than that faculty' (*Treatise* 1: 25). He even denies that there is any other source, including reason, for the action of the will. He argues that 'reason alone can never be a

motive to any action of the will' (ibid. 2: 164) and 'reason alone can never produce any action, or give rise to volition' (ibid. 2: 166). Imagination is the only power that unites and separates ideas wilfully. It is 'not restrained to the same order and form with the original impressions; while the memory is in a manner tied down in that respect, without any power of variation' (ibid. 1: 24), as also it has the liberty to 'transpose and change its ideas' (ibid.). Although the memory works to 'preserve the original order and position of its ideas,' Hume writes, 'the imagination transposes and changes them as it pleases' (ibid. 1: 114). He further observes: 'The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can join, and mix, and vary them in all the ways possible. It may conceive objects with all the circumstances of place and time. It may set them, in a manner, before our eyes in their true colours, just as they might have existed' (ibid. 1: 130).

The productive imagination to Kant, at least in one of its two parts, is also voluntary. Kant divides the productive imagination further into two: the wilful and discretionary productive imagination and *Phantasie* which is necessary and involuntary. In his *Critique of Judgment*, he says:

> This productive power is divided into the willed and the unwilled imagination. The willed imagination consists in the fact that one can exercise the activity of imagination with discretion, let images well up and disappear, and shape them according to one's desire. The unwilled imagination is called fancy (*Phantasie*), and although many writers have indeed confused the two, common usage already gives occasion to differentiate them.' (quoted Engell 135-36)

Coleridge, it goes without saying, also thinks of secondary imagination as wilful and voluntary and vital. It co-exists 'with the conscious will.' 'It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 304).

VIII. The Primary Reason and Secondary Imagination

The other characteristic that marks imagination in the thought of Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant and Romantics like Wordsworth and Coleridge is that it is subsidiary and secondary to reason. Descartes argues that 'bodies are not strictly perceived by the senses or the faculty of imagination but by the intellect alone, and that this perception derives not from their being touched or seen but from their being understood' (*Meditations* 22). Locke declares at the beginning of his *Essay* that 'he is little acquainted with the Subject of this Treatise, the UNDERSTANDING, who does not know, that as it is the most elevated Faculty of the Soul, so it is employed with a greater, and more constant Delight than any of the other' (ibid. 6).

Hume thinks that imagination could be very deceptive and misleading. Its action could easily end in usurping the place of reason and in its tyranny over the mind. For him, '[n]othing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of the imagination, and nothing has been the occasion of more mistakes among philosophers' (*Treatise* 1: 329). Of the function of imagination he says:

> No wonder a principle so inconstant and fallacious should lead us into errors when implicitly followed (as it must be) in all its variations. It is this principle which makes us reason from cause and effect; and it is the same principle which convinces us of the continued existence of external objects when absent from the senses. (ibid. 1: 327)[11]

Belief, the higher degree of certainty which accompanies ideas, on the other hand, Hume thinks, usually accompanies the memory or the senses rather than imagination.[12] In his definition of belief he writes: 'an opinion or belief is nothing but an idea, that is different from a fiction, not in the nature, or the order of its parts, but in the *manner* of its being conceived' (ibid. 1: 129).[13] Of imagination he says, 'it is impossible that that faculty can ever of itself reach belief' (ibid. 1: 130). Without the

faith or the element of feeling, the ideas of imagination remain no more than a fiction: 'it is something *felt* by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination' (ibid.). He says:

> ... the *belief* or *assent*, which always attends the memory and senses, is nothing but the vivacity of those perceptions they present; and that this alone distinguishes them from the imagination. To believe is in this case to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory. It is merely the force and liveliness of the perception, which constitutes the first act of the judgment, and lays the foundation of that reasoning, which we build upon, when we trace the relation of cause and effect. (ibid. 1: 116).

Kant also believes that both reproductive and productive imagination depend on reason and understanding in their function. Although its function is necessary, in its action it is subordinate to reason. In the epistemology of Kant, as Furlong observes, '[i]f the transcendental activity of the imagination is to result in knowledge then that activity must obey rules of the understanding' (*Imagination* 118). In Kant, according to Pyle, 'the imagination remains caught between a "nature" that it exceeds and the play of a "reason" that it emulates but cannot realize' (*Ideology of Imagination* 7). It will remain, as Engell says, 'everywhere an instrument for unity within the powers of the mind and also for unity of the mind with external reality' (*Creative Imagination* 132). Imagination in its work after all relies on the power of judgement which is a part of reason.

And even Coleridge, despite all the emphasis and importance he gives to imagination, makes it nonetheless subordinate to his own conception of Reason. He divides the faculties into passive Senses, Understanding, and the intermediary Imagination to engraft them as subsuming circles into the bigger circle of Reason. He states that 'REASON without being either the SENSE, the UNDERSTANDING or the IMAGINATION contains all three within itself, even as the mind contains its thoughts, and is present in and through them all; or as the expression pervades the different features of an intelligent countenance' (*Lay Sermons* 69-70).

IX. Shelley and Imagination

Shelley's world view, and consequently his conception of imagination is different from all the foregoing. Shelley, first of all, does not accept any fissure or gap in being. For him existence is one and undivided; there is no difference between thought and thing or the external and the internal. His world is neither dualistic nor synthetic, and logically the mind is neither associative or selective nor synthetic in its perception. Thus he already dispenses with the concepts of passive reason and creative synthetic imagination. The only means to understanding the world in its integrity and dynamicity is imagination; but imagination for him is not the faculty which presents ideas in images and pictures, nor is it the means which mechanically links the opposites. Imagination for Shelley is the very perception, not as creative or representative but as a power of sign making and sign interpretation. Things perceived thus are no longer definite static objects but are signs with endless possibilities of generated meaning. They 'exist' as metaphors within discourse or constituents of one poetic language, or, as Wheeler argues, 'the very substance of experience is not a transempirical "other"; it is the result of imagination's primary activity of creating metaphors' ('Kant and Romanticism' 51). Imagination thus destroys what appears as ontological and reified and opens a way out of literality into a metaphoric understanding of existence. It works against reification by taking 'an elaborate effort of metaphorical construction and substitution' (*Linguistic Moment* 161). Imagination, therefore, acts through its two powers: imaginative sign or symbol making, and imaginative iconoclasm.

The opposites in Shelley's thought system are integrated not through synthesis, but by putting existence in the context of an original poetic and imaginative perception. The unity of the external and the internal and the subject and object then find quite another meaning. They become united not as two separate entities linked through a mediating principle, but in the sense that they are seen in their original metaphoric state as two

names for one being. As Hillis Miller points out, the 'naming of one thing by the name of another ... puts in question the possibility of literal naming. All names, it may be, are metaphors, moved aside from any direct correspondence to the thing named by their reference to other names that precede and follow them in an endless chain' (*Linguistic Moment* 93-94). It is only then that the thing and thought become one and the self turns to be another name for experience.

Shelley thinks language is originally metaphoric and poetic and man's perception is imaginative. His conception of imagination as poetic perception is, in fact, a return to an undefiled original state in man's perception where 'every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry' ('Defence of Poetry' 482). For him, perception is essentially a poetic understanding of existence. Language as such, besides its conventional function of literal reference to objects, is figurative or metaphoric in the sense that, as Hillis Miller argues, 'each word is seen as a link in an endless chain of substitutions and displacements, with nowhere a fixed extralinguistic beginning or ending' (*Theory now and then* 106). By poetry, however, Shelley implies a much wider conception than what is conventionally understood by the term. He hints at this in his letter to Peacock on 21 March 1821: 'You will see that I have taken a more general view of what is Poetry than you have' (*Letters* 2: 275). By poetry and poetic perception he understands that ability of imagination to make signs or read things as metaphors with no one fixed literal meaning. It is, as Wheeler says, 'the paradigmatic form of all human mental activity' ('Kant and Romanticism' 50), and the power, as Hillis Miller observes, 'to make tropes, to see and name one thing as another' (*Linguistic Moment* 142). Poetry then is language free from the dichotomy of sign and meaning, and consequently all sorts of objectification and reification, where sign contains its meaning and meaning is not an extra-linguistic entity but is linguistic and relational. Shelley says, 'to be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and

perception, and secondly between perception and expression' ('Defence of Poetry' 482).

Imagination or poetic perception thus makes not a link between the limited and the absolute but is a way to see the limited as it *is* absolute. A poet, he says, 'participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not' (ibid. 483). A poem, in other words, is 'the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth' (ibid. 485). Poetry, Shelley says, 'lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents' (ibid. 487). And finally poetry abolishes the diversity of beings and their ontological existence and reveals the infinite relationships constituting their being. Shelley says:

> All high poetry is infinite; it is as the first acorn, which contained all oaks potentially. Veil after veil may be undrawn and the inmost naked beauty of the meaning never exposed. A great Poem is a fountain forever overflowing with waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all of its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and an unconceived delight. (ibid. 500)

Imagination, therefore, does not reveal some already existing thing nor does it make anything new, but is the very process of uncovering relation, where things, as Hillis Miller argues, are not 'what or where they are,' but are in a 'continual flickering displacement' (*Linguistic Moment* 77). John Hodgson also writes: 'The "indestructible order" that the poet imagines is not a pre-existent or transcendent scheme, then, but precisely--and only--the order of imagination itself. The light that the mirror of language reflects is no radiance from beyond, but simply the creation of imagination itself--and out of itself, "its own light", as self-referential as it is self-creative' (*Coleridge, Shelley, and Transcendental Enquiry* 55).

Shelley divides the functions of imagination in two: 'by one it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure; by the other it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order which may be called the beautiful and the good' ('Defence of Poetry' 503). However, the creativity of imagination is not a creation in the sense of bringing into existence something *ex nihilo*, but a retrieval of what is lost through familiarity and reiteration. Shelley argues that imagination 'purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive' (ibid. 505). It is creative in the sense that it reduces things to metaphors which have no central core, and therefore no ultimate meaning. Meaning, in other words, is no more than a certain combination or position of relation. Whenever one meaning in the form of 'peculiar relations' is exhausted, 'another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed' (ibid. 500). In short, imagination is creative as it never stops from generating new meaning produced in the form of new relationships.

In Shelley's world of metaphors, the self is no exception and it becomes another relational metaphor with no pre-existing and fixed selfhood. He would say with William James that '[c]onsciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being' ('Does Consciousness exists?' 14). The self, as Hillis Miller argues, becomes a 'principle of instability and insubstantiality. The self is itself a trope, and it turns everything it encounters into more tropes' (*Linguistic Moment* 161). Imagination, thus, by giving a new definition to consciousness undermines the sense of selfhood and self as a fixed, independent and already existing entity, and eliminates the boundaries surrounding it. By substituting relations for the conventional concept of the 'self', imagination is the instrument of love and sympathy. It is the instrument which makes man feel the other more vividly and with intensity. A man 'to be greatly good,' Shelley believes, 'must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others' ('Defence of Poetry' 487-88). Those who have strong imagination 'feel as if their

nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction. And these are states which precede, or accompany, or follow an unusually intense and vivid apprehension of life' ('On Life' 174). In short, imagination 'can render men more amiable, more generous, and wise, and lift them out of the dull vapors of the little world of the self' ('Defence of Poetry' 497).

Imagination, therefore, in its activity is associated with sympathy and love.[14] Only by repenting his hate and withdrawing the curse, wishing 'no living thing to suffer', can Prometheus liberate himself from the tyranny of Jove, the despotic Intellect. His regeneration begins with overcoming selfhood and accepting the supremacy of love and imagination reflected in Asia's return from exile and his ultimate union with her. Jesus and Socrates whom Shelley thinks of as representatives of the 'sacred few' in *The Triumph of Life,* are distinguished from the multitude and the wise but 'deluded crew' by the sacrifice of the self, disinterestedness and their love for others.

In its metaphysical conception love Shelley considers to be the power that 'heals all strife' ('Among the Euganean Hills' 366). It both gathers and binds the many to each other through decentring the self and binding all in insubstantial relationships. In fact through love the many become the One, differentiated not through its essence but in its infinite sets of relationship. It is the 'germ of perfection' within all beings and which makes them one and equal:

> ... I know
> That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
> By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
> The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
> In love and worship, blends itself with God.
>
> (*Epipsychidion*, 125-29)

The concept of love in Shelley's poetry is not far from the conventional idea of correspondence, like Vaughan's idea of the spark or seed of light for example.[15] However, it is not the link between a physical and a metaphysical reality but between one relational being and its other. Shelley says: 'This is Love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man but with everything which exists. We are born ... and there is something within us which ... thirsts after its likeness' ('On Love' 170). Love, Shelley thinks, is that 'powerful attraction toward all that we conceive' (ibid.). It is because of this touch of light, this shared nature that man can feel the link between him and others, and comes to touch what Wordsworth calls the 'universal heart' (*Prel.* xiii.220) and the 'absolute self' (ibid. viii.123):

> In the motion of the very leaves of spring ... there is then found a secret correspondence with our heart. There is eloquence in the tongueless wind ... which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul, awaken the spirits to a dance of breathless rapture. ('On Love' 170)

Imagination for Shelley is the real sovereign of all mental faculties. Shelley often speaks of 'passion, reason, will/ Imagination' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.10-11), and 'Will, Passion,/ Reason, Imagination' (*Hellas* 795-97) as the four basic faculties of the mind, and always keeps imagination at the head of the list. For him 'Reason is to Imagination as the instrument to the agent; as the body to the spirit, as the shadow to the substance' ('Defence of Poetry' 480). As Wheeler says, Shelley's 'theory of metaphor attacks the accounts of truth that give primacy to reason' ('Kant and Romanticism' 51). However, her assumption of the similarity of Shelley to either Kant or Coleridge in giving the same priority and supremacy to imagination over reason has to be taken cautiously. Shelley, she argues, 'reversed the values of analysis and synthesis, as did Kant and Coleridge; he insisted on the epistemological priority of imagination over reason and of metaphor over the "univocal" statement' (ibid. 51-52). Although both Kant and Coleridge argue for the superiority of synthesis over analysis, both are unanimous in giving reason a higher place than imagination. Kant considers

imagination as the blind but inevitable power of the mind, and Coleridge, after all, reserves its place as a circle within the larger circle of reason. Whereas imagination for Shelley is the divine messenger to the 'blind mortality': 'It is the shadow which doth float unseen,/ But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality' (*Revolt of Islam* VI.325).[16]

Shelley thinks of imagination as a means to knowledge beyond and above sense perception and intellectual speculation. The solution of the mystery of existence and the question of life could be given only by imagination:

> No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
> To sage or poet these responses given--
> ....
> Thy light alone--like mist o'er mountains driven,
> Or music by the night wind sent
> Through strings of some still instrument,
> Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
> Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.
> ('Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' 25-36)

Unity and equality of beings, and their interdependence are concepts which have to be perceived by imagination alone. What comes within the realm of intellect or senses has already entered a process of fragmentation. The mind, it is a truth, 'murder[s] to dissect'. It understands the parts as imagination understands the whole; it observes the beingness in things while imagination discerns their relationship. The intellect, on the other hand, is hierarchical in its perception, that is, it not only perceives the parts but assigns each group to a certain class of being and arranges them hierarchically. Imagination, however, thinks of them as equal in being and significance. For imagination there is no loftiest and no lowest as it blends them all together in a world where the 'spirit of the worm beneath the sod/ In love and worship, blends itself with God' (*Epipsychidion* 128-29).

Imagination for Shelley is the means to true knowledge and right interpretation of beings. He writes: 'What were Virtue, Love, Patriotism, Friendship &c.--what were

the scenery of this beautiful Universe which we inhabit--what were our consolations on this side of the grave--and what were our aspirations beyond it--if Poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar?' ('Defence of Poetry' 503). In a similar passage, speaking on the supremacy of imagination to all other human faculties and its role in discovering the real meaning of beings, in the conclusion of 'Mont Blanc' he says:

> And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
> If to the human mind's imaginings
> Silence and solitude were vacancy?
>
> (142-44)

For Shelley, imagination is totally passive and necessary and has nothing to do with will or consciousness. He believes that the 'birth and recurrence' of poetry have 'no necessary connexion with consciousness or will' ('Defence of Poetry' 506). Imagination, therefore, despite the verbs 'ascend' and 'bring' in the 'Hymn' which speak of volition and decision, is not a wilful activity but is uncontrolled and passive. It is described in terms of unaccounted for visitations 'arising unforeseen and departing unbidden' (ibid. 504). At the moments of these visitations imagination is the 'Æoelian lyre' which has its melody invariably through the 'alteration of an ever-changing wind' (ibid. 480). Having this image in mind, in his 'On Christianity' Shelley says:

> We are not the masters of our own imaginations and moods of being. There is a Power by which we are surrounded, like the atmosphere in which some motionless lyre is suspended, which visits with its breath our silent chords at will. Our most imperial and stupendous qualities ... are ... active and imperial; but they are passive slaves of some higher and more omnipresent Power. (202)

Shelley would describe imagination with Wordsworth as a favour conferred to man which 'fits him to receive it when unsought' (*Prel.* xiii.10). It is the privilege given to the 'favor'd Being' of Nature by the visiting Spirit:

> ... Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
> A favor'd Being, from his earliest dawn

>Of infancy doth open up the clouds,
>As the touch of lightning, seeking him
>With gentlest visitation....
>
>*(Prel.,* 1805 text, i.363-367)

And once this relation is reversed, Shelley and Wordsworth cannot see anything but

>Presumption, folly, madness, in the men
>Who thrust themselves upon the passive world
>As Rulers of the world....
>
>*(Prel.* xiii.66-68)

It is on the basis of this element of passiveness that Shelley distinguishes between science and poetry, saying that poetry 'differs from logic, that [is,] it is not subject to the controul of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence has no necessary connexion with consciousness or will' ('Defence of Poetry' 506). Shelley's character, likewise, is passive in his search--if we can only suspend our apprehension of the active wilfulness implied in the word--for truth; he is borne, carried out to his destination rather than actively seeking for it.[17]

X. Imagination and the Veil of Familiarity

For Shelley language is made of metaphors and insofar as things are considered metaphors, they are perceived by imagination. However, metaphors for one reason or another turn into dead metaphors and become literal facts and reified objects. In this case, Shelley thinks, they cease being the subject of acts of imagination, and rather become the object of understanding or reason. This move from imagination to reason or the metaphoric to the literal constitutes the Fall of Man from the point of view of Shelley.

Shelley attributes the Fall from the unity of imagination into the diversity of reason mainly to two causes: time (along with space and number) (Cf. 'Defence of Poetry' 483) and familiarity with life.[18] Of the two, however, he holds that the damaging effect of the latter is deeper and more serious. Shelley's attack, one can see, is not so much directed to the 'dividing' time that imprisons man into past, present, and future, and prevents him from considering existence as one continuous reality, and time 'which destroys the beauty' (ibid. 485), as it is pointed at that veil that hides the lustre of things and covers beings with the dust of familiarity. For Shelley, the veil of being, as Drummond Bone observes, is the 'material clothing which banishes us from the being of being - it is the bodily existence which obstructs " the light for which all thirst"' ('Turner and Shelley' 210). He even attributes the damage done by time to a great extent to the blunting effect of reiteration which leads in turn to familiarity with life. In his 'Ode to the West Wind', addressing the spirit of the wind, he says:

> A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
> One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.
> ('Ode to the West Wind' 55-56)

In his mythology it is more appropriate, therefore, to speak of the tree of familiarity rather than the tree of knowledge since man's expulsion from the paradise of his imagination is a corollary more of the former than the latter. Familiarity, from his point of view, draws a veil of darkness over the beauty of the world and changes this world of dynamic relationships and endless sources of meaning into static objects heavy with the burden of beingness, each bound into its horizon of meaning, arousing no wonder and attracting no attention whatsoever.

Custom is at the very root of such a mechanistic and ontologically-tinted world view. It raises the 'mist of familiarity' ('On Life' 172), Shelley believes, and prevents man from seeing life as it is. He argues that man in the course of his life 'learns/ To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!' Excessive familiarity with life makes him

unheedful of the unity of existence, and he consequently sinks into the 'gulf of things'

(*Prometheus Unbound* I.818). Custom, in short, is the veil that 'maketh blind and

obdurate/ The loftiest heart,' to the point that

> Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
> And the æthereal shapes which are suspended
> Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
> The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
> The colours of the air since first extended
> It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
> to see or feel....
>
> (*Revolt of Islam* II.37-43)

A new insight is necessary to withdraw the veil of the 'unutterable curse' of custom so

that man can see things in their vitality and vigour, as they are seen through the poet's

eyes. Man through this new insight will 'burst the chains which life for ever flings/ On

the entangled soul's aspiring wings.' 'Life's familiar veil' which is caused by habit,

however, can only be withdrawn by a habit-shaking power. This power, Shelley calls

imagination. Only one in possession of such power, a poet or a prophet, can in self-

realisation say with Wordsworth:

> ... I shook the *habit* off
> Entirely and for ever, and again
> In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,
> A sensitive being, a *creative* soul.
>
> (*Prel.* xii.204-207)[19]

Shelley attributes the fall of nations not to external factors such as religion or social

calamities like war, though they could be important, but to the 'extinction of the

poetical principle' ('Defence of Poetry' 496) which for him is equal to imagination.

Poetry or imagination, according to Shelley, is the source of pleasure and sympathy or

love. Poetry, he observes, 'is ever accompanied with pleasure' (ibid. 486), and makes

man, instead of being imprisoned within the self, 'participate in the eternal, the

infinite, and the One' (ibid. 483). Imagination, as the 'instrument of moral good' (ibid.

488), through love, works on man for the identification of the self with the beautiful

existing outside the self which, virtually, is every thing. By losing this power of imagination, man becomes 'insensible' to the pleasure of life and being, and more selfish and self-dependent.

Shelley, on the other hand, believes that imagination transforms the meanest into the loftiest, and the earthly into the sublime, since the subject of its work is only relation, and in its realm there is no internal essence to divide and make distinctions. Imagination, thus, 'transmutes all that it touches, and every form moving within the radiance of its presence is changed by wondrous sympathy to an incarnation of the spirit which it breathes; its secret alchemy turns to potable gold the poisonous waters which flows from death through life' (ibid. 505).

The intellect, however, changes these metaphoric relationships, revealed by imagination, into literal facts. It works not on the whole but the individual, and thus, on things and not relations. It tends to familiarise the new by trying to 'arrest' the eternal and the infinite and bind it in the fetters of time and place and numbers. Thus the metaphoric experience becomes temporal and spatial and fragmented. The mind does this mainly through two different means: language and temporality or order, through assigning classes and categories. The mind gains this familiarity but at the expense of forfeiting all the elements of the experience that can never undergo any of the fetters of language or temporality: the unity, the beauty, and the ecstasy of the experience. Shelley in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 15 July 1811 writes, '[t]hus does knowledge lose all the pleasure which involuntarily arises, by attempting to arrest the fleeting Phantom as it passes--vain almost like the chemists æther it evaporates under our observation; it flies from all but the slaves of passion & sickly sensibility who will not analyse a feeling' (*Letters* 1: 119-120).

The mind tries through language and grammar to give an expression to the experience which defies any definite set of words or any specific description and fixed

interpretation. It has some success insofar that it can convey the freshness of the experience through fresh language: the metaphor that 'marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension' ('Defence of Poetry' 482). But the problem with language is that it cannot keep the freshness of its elements; it becomes petrified as soon as it is born, for the 'curse of this life,' Shelley writes to Peacock on 20 April 1818, 'is that whatever is once known can never be unknown' (*Letters* 2: 6). It loses that circularity where there is no beginning and no end or where the beginning is the end and turns into a straight line movement where there is both beginning and end; where words are born and inevitably die in time. Thus, the 'unapprehended relations' once put into words become apprehended and lose their novelty. Metaphors, Shelley says, 'become through time signs for portions of classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts' ('Defence of Poetry' 482). As Heidegger also indicates, it is 'possible for every phenomenological concept and proposition drawn from genuine origins to degenerate when communicated as a statement. It gets circulated in a vacuous fashion, loses its autochthony, and becomes a free-floating thesis' (*Basic Writings* 84-85). Words lose their significance so quickly that speaking becomes hardly worthwhile. In *Julian and Maddalo*, the madman, who could symbolically stand for this intolerance of familiarising fetters, says:

> How vain
> Are words! I thought never to speak again,
> Not even in secret,-- not to my own heart...   .
> > (*Julian and Maddalo* 472-74)

Language remains, thus, restricted to the domain of the fixed world of objects, unable to uplift the mind above or beyond the grammatical order through which it functions. Therefore, from the point of view of Shelley, it can never be an adequate means to give an account of an imaginative experience. To speak of such an experience he would need another medium, language ever fresh and new and not tainted with the dull and deadening effect of repetition: 'would I echo his high song,/ Nature must lend me words ne'er used before' ('Orpheus' 99-100).

Metaphor, however, from the point of view of Shelley and certainly many other Romantics is not limited to being a figurative literary device, but includes every thing which is marked by relationships rather than essence and ontological constitution. It constitutes all 'the before unapprehended relations' ('Defence of Poetry' 482). In other words, it is a perspective, a way of looking at things in their novelty and integrity. The means to such perception, Shelley would say with Wordsworth, would be 'unaccustomed eyes' (*Prel.* xii.183), 'unadulterated ears' (ibid. xiii.239), and an inexperienced heart. To appreciate life one has to approach it as an absolute stranger:

> ... I have stood, to fancies such as these
> A stranger, linking with the spectacle
> No conscious memory of a kindred sight....
> (*Prel.* i.572-74)

In other words, the eyes should be changed, and so should the way of reading things, so that the 'form of things' should not be read 'with an unworthy eye' (*Excursion* I.939-40).

Shelley remains doubtful if language can ever be expressive of these illuminating moments of the flight of imagination. As Drummond Bone observes convincingly in his comparative study of Turner and Shelley, Shelley 'was as much beleaguered by the limitations of the word, as was Turner by the limitations of painting' ('Turner and Shelley' 221). He often wonders: 'How vain is it to think that words can penetrate the mystery of our being' ('On Life' 172). His characters, too, share this mistrust of language with him. They often complain of the futility of talk or words. Prometheus expresses his dissatisfaction with words saying, 'How vain is talk' (*Prometheus Unbound* I.431). To him 'words [are] quick and vain' and at the time of regeneration he withdraws his curse, those venomous words that had imprisoned him for three thousands years. The failure of Beatrice in *The Cenci* is caused symbolically by words. In the silence of others, she is betrayed by her own words presented against her

as 'those who will speak,' and their language is described by Savella, ironically, as 'at least sincere' (IV.iv.89). Shelley himself thought of words as a veil that covers the beauty of life from the eyes of the beholder:

> O that words which make the thoughts obscure
> From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
> From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,
> Were stript of their thin masks and various hue,
> And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
> Till in the nakedness of false and true
> They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.
>
> ('Ode to Liberty' 234-240)

Sometimes 'words' become a veil to another veil, that of familiarity with life:

> ... and how we spun
> A shroud of talk to hide us from the Sun
> Of this familiar life, which seems to be
> But is not....
>
> ('Letter to Maria Gisborne' 154-57)

Shelley, Drummond Bone argues, always stressed 'the never-finished quality of being, and the moral necessity to escape the defining word as agent of repressive reason and repressive society' ('Turner and Shelley' 206). In the spiritual experience words prove a hindrance and a counter force to the flight of the soul, divesting symbolically the experience from its freshness and delight, bringing what is heavenly in nature down to earth:

> The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
> Into the height of love's rare Universe,
> Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.

Under the burden of which the Poet falls exhausted, 'I pant, I sink; I tremble, I expire!' (*Epipsychidion* 588-91).

However, any experience or perception will not be out of the realm of language. To borrow Drummond Bone's expression, '[w]ithout medium there is nothing' ('Turner

and Shelley' 221). If Shelley speaks of the inefficacy of language, it does not mean he wants to abandon language for, as it is often thought, a direct experience, but the language he abandons is replaced by another language, the 'subtler language' or the metaphoric language, the language to which Cythna refers in her new exulting experience:

> And on the sand would I make signs to range
> These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
> Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change
> A subtler language within language wrought....
>
> *(Revolt of Islam* VII.280-83)

The maid on the shore, too, communicates with the Good in the same unearthly language, their original 'native tongue':

> She spake in language whose strange melody
> Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
> What made its music more melodious be,
> The pity and love of every tone;
> But to the Snake those accents sweet were known,
> His native tongue and her's....
>
> *(Revolt of Islam* I.163-68)

The new 'subtle language' is language without the imposed familiar order of common speech. There is no surprise then that besides language 'order' comes as another fetter and a means of familiarisation. In fact they are related to each other as Shelley usually thinks of grammar and language in their association with order and 'arrangement'.[20] Highlighting the interdependence of language and order Shelley in his 'Defence of Poetry' says that in the 'infancy of society every author is necessarily a poet, because language itself is poetry;' and he attributes this freshness of language to the absence of order as 'language near to its source is in itself the chaos of a cyclic poem' (482). To see life as it is, to sense the freshness of the experience, the artificial order, therefore, should be reduced to what Shelley calls 'chaos'.[21]

By the 'chaos of a cyclic poem' Shelley intends those moments of the imaginative experience when the common order of life and beings is suspended and the veil of familiarity is uplifted.[22] It is at the time of experiencing this chaos that Shelley believes there is no wonder 'if we grow dizzy to look down the dark abyss of how little we know' ('On Life' 174). There is nothing known in the sense that there is nothing familiar or stereotyped and every thing is new. As soon as it comes to the verge of familiarity and order, chaos works to disrupt the equilibrium and begins the process anew. To keep this original outlook, the chaos, therefore, must be kept anew: 'one Spirit vast/ With life and love makes chaos ever new' ('Ode to Liberty' 88-89).

Imagination, then, works in disrupting the common order and changing it into chaos. Imagination, Shelley concludes, 'makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos' ('Defence of Poetry' 505). Truth becomes not a fixed object but only 'Glimmers, forever sought, for ever lost' (*Triumph of Life* 431), and is conveyed, as Drummond Bone explicates, by words which 'vanish on the air at the moment of speech' (Turner and Shelley' 216). In a passage reminiscent of Wordsworth's conception of the animating work of imagination in the remembered incident in the first book of his *Prelude* when under the force of the chaotic darkness of the evening to the imaginative child the lifeless mountain assumes life and becomes huge and strident, Shelley says:

> But when night comes, a chaos dread
> On the dim starlight then is spread,
> And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.
> ('Passage of the Apennines' 10-12)

Perhaps madness as a symbolic manifestation of this chaotic world view is what is meant by Shelley in addressing the skylark:

> Teach me half the gladness
> That thy brain must know,
> Such harmonious madness
> From my lips would flow,

The world should listen then--as I am listening now.

('To a Skylark' 101-105)

Thus, the prelapsarian Eden of poetry is 'based' on chaos. The paradise of imagination is not a fixed, finished product of an Absolute inflexible will but is in constant 'build' and 'rebuild'. It is a continuous process of creation and annihilation: 'paradise was created as out of the wrecks of Eden' ('Defence of Poetry' 497). There is not even a moment's rest, for that is equal with the 'unapprehended relations' being apprehended, that is death of metaphor. The world of poetry is constantly disrupting the system, the established rules, and is in continuous creation.

The Triumph of Life displays the two forces of familiarity and imagination side by side. The two groups described in the poem indicate the effect of the two forces. The multitude and the 'deluded crew', who are deceived by the appearances of life and thingness, are conquered and defeated by life. The 'sacred few', however, 'could not tame/ Their spirits to the conquerors,' and are not deceived by reifications caused by the dust of time and familiarity. As soon as they feel the heavy pressure of the outward forms caused by familiarity and custom, they are saved from following the Car of Life by returning to their original outlook, the 'native tongue' (*Revolt of Islam* I.168) and the 'chaos of a cyclic poem' ('Defence of Poetry' 482):

> ... but as soon
> As they had touched the world with living flame
> Fled back like eagles to their native noon....
>
> (*Triumph of Life* 129-31)

'The native noon' is the original view man had of being. It is the metaphoric perception of the world before it was tainted with literality. It is the novel outlook which a child could have of life and things which can never fail to keep him in constant wonder. It is of these people Shelley speaks when he says, 'there are some persons who in this respect are always children. Those who are subject to the state called reverie feel as if their nature were dissolved into the surrounding universe, or as

if the surrounding universe were absorbed into their being. They are conscious of no distinction' ('On Life' 174). The 'native noon' of the 'sacred few' is that 'fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight; and after one person and one age has exhausted all of its divine effluence which their peculiar relations enable them to share, another and yet another succeeds, and new relations are ever developed, the source of an unforeseen and unconceived delight' ('Defence of Poetry' 500).

The association of childhood and imagination is a common Romantic theme, and in this perhaps Shelley has been influenced by Wordsworth with his familiar saying 'The Child is father of the Man.' Wordsworth's high estimation of childhood must be analysed according to his Platonic conception of spirit as a complete entity which in birth puts on the dress of matter and thereafter a process of gradual forgetfulness begins. Accordingly, the best stage of man's life is that of childhood when he is new to the world of matter and the spirit has not forgotten all its glory:

> O Heavens! how awful is the merit of souls,
> And what they do within themselves while yet
> The yoke of earth is new to them....
> > (*Prel.* iii.180-82)

Wordsworth, however, uses this platonism more to emphasise the astounding work of imagination while it is unaffected by custom and time rather than his belief in the pre-existence of the soul which he elaborates especially in the fifth stanza of his 'Ode'.[23] He employs the Platonic metaphor of departure from the source of light as a vehicle to meditate on the separation of man from the original outlook which he had on existence, and his gradual forgetfulness of the beauty of life because of his familiarity with it. A child, like a 'mighty prophet' or a poet has a 'sense that fits him to perceive/ Objects unseen before' (*Prel.* xiii.304-305). Because of this novelty in outlook Wordsworth thinks of the child as the 'Eye among the blind' ('Ode' 111). What he

laments indeed is the replacement of this imaginative perception with one dominated by habit and custom:

> Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly flight,
> And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!
> ('Ode' 129-31)

One of the unforgettable examples which he gives is the 'idiot boy'. It is hard to differentiate the boy from any other thing in Nature. His thrilling experience to be released in Nature to be finally lost in it is memorable. His unconventional and novel outlook is reflected in his oddity and idiocy. The boy not only feels as one with nature, but he feels all things reflect each other and he names them by each other's names. His novel and indeed odd way of looking at things is reflected in the only two lines which he speaks in the whole poem: 'The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,/ And the sun did shine so cold' ('Idiot Boy' 451-52).

For Wordsworth, therefore, childhood is not merely a state to be remembered nostalgically, but a state and source where the lost splendour and glory can be found. Reflecting on where man's greatness resides, he says:

> I am lost, but see
> In simple childhood something of the base
> On which thy greatness stands....
> (*Prel.* xii.273-75)

The imaginative revival, thus, in Wordsworth's rhetoric is expressed metaphorically in man's return to childhood, in fact, to the way of looking at things while not wrapped by the dark veil of familiarity. He speaks of his experience as an imaginative poet in terms of a return to these days, saying:

> The days gone by
> Return upon me almost from the dawn
> Of life: the hiding-places of man's power
> Open....
> (*Prel.* ii.277-80)

One can speak with more certainty of Shelley's concept of childhood as representing pure imagination with no Platonic background. In his essay 'On Christianity' he says, 'Have we existed before birth? It is difficult to conceive the possibility of this' (177). Therefore, his estimation of childhood totally returns to the strength of imagination and the way things are approached in childhood while unspoiled by time and familiarity. In the time of the ebb of imagination he recollects his childhood nostalgically, and addressing the spirit of the wind, he says:

> If even
> I were as in my boyhood, and could be
> The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
> As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
> Scarce seemed a vision....
> ('Ode to the West Wind' 47-51)

There is a great affinity between Shelley's 'native noon' and Wordsworth's 'spots of time', and the 'sacred few' in their flight from the appearances of life with Wordsworth's renovating effect of the spots on the damages of time and habit:

> There are in our existence spots of time,
> That with distinct pre-eminence retain
> A renovating virtue, whence, depressed
> By false opinion and contentious thought,
> Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,
> In trivial occupations, and the round
> Of ordinary intercourse, our minds
> Are nourished and invisibly repaired;
> A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,
> That penetrates, enables us to mount,
> When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.
> (*Prel.* xii.208-18)

Wordsworth, however, argues that only glimpses of this world are possible to man, the 'spots of time', or moments when the secrets of life and existence lay open to him:

> ... the hiding-places of man's power
> Open; I would approach them, but they close.
> I see by glimpses now....
> *(Prel.* xii.279-81)

These glimpses, Wordsworth believes, offer the possibility of looking at things through the eyes of imagination and understanding them in their infinite layers of meaning. He further extends the Platonic metaphor of journey (to the sea of our origin where man lived in God and witnessed the divine light) to hint at the possible but temporary return to the original outlook:

> Hence in a season of calm weather
> Though inland far we be,
> Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither,
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.
>   ('Ode' 165-71)

Shelley like Wordsworth believes in the possible return to the 'native noon', embodied in the experience of Socrates and Jesus. The 'native noon' of Shelley is Wordsworth's 'first diviner influence of this world,/ As it appears to unaccustomed eye' (*Prel.* xii.182-83).

Imagination, however, may become blunt through reiteration and familiarity with life. There always lurks, as Heidegger points out, 'possible inflexibility and inability to grasp what was originally "grasped"' (*Basic Writings* 85). A time comes when man, due to his weakened imagination, forfeits all the pleasure and sinks into materialism. Poetry in 'these systems of thought,' Shelley says, 'is concealed by the accumulation of facts and calculating processes' ('Defence of Poetry' 502). The imaginative visitations, due to such reasons as the interference of the analytical mind, cease, and man after being acquainted with a life of unity and savouring the sweetness of this experience is once more necessarily returned to the level of diversity, to lament nostalgically:

> Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
> This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
> Ask why the sunlight not for ever
> Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
> Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,

Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom....
('Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' 16-23)

Shelley, here, is reiterating what all visionary poets have felt from the prophet of the *Psalms* whom he echoes here,[24] to Saint John of the Cross,[25] and to the mystical poet Vaughan who along with others lamented the aridity of man's imagination, and longed nostalgically for the time when man was in communication with angels and could see things not as certain accumulated facts, but as metaphors--a feeling of sad regret and a sense of loss that culminated in his familiar saying 'O how familiar then was heaven' and in his lament that 'We have no Conf'rence in these daies'.[26] Shelley reflects in the same mode the nostalgia for the time when man could see and feel the animating, uplifting forces within beings and regrets 'a Vision long since fled' ('To Edward Williams' 36). In the poem expressively titled 'A Lament' he complains:

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more--Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more--Oh, never more!
('Lament' 1-10)

The poem echoes Wordsworth's 'Ode', both displaying the same theme and sharing one sensibility. Wordsworth expresses the same sadness and nostalgia at the loss of the visionary glory which man once had. Every thing becomes a reminder to the poet that a great loss has happened. All

... speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?[27]
('Ode' 53-57)

In a parallel passage Shelley speaks of the time when love was a 'religion the idols of whose worship were ever present. It was as if the statues of Apollo and the Muses had been endowed with life and motion and had walked forth among their worshipers; so that earth became peopled by the inhabitants of a diviner world' ('Defence of Poetry' 497).

XII. Ibn Arabi and the Interpretative Imagination

In conception and details Shelley and Ibn Arabi show a striking similarity in their understanding of imagination. In fact, if we only exchange the word imagination in Ibn Arabi's system for Shelley's broad conception of poetry and the poetic principle,[28] we will arrive at an interesting conclusion regarding the identification of the two conceptions.

Imagination, first, in both systems comes in contrast to intellect or reason in the sense that the latter works through separation while imagination acts in unity and harmony. Ibn Arabi calls the first *furqan* or separation and the latter *quran* or combination (*Fusus* 76). Shelley reflects the same contrast in his 'Defence of Poetry' saying: 'Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes' (480). Second, it is neither an ontological entity, nor the means to link two ontological spheres, but is anti-ontological in the sense that it purges the things from their illusory beingness and defines them in terms of relations. In both systems, to put it in other words, it is the means to see things defined by relations rather than essence and beingness. For Ibn Arabi imagination is the intermediary realm between existence and nonexistence, not in the sense that it links the two, but to indicate that existence is neither being nor non being but a 'being' characterised by relationships. For Shelley, likewise, imagination is

the plane of reading the metaphor, that is, deciphering the relations that give existence

to beings. It is iconoclastic and contrary to any reification or objectification.

Ibn Arabi divides the perceptive organs into three categories: senses, intellect, and

imagination.[29] The first two, though necessary and indispensable, he believes lead

only to deficient knowledge of the truth, as both are fragmentary and limited in their

scope and can understand beings only in their separation. He dismisses the intellect

for 'being restrictive' (*Fusus* 262) and because it 'reaches a certain limit, beyond which

it cannot go, while one possessed of inspiration and certainty can proceed beyond that

limit' (ibid. 263). Imagination for him is that direct perception which leads to

certainty, and which compared to derivative methods of perception, Ibn Arabi says, is

the 'true knowledge, all else being guesswork and conjecture' (ibid. 215).[30]

Imagination from the point of view of Ibn Arabi constitutes an intermediary realm

between immanence and transcendence, or a perception between sense and reason. He

considers those who separate the two as having only 'half the gnosis'. He only has the

complete knowledge who knows Reality both in its immanence or sensory experience

and transcendence or spiritual contemplation of the unity of existence. The

contemplation of Reality in its separate states Ibn Arabi calls, as we have seen before,

furqan or separation and discrimination, and in its unity, namely in its immanence and

transcendence, *quran* or combination, which he equates with imagination. Hinting at

the supremacy of imagination in having both transcendence and immanence he

comments on one possessed with transcendental knowledge of Reality as becoming

'an intellect without any lust, retaining no link with the strivings of the [lower] soul. In

him God was transcendent so that he had half the gnosis of God.' He concludes that

'knowledge of God becomes complete, seeing Him as transcendent when appropriate,

and perceiving the diffusion of God in natural and elemental forms. Indeed, he sees

the Essence of Reality to be their essence. This is complete gnosis' (ibid. 230). On this

basis Ibn Arabi denies that a transcendent approach to Reality could reveal the truth

for 'contemplation of the Reality without formal support is not possible, since God in His Essence is far beyond all needs of the Cosmos' (ibid. 275).

Knowledge which is essential to solving the mystery of life and existence derives from imagination. On the influence of 'non-existence' on 'existence' and, indeed, on many issues which are of special significance to him, Ibn Arabi says: 'Only men of imagination may understand it through the spiritual sensitivity they possess, while those devoid of imagination are far from such an understanding' (ibid. 224). Moreover, for Ibn Arabi imagination is 'the first principle of revelation' (ibid. 120) and the knowledge of the prophets as such is only one of its manifestations. In discussing the kind of knowledge the prophet receives in revelation he says, 'what he perceived [in this state] he perceived only in the plane of imagination' (ibid. 121). On the other hand he defines revelation as 'that in which sign takes the place of expression' (*Futuhat* 2: 78). In an expression, he says, 'you pass from the words to the intended meaning and because of this it is called passage. On the contrary, a sign which is revelation is the referent itself. Revelation is the first concept and the first understanding, and no sooner it becomes the very understanding, the very revealing, and the very revealed thing' (ibid.).[31]

Imagination is the very basis of Ibn Arabi's theory of unity of existence. It is the realm of relations where there are no fixed and independent beings. For imagination there is no 'thing' in the world, 'for, in reality the thing is God and God is named a thing' (*Treatise of Unity* 3). Imagination works in bringing together the opposites. Each being as a part of this relational system has its other within itself. He states that Reality 'possesses two realities,' and then he extends this dual aspect to every being, saying, 'the whole of existence has carried out this rule: there is nothing in existence that does not contain its compensatory opposite' ('Majesty and Beauty' 53). Thus, the unity of existence will be perceived only by imagination. Aware of his critics he puts the question in his *Treatise on Unity* saying:

Then if one ask and say: In what light regardest thou all the hateful and loveable things? For if thou seest, for instance, refuse of carrion, thou would say it is God.... Then the answer is: God forbid that He be any such thing. But our discourse is with him who does not see the carrion to be carrion, nor the refuse as refuse.... this discourse is with God, nor with other than God and not with the blind. For he who attains to this station knows that he is not other than God. (10).

There is another point where Shelley and Ibn Arabi share their views on the intermediary realm of imagination. So far it has been said that Shelley often thinks of imagination in terms of a descending visiting Power that brings life and beauty to beings. It makes life tolerable and invests it with meaning not discernible in its separate elements:

> The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats though unseen amongst us,--visiting
> This various world.... (1-3)[32]

Although Shelley thinks of imagination as necessary and passive, yet, in order to reflect the interrelationship and interdependence between beings and define these relations as the main subject of the work of imagination, he often describes imagination as an act of mutual interpenetration. Shelley, thus, modifies his conception of passiveness in thinking of imagination not in terms of passive visitations but as an active permeation of both the divine and the earthly, and in this respect he comes closer to Ibn Arabi's understanding of the concept of *takhalul* as a permeation or interpenetration of the divine and the earthly.[33] He modifies the image of the 'Aoelian lyre' to denote that in the process of imagination man is not totally passive but there is that 'principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings ... which acts otherwise than in a lyre, and produces not melody alone but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them in determined proportion of sound' ('Defence of Poetry' 480). Thus, although he speaks of imagination 'as it were the interpenetration

of a diviner nature through our own,' (ibid. 504) he nevertheless believes that poets are 'not only subject to these experiences as spirits of the most refined organization, but they can colour all that they combine with the evanescent hues of this eternal world' (ibid. 505). In his conception of imagination as a conjunction of the meeting of two powers, the inward and the outward, Shelley agrees with Wordsworth to whom the poet as the organ of these imaginative visitations is endowed with power to give as well as to receive:

> For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
> Was blowing on my body, felt within
> A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
> With quickening virtue, but is now become
> A tempest, a redundant energy,
> Vexing its own creation.[34]
>
> (*Prel.* i.33-38)

So, in this sense, mere passiveness becomes unacceptable to Shelley. Although verbs like 'borne away' and 'carried away' indicate his approval of passiveness, these become less positive when they are not associated with the active penetration by the mind of higher realms. One example are the multitude in *The Triumph of Life* each being 'borne amid the crowd, as through the sky/ One of the million leaves of summer's bier' (50-51). Hence imagination is not only a passive act of the work of the spiritual on the earthly, but of the earthly on the Divine, too. Shelley pictures this gradual and unnoticed penetration most effectively in his 'Hymn' where he describes imagination in terms of a series of images that by nature work through penetration and absorption, where the Divine pervades and becomes intermixed with the earthly:

> 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....
>
> (5-10)

Ibn Arabi's conception of this mutual permeation is a corollary to his theory of 'Oneness of Being': the earthly and the divine are not two independent entities but two aspects of one being, one is manifest and the other is hidden. Of the function of imagination in bringing together the One and the many Ibn Arabi puts his views through this concept of permeation:

> Know that whenever something permeates another it is assumed into the other. That which permeates, the agent, is disguised by that which is permeated, the object of permeation. Thus, the object in this case is the manifest, while the agent is the unmanifest, the hidden [reality]. The latter is as nourishment for the former, even as a piece of wool swells and expands because of water that permeates it. If on the other hand, the Reality is considered as being the Manifest and the creature as being hidden within him, the creature will assume all the Names of the Reality, His hearing, sight, all His relationships [modes], and His knowledge. (*Fusus* 92)

He explains the concept through different metaphors. One of these is the image of food which 'permeates to the essence of the one fed, permeating every part' (ibid. 95). He uses appropriately the story of the prophet Abraham in offering food to his angelic guests to elaborate especially on the second part of his theory of penetration, that is, man as the nourishment of the Divine, thinking of the first part as self-evident and accepted by all religions. The idea is also expressed by Vaughan who speaks of the imaginative exchange between man and the Divine:

> In *Abr'ham* Tent the winged guests
> (O how familiar then was heaven!)
> Eate, drink, discourse, sit down, and rest
> Until the coole, and shady Even.
> ('Religion' 4-8)

Having this image in mind, Ibn Arabi says: 'You are His nourishment as bestowing the contents of His Self-knowledge, while He is yours as bestowing existence, what is assigned to you being assigned to Him' (*Fusus* 94). He sums up the idea in his verse in the *Fusus* (237):

> Should the deity wish for Himself sustenance,
> Then the whole of existence is food for Him.

> Should the deity wish sustenance for us,
> Then He may be food for us, as He wishes.

Another image favoured by Ibn Arabi and which puts into a sharp relief this act of permeation is that of colour. As food permeates the body, he says, 'in the same way, colour permeates that which is coloured' (ibid. 91).

The other way in which imagination works is through limiting the Absolute, and expanding and uplifting the limited. Reality is restricted to the extent that it becomes identical with the material, and the material is spiritualised until it be one with the divine. In Ibn Arabi's words, Reality goes through a process of self-limitation. In theological terms he explains the synopsis of this process on the basis of imagination's acts of restriction and expansion: 'The first limitation [to which He subjects Himself] is "The dark Cloud having no air above or beneath it." The Reality was in it before He created His creation. Then He says, "He established Himself on the Throne", which also represents a Self-limitation. He then says that He descended to the lower Heaven, also a limitation. He says further that he is in Heaven and on Earth, that He is with us whenever we are, and finally that He is, in essence, us. We are limited beings, and thus He describes Himself always by ways that represent a limitation on Himself' (ibid. 134-35). Needless to say, imagination follows the same process in the opposite way.

Shelley points to a similar function of imagination when in the preface to *The Cenci* he argues that it 'raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness' (*Poems and Prose* 149).

Ibn Arabi, moreover, thinks that imagination works on two levels: the universal and the individual. On the universal level imagination works in making the human mind share the divine creativity. Man on this level comes through what he calls *himmah*, a concentration of the spiritual powers, to possess a free disposal to interfere with and

manipulate the cosmic affairs of creation. This is why it is also called 'Cosmic imagination'. On the individual level imagination works in projecting the 'self' onto phenomenal nature. In this function it comes in direct contrast to the intellect. It is an outflow, a movement from within to the outer world. It is somehow diluting the self in the sea of beings and dyeing the world with the colour of the self. Imagination as such is a way of humanising the external world by enlarging the sphere of the human mind. The intellect follows a contrary movement; it is an influx of the outer world of beings into the mind. The mind in intellectual speculation does not colour but assumes the colour of things.

Imagination for Ibn Arabi, also, works in raising the 'veil of familiarity', which he understands to be the fixed and unchanging ontological things. He fights against this familiarity by, first, believing that there is no thing, but all things, as is said before, are God which he understands to be an expression. Second, he denies any fixed and finished entities by proposing his theory on 'New Creation'.

The theory of 'New Creation' or 'renewal of creation', in brief, is that not even for one moment is creation the same. Ibn Arabi uses the dichotomy of substance and accidents of the old philosophy by which essence is understood to be permanent but accidents are changing, to put forward his theory of continuous creation and annihilation. He reduces the world of phenomena to only accidents with no essence. The 'whole Cosmos,' he argues, 'is a sum of accidents, so that it is transformed in every duration, since the accident does not last for more than one duration' (*Fusus* 154). Creation, or God in manifestation, thus, in every moment appears in one of its transformations, and 'no [particular] Self-manifestation is repeated' (ibid. 155). He further adds, 'every self-manifestation at once provides a [new] creation and annihilates another. Its annihilation is extinction at the [new] Self-manifestation, subsistence being what is given by the following [other] Self-manifestation' (ibid.). [That is, annihilation is extinction in the face of the (new) self-manifestation; subsistence is in the following

(other) self-manifestation]. Thus he comments that 'no one has any knowledge of this decree, indeed no one is aware of the fact in himself that, with each breath, he is not and yet comes into being again' (ibid. 193). This is because 'the moment of the nonexistence of a thing is the very moment of the existence of its like' (ibid.).

The paradoxical aspect of life, in Shelley's view, is that it is the very thing that covers itself. Again there is a striking similarity here with Ibn Arabi who thinks of Reality as its own veil. The more we live, Shelley thinks, the more careless and less sensitive we grow to the wonders of life, that is, 'we live on, and in living we lose the apprehension of life' ('On Life' 172). The retrieval of the lost comprehension of life is dependent on a process of defamiliarisation which is also what is advocated by Ibn Arabi who believes that the final awareness of men works in 'separating them from what was familiar to them' (*Fusus* 133). Unity, thus, becomes an attitude, and an outlook for a state already existing. It turns out to be a new appreciation of what man already knew. A corollary is that all outward searches are futile. Quest for an external perfection, 'this soul out of my soul,' of which the poet asks where it has fled has to be abandoned for he will surely hear that the 'phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest' (*Epipsychidion* 238, 233). The idea has a stronger hold in the system of Ibn Arabi who thinks, 'thou art thine own end and thine own object in thy search after thy Lord' (*Treatise on Unity* 3).

It is from this point of view that both Ibn Arabi and Shelley think that inspiration has an inner cause.[35] Shelley implies this by establishing that what his characters hear or see in revelation is either heard or known before. After Asia's long journey to the cave of Demogorgon and listening to his oracles she finds that:

> So much I asked before, and my heart gave
> The response thou hast given; and of such truths
> Each to itself must be the oracle.
>
> (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.121-23)

The Poet in *Alastor* finds that the voice of the 'veilèd maid' 'was like the voice of his own soul/ Heard in the calm of thought' (153-54). In *The Revolt of Islam* the girl the narrator meets at the shore has a voice that 'was like the wildest, saddest tone,/ Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago' (I.190-91). And finally in *The Triumph of Life* the 'Shape all light' appears as the 'ghost of a forgotten form of sleep' (427).

Ibn Arabi in accordance with his doctrine of 'Oneness of Being' is evidently in agreement with Shelley that all that man learns, all inspirations and revelations come from his own essence. He says, 'there is nothing in anyone from God [as other], and there is nothing in anyone but what comes from his own self, however various the forms' (*Fusus* 69). He further says:

> whenever a gnostic receives a spiritual intuition in which he looks on a form that brings him a new spiritual knowledge and new spiritual graces, [he should know] that the form he contemplates is none other than his own essential self, for it is only from the tree of his own self that he will garner the fruits of his knowledge. In the same way his image in a polished surface is naught but he, although the place or plane in which he sees his image effects certain changes in the image in accordance with the intrinsic reality of that plane. (ibid.)

Learning as knowing-the-already-known in Ibn Arabi's doctrine and to a certain extent in Shelley's, however, should not be thought of as identical with Plato's theory on learning as remembering, a process of gradually regaining what has been forgotten due to the imprisonment of the soul in the body and to the passing of time. Certainly such manifest duality of spirit and matter could never be in line with Ibn Arabi's system of 'Oneness of Being' nor Shelley's metaphorical perception of One life. Ibn Arabi's view comes as a corollary to his doctrine that the whole is one existence and there is nothing which comes or is added from outside. Man as the microcosm has the macrocosm within himself as his other. He potentially comprehends and has all knowledge. What remains for him to do is to realise this microcosmic unity within him. Knowledge for Shelley also becomes reminiscence, not in its Platonic understanding but, to use Abbey's words, in the sense that 'perception becomes

identity' (*Destroyer and Preserver* 77); in fact, it is not a recollection but only a repetition. Such an experience he finds manifested in Cythna's discovery of the repetition of other minds within her mind:

> My mind became the book through which I grew
> Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
> Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
> To me the keeping of its secret gave--
> One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
> Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
> Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
> And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
> Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.
>
> <div align="right">(Revolt of Islam VII.271-79)</div>

Love, as with any other mystic, has a special place in the philosophy of Ibn Arabi. It is the cause of all motivations and actions,[36] the best form that God could be worshipped in, and the very reason of the creation of the world.[37] Ibn Arabi says: 'The movement that is the coming into existence of the Cosmos is a movement of love.... Thus its movement from non-existence into existence is the love of the Creator for it' (*Fusus* 257). Corbin explains this relationship between the One and the many in terms of compassion and 'sym-pathy'. Love in Ibn Arabi's system is reciprocal and involves both sides, the earthly and the Divine. He expresses this notion in his verse (ibid. 273):

> The Beloved longs to see me,
> And I long even more to see Him,
> The hearts beat fast, but destiny bars the way,
> I groan in complaint and so does He.

For Shelley imagination cannot act or influence unless through this medium of love. It is indispensable to the work of imagination and even superior to it to the point that every endeavour becomes superfluous and in vain unless endorsed and consecrated by love: 'Most vain all hope but love' (*Prometheus Unbound* I.808). To the imaginative

emanation of Prometheus, only Asia, the embodied love and sympathy, could be the directive force to apply these powers to the effect of regenerating the world:

> Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
> Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
> Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
> (*Prometheus Unbound* I.809-811)

These lines echo both Wordsworth in the last book of *The Prelude* and Ibn Arabi in the last chapter of the *Fusus*. The similarity consists in the way Reality is approached and contemplated through love.

XII. Imagination and Iconoclasm

From the point view of both Shelley and Ibn Arabi, imagination does not concern the ontological, but by contrast, it is anti-ontological. Imagination, first of all, works on relationships, it demands otherness, and insofar as the ontological is concerned, there are no relations and no other; it is pure presence. Imagination, therefore, as a means of perception has nothing to do with being in its ontological existence. It works in the realm of beings and phenomena which according to Shelley are metaphors and certain relationships. Shelley argues that 'we can think of nothing which we have not perceived' ('Treatise on Morals' 182), and imagination as an act of perception, therefore, does not discuss or contemplate the ontological side of being which is imperceptible. The Power in its ontological presence remains out of the reach of imagination, since, as Shelley himself says, there is no image which can express this Power: 'the deep truth is imageless' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.116). It is for this that at the threshold of any reflection on the ontological origin of existence, Shelley states, 'we are on that verge where words abandon us' ('On Life' 174; Cf. above, chapter two 54). It is no surprise that at this verge words--as relational signs associated with perception--leave the mind in its vacancy. Panthea speaking perhaps of such a

moment asks Ione: 'Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned' (*Prometheus Unbound* I.758). Hence, imagination as a form of perception concerns itself with the world of metaphors, which are the insubstantial relational beings. Shelley in this way rules out any possibility of translating or rendering the ontological, transcendent Power understandable as one of the functions of imagination. Pyle's claim that '[t]hroughout the discourse of English Romanticism, the imagination is repeatedly assigned the work of translating or articulating' (*Ideology of Imagination* 10), thus, is not true, at least, regarding Shelley. What imagination does is to understand beings in terms of metaphoric relationship within the text. It destroys any kind of ontological conception within the text and fights against the tendency to reification and idolatry.

One example in Shelley is the Poet in *Alastor* who leaves the world of relationships to 'seek strange truths in undiscovered lands' (77). This is done at the price of forfeiting love, beauty, and sympathy which demand otherness, and which could be thought as what the Arab maid represents. He

> ... eagerly pursues
> Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
> He overleaps the bounds.
> (*Alastor* 205-207)

The 'realms of dream' from the point of view of Shelley are the insubstantial world of relationships. But what can one find out of this world of dreams and beyond these relations? Shelley gives his repeated answer: we only 'wake to weep' ('Mutability' 21).[38] Life is a dream within a dream. Beyond the dream there is nothing; there is, indeed, something, but it is unknown, unintelligible, and beyond comprehension. What the Poet's journey then leads him to is an image of Reality stripped of all the beauty he has imagined to himself:

> A Spirit seemed
> To stand beside him--clothed in no bright robes
> Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,

> Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
> Of grace, or majesty, or mystery....
>
> (*Alastor* 479-83)

The Poet follows the river in his journey and makes it reflect his life: 'Thou imagest my life' (505). But the river leads to nowhere; it leads only to the incomprehensible void:

> ... the broad river,
> Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
> Fell into that immeasurable void
> Scattering its waters to the passing winds.
>
> (*Alastor* 567-70)

And finally at the verge of his death he comes to an image, but it is 'an image, silent, cold, and motionless' like 'Mont Blanc' which stands 'still, snowy, and serene.' The Poet rejects what is phenomenal, that is, what is relational to search for the substantial and the ontological. And consequently in the 'wide pathless desert of dim sleep' he can find no 'sense, no motion, no divinity' for these are different interpretations of the metaphor. Without and outside the realm of relationships, he becomes an image of a silent 'fragile lute', a voiceless stream, a dream 'Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,/ Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now' (*Alastor* 670-671). In short, he falls, for in the world of images he could not make the leap from the literal to the imaginative; in fact, he made the leap, but it was from the imaginative to the literal.

Ibn Arabi, likewise, assumes an anti-ontological role for imagination. It changes man's attitude to see things not as things but as God, for what is described as a thing is in fact 'God [that] is named a thing' (*Treatise on Unity* 3). On the other hand, 'God is, in reality, but a [verbal] expression' (*Fusus* 231), and insofar as perception is concerned imagination can detect no presence. In other words, no beings can be described by other than these relationships.

Conventionally, between the two concepts of the beautiful and the sublime, the sublime is regarded as the subject of the work of imagination. If we think of beauty as representing finite relationships and splendours limited both in scope and nature, the sublime, or chaos in Shelley's terminology, will represent that aspect of being that is 'vast' and 'infinite' inspiring 'fear' and 'horror'. However, both the beautiful and the sublime are no more than two types of relations marked by limitation or infinitude. Chaos is where these relationships are in their highest infinitude and there is no restriction to the levels of meaning which each phenomenon as a metaphor holds within itself. Therefore, neither the sublime nor the beautiful reflect any notion of ontology or presence in them.

Ibn Arabi reflects more or less the same idea in his treatise 'Majesty and Beauty'. Majesty, according to him, is that condition which fills the beholder with awe and fear while beauty brings intimacy to the contemplator. Beauty, he writes, 'is the welcoming openness of the Truth towards us, while Majesty is its unattainable exaltation over us' ('Majesty and Beauty' 52). However, he differentiates between two states of majesty: the absolute majesty and majesty of beauty. He argues that philosophers 'have connected the condition of intimacy with Beauty and the condition of awe with Majesty, and things are not as they have said' (ibid. 50). In brief he thinks of majesty as that transcendental aspect of Reality which represents the infinite and the unknown. 'As for Absolute Majesty,' he says, 'no created being possesses any means of entering into it or bearing witness to it. The truth has singled it out for Himself. It is the presence in which the Truth sees Himself as He is' (ibid. 53). Beauty, on the other hand, is an immanent aspect of Reality which is the subject of speculation of the intellect and pleasure of the senses. He elaborates further on the division saying, 'Majesty is a relation referring back from Him to Himself, that prevents us from knowing Him. Beauty, though, is a relation referring back from Him to us, and it is this that grants us any knowledge we possess of Him, as well as revelations,

contemplations, and spiritual states' (ibid. 51). If in his terminology, therefore, he is close to the common conception of the beautiful and the sublime, he diverges nonetheless in his idea that majesty as such, reflecting the absolute infinity of Reality and its pure ontological presence, cannot be a subject for imaginative perception. He therefore proposes another level which combines the infinitude of the majesty and the meaning of the beautiful and calls it 'Majesty of Beauty'. In other words, what he considers as the sublime and beauty are two states of 'divine beauty', and not 'divine majesty' which is unknown and unknowable. Beauty, he says, 'has two modalities: awe and intimacy. That is because this Beauty has an exalted aspect and a related aspect. The exalted aspect is called the *Majesty of Beauty*.' Beauty's exalted aspect is in fact the realm of imagination: it is the intermediary link between the opposites. Ibn Arabi says, 'When the Majesty of Beauty manifests to us, we are drawn intimately close.... Thus Majesty in Him is countered by intimacy in us so that we may keep our balance in contemplation and maintain a mental awareness of what we see, rather than falling into distracted terror' (ibid.). To conclude, imagination for Ibn Arabi works on the relational and is iconoclastic. As a means of perception it can not understand the Absolute sublime which is ontological and with no relations; nor perceives it the set and fixed relations of the beautiful but the infinite and dynamic relations of the sublime of beauty or the knowable aspect of the sublime.

XIII. Imagination and the Necessity of Interpretation

According to both Shelley and Ibn Arabi, imagination continuously interprets beings in the sense of unravelling their different levels of meaning. The 'solid universe of external things' Shelley would say with Shakespeare is '"such stuff as dreams are made of"' ('On Life' 173). That is, life is a dream in need of interpretation.

Ibn Arabi puts forward his theory of interpretation as another exposition of the act of imagination. In another dichotomy he thinks of existence as being divided into the sensual and the intellectual. Man through imagination has to make the leap from appearance, which is the domain of the senses to the internal and the hidden. In other words he has to adopt an interpretative approach to life and existence. Interpretation, he writes, 'means to pass from the form of what one sees to something beyond it' (*Fusus* 99), which is not far from what has already been quoted from Shelley's letter to Peacock on 7 November 1818 that 'I always seek in what I see the manifestation of something beyond the present & tangible object' (*Letters* 2: 47). For Ibn Arabi life is a dream and beings are images, not in the sense that life is illusory or insubstantial, but simply to hint at the necessity of making the passage from the phenomenon to the truth and reality which lies behind it. On the relationship of sleep and imagination Ibn Arabi says, 'the state of sleep is the plane of imagination' (*Fusus* 99), but we have to know that the whole of life to him is one state of sleep (see ibid. 121) that calls for imaginative interpretation. He warns that nothing has to be taken literally. An archetypal example is the story of Abraham's vision in which he is commanded to sacrifice his son. He comments that the prophet has missed the significance of the dream, for on that occasion 'the perspective of the imagination required interpretation' (ibid. 100). It goes without saying that in his belief no-one is more distant from the truth than he who takes life literally and remains in the senses, unable to make the passage from the apparent to the hidden and the necessary leap to decipher the covered meaning.

One point which is interesting and illuminating in this regard is the Arabic term which Ibn Arabi uses for the concept of interpretation. He uses the word *tawil* which literally means to 'return to the root or origin'. Therefore, one can easily deduce that the symbolic interpretation which he intends is not so much a leap forward as it is a step inward; it is a search for the meaning of phenomenal beings not above or beyond them but within them. In other words, it is a way to see things through an outlook marked

with originality and cleansed from the dust of time and familiarity, and in Shelley's interpretation, it is a return to the 'native noon' of the 'sacred few' and the 'native tongue' or the poetic origin of language.

Shelley expresses a compatible idea in illustrating the same facts in *The Triumph of Life* and *Alastor*. The 'Shape all light' is the embodiment of imagination who comes to give a new meaning to what was seen before. It 'comes from the realm without a name', chaos, where there is no fetter either of custom or repetition to bind the mind to fixed images and thought to 'this valley of perpetual dream.' In the light of this 'Shape' what only 'seemed' before disappears to reappear as shadowy figures of a night dream. By contrast 'like a day she came,/ Making the night a dream,' so that she could interpret and transfigure the images of this dream.

The 'Poet' in *Alastor* is evidently led to his destruction by overlooking the fact that life is a dream, and by overlooking the necessity of its constant interpretation. He follows the vision literally whereas he has to find its significance metaphorically. His doom is foreshadowed in his cold response to the love of the Arab maid. He cannot decipher the divine beauty within the earthly love and thus follows the abstract image of the 'veiled maid'. The Angelic visitant becomes the lure to attract him to 'seek strange truths in undiscovered lands' and consequently turns to be the Angel of Revenge.

The two ways to meaning, interpretative or literal, result in two kinds of life. The difference is best shown in the two lives that man and the Witch lead. One is kept imprisoned by reifications and takes life literally, while the other acts in transforming them through imagination:

> We, the weak mariners of that wide lake
> Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,
> Our course unpiloted and starless make
> O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:--
> But she in the calm depths her way could take,

> Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide
> Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.
> *(Witch of Atlas* 498-504)

The same contrast is made between Laon who lives a life of imagination, and the multitude. While Laon 'like a reposing child' *(Revolt of Islam* XII.27) feels the calm and the harmony that binds him to others, 'Each of that multitude remains alone, and lost/ To sense of outward things' *(Revolt of Islam* XI.82-83).

To sum up. Shelley's conception of imagination differs from those of Locke, Hume, Kant, Coleridge and many other Romantics mainly in four essential perspectives.

First, imagination in Shelley's understanding is not a means of reconciliation or establishing a linkage between opposite elements but is the power to see existence as one and undivided.

Secondly, imagination for Shelley is the faculty to see things not as substantial objects but insubstantial relationships. In this perspective, it turns things into signs and reads them as symbols.

Thirdly, imagination for Shelley is anti-ontological in the sense that it destroys whatever conceptions we have of beings as final and finished ontological entities.

Finally, imagination is considered by Shelley as the power of deciphering and unravelling the limitless levels of meaning. It opens the things read as metaphors and symbols to continuous interpretation. In these and many other points, Shelley's understanding of imagination bears a remarkable similarity to that of Ibn Arabi.

Notes to Chapter Three

[1] See also where he says: 'All the perceptions of the mind are of two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas, which differ from each other only in their different degrees of force and vivacity. Our ideas are copied from our impressions, and represent them in all their parts' (*Treatise* 1: 127).

[2] Hume argues that 'wherever we reason, we must antecedently be possessed of clear ideas, which may be the objects of our reasoning. The conception always precedes the understanding' (*Treatise* 1: 210).

[3] Hume argues, 'Having thus discovered or supposed the two relations of *contiguity* and *succession* to be essential to causes and effects, I find I am stopped short, and can proceed no further in considering any single instance of cause and effect' (*Treatise* 1: 104).

[4] Hume says:
> Reason can never show us the connection of one object with another, though aided by experience, and the observation of their constant conjunction in all past instances. When the mind therefore passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determined by reason, but by certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects, and unite them in the imagination. Had ideas no more union in the fancy, than objects seem to have to the understanding, we could never draw any inference from causes to effects, nor repose belief in any matter of fact. The inference therefore depends solely on the union of ideas. (*Treatise* 1: 122-23)

[5] Kant argues that 'the understanding is something more than a power of formulating rules through comparison of appearances; it is itself the lawgiver of nature. Save through it, nature, that is, synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances according to rules, would not exist at all (for appearances, as such, cannot exist outside us--they exist only in our sensibility); and this nature, as object of knowledge in an experience, with everything which it may contain, is only possible in the unity of apperception' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 148).

[6] Kant says: 'Appearances are the sole objects which can be given to us immediately, and that in them which relates immediately to the object is called intuition. But these appearances are not things in themselves; they are only representations, which in turn have their object--an object which cannot itself be intuited by us, and which may, therefore, be named the non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = x' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 137).

[7] Kant argues that '[i]n so far as it aims at nothing but necessary unity in the synthesis of what is manifold in appearance, it may be entitled the transcendental function of imagination' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 145-46).

[8] Coleridge, for example says: 'In common language and especially on the subject of poetry, we appropriate the name imagination to a superior degree of the faculty, joined to a superior voluntary controul over it' (*Biographia Literaria* 1: 86)

[9] Kant further elaborates: '*Sense* represents appearances empirically in *perception*, *imagination* in *association* (and reproduction), *apperception* in the *empirical consciousness* of the identity of the reproduced representations with the appearances whereby they were given, that is, in recognition' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 141).

[10] The Understanding, according to Kant, contains 'pure *a priori* modes of knowledge which contain the necessary unity of the pure synthesis of imagination in respect of all possible appearances. These are the *categories*, that is, the pure concepts of understanding. The empirical faculty of knowledge in man must therefore contain an understanding which relates to all objects of the senses, although only by means of intuition and of its synthesis through imagination' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 143).

[11]It is important to note that Shelley in the 'Hymn' marks imagination with inconsistency, but there inconsistency is the result of human failure to keep metaphoric perception and eventually falling back into the literal perceptivity of life and existence.

[12]In his definition of belief Hume says: 'as belief does nothing but vary the manner in which we conceive any object, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity. An opinion, therefore, or belief, may be most accurately defined, as *a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression*' (*Treatise* 1: 127-28). He further says: 'an opinion or belief is nothing but a strong and lively idea derived from a present impression related to it' (ibid. 1: 140).

[13] Hume says, 'it is evident, that belief consists not in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind' (*Treatise* 1: 130).

[14]On the interaction of love and imagination and their interdependence Wordsworth writes:

> This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist
> Without Imagination, which, in truth,
> Is but another name for absolute power
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood.
>> (*Prel.* xiv.188-192)

or

> Imagination having been our theme,
> So also hath that intellectual Love,
> For they are each in each, and cannot stand
> Dividually.
>> (*Prel.* xiv.206-209)

[15]See Vaughan's 'Cock-crowing' and 'The Bird' for example.

[16]It should be noted, however, that despite the difference between the two concepts of imagination in the theories of Coleridge and Shelley, nonetheless, the Coleridgean Reason is very similar to Shelley's conception of imagination.

[17] Wordsworth thinks these visitations come to those who in passiveness refrain from exerting their will:

> A gracious Spirit o'er this earth presides,
> And o'er the heart of man: invisibly
> It comes, to works of unreproved delight,
> And tendency benign, directing those
> Who care not, know not, think not what they do.
>> (*Prel.* v.491-95)

[18]Wordsworth mentions the same two causes for the fall, that is, custom and time (see *Prel.* xii.193-96).

[19]It should be noted that the word 'habit' may also suggest clothing, the 'civilized' covering of the body as a metaphor for the way in which familiarity covers the soul.

[20]In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 2 January 1812, Shelley says, 'words are only signs of ideas, and their arrangement only valuable as it is adapted adequately to express them' (*Letters* 1: 215); in his Essay 'On Life' he says, 'the words *I* and *you* and *they* are grammatical devices invented simply for arrangement, and totally devoid of the intense and exclusive sense usually attached to them' (174).

[21]Shelley is perhaps knowingly playing on the etymological and conventional meaning of the word 'chaos'. Thus, besides its sense of formlessness and lack of order, it could have the original meaning of

"formless void' of primordial matter, the 'great deep' or 'abyss' out of which the cosmos or order of the universe was evolved' (*OED* 3: 22). Hence it conveys the meaning of both disorder and creativity.

[22]One of the most illustrative of these epiphanic moments is Wordsworth's recollected incident of the stolen boat in the first book of his *Prelude*. He describes the chaos then affected by darkness and perhaps by the child's troubled consciousness, speaking of the time when for the troubled child and the exhilarated poet 'no familiar shapes/ Remained':

> ... but after I had seen
> That spectacle, for many days, my brain
> Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
> Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
> There hung a darkness, call it solitude
> Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
> Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
> Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
> But huge and mighty forms, that do not live
> Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
> By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.
>   (*Prel.* i.390-400)

[23]The same theme, though with a real Platonic background, is treated by Vaughan:

> Something I had, which long ago
> Did learn to suck, and sip, and taste,
> But now grown sickly, sad and slow,
> Doth fret and wrangle, pine and waste.
>   ('The Seed growing Secretly')

[24]Cf. Psalm No. 84.

[25]St John of the Cross in several poems laments the cessation of the divine visitations, in one of them he says:
> Why then did you assault
> And wound this heart, but not appease it?
> You rob me of my heart
> And yet you leave it;
> The plunder you have stolen--why not seize it?
>   ('Spiritual Canticle')

[26]Vaughan beautifully gives the outline of early man's strong imagination and his subsequent fall from this power in his poem 'Religion' where he says:

> My God, when I walke in those groves,
> And leaves thy spirit doth still fan,
> I see in each shade that there growes
> An Angell talking with a man...
>
> In *Abr'hms* Tent the winged guests
> (O how familiar then was heaven!)
> Eate, drinke, discourse, sit down, and rest
> Untill the coole, and shady *Even*;
>
> Nay thou thy selfe, my God, in *fire*
> *Whirl-winds*, and *clouds*, and the *soft voice*
> Speak'st there so much, that I admire
> We have no Conf'rence in these daies.

[27]The same nostalgia and sense of loss is expressed in the first stanza of the same 'Ode'.

[28]Shelley, himself, hints at this in his letter to Peacock on 21 March 1821: 'You will see that I have taken a more general view of what is Poetry than you have' (*Letters* 2: 275). For a similar broad interpretation of poetry, and the power of seeing things differently which the poet shares with the prophet (see *Prel.* xiii.301-305).

[29]See *Fusus* 252.

[30]It is interesting to note that Spinoza makes the same three divisions of knowledge. He puts imagination, however, in the first kind which for him is absolutely unreliable and unconducive to the truth. If we dismiss the names and titles, however, we come to the same conclusion in the two systems. Spinoza thinks that only the third kind of knowledge which is an intuitive knowledge is reliable. But for the name it is the same imagination of Ibn Arabi which he thinks of as intuition, too.

[31]My translation of the Arabic text quoted by Abdul Karim al-Yafi, *Derasat Fanniyya fi al-Adabi al-Arabi* (Damascus, 1972), 382.

[32]Wordsworth, too, speaks of imagination as visitations from the world above that defy restriction of time and space and link man to eternity:

> ...visitings
> Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
> That tolerates the indignities of Time,
> And, from the centre of Eternity
> All finite motions overruling, lives
> In glory immutable.
> > *(Prel.* iii.119-24)

[33]Wordsworth, too, despite his belief in imagination as a given grace and descending visitations, does not hesitate to present it as an ascent, an emanation from the human heart. Imagination,

> That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
> Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some lonely traveller.
> > *(Prel.* vi.594-96)

[34]Wordsworth often speaks of this mutual interaction between the internal and the external, the earthly and the divine. In *The Prelude*, book xii, he says that 'thou must give,/ Else never canst receive' (276-77). In book xiii, he speaks of an 'ennobling interchange/ Of action from without and from within' (375-76). But though the relationship works in two ways, it is strange and interesting to note that from his point of view still 'Knowledge was given' (*Prel.* xiii.55) and not acquired.

[35]This theme has been developed by other Romantics, Wordsworth, for instance who after reflecting on imagination and its cooperator 'Spiritual Love' says:

> Here must thou be, O Man!
> Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;
> Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:
> No other can divide with thee this work:
> No secondary hand can intervene
> To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,
> The prime and vital principle is thine
> In the recesses of thy nature, far
> From any reach of outward fellowship,
> Else is not thine at all.
> > *(Prel.* xiv.209-218)

[36]See *Fusus* 257.

[37]See *Fusus* 272.

[38]The same theme is repeated in *The Triumph of Life* 430, *Rosalind and Helen* 775 and 1210, *Julian and Maddalo* 335-37, and 'Ginevra' 54.

IV

Reification and False Consciousness

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above,
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of aëreal joy, and call the monster Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain--as he whom now we greet.
(Prometheus Unbound I.772-79)

I. Reification and Representation: The Context

There is a tripartite relationship in almost all systems of thought between subject, object, and representation. How the representation is defined and understood depends on this relationship. Different systems give different interpretations of subject and object in the sense that they make the one or the other the centre of perception and give it primacy and priority by investing it with ontological existence and presence.

For the Platonists and idealists what is real and true are the ideas. The objects of the external world are only shadows of these ideas which are thought to be eternal, immutable and ontological. Things, on the other hand, are mere imitations of these eternal and unchangeable forms. This is best illustrated in Plato's story of the prisoners in the cave. The prisoners think of the shadows on the wall of the cave as the real things whereas they are no more than reflections of real things which, according to Plato, are the Ideas. Across the wall of the cave, he says in his well-known parable, men are passing while 'carrying along that wall, so that they overtop it, all kinds of artefacts, statues of men, reproductions of other animals in stone or wood fashioned in all sorts of ways, and ... some of the carriers are talking while others are silent' (*The Republic* 193). The prisoners wrongly think that the only reality of this world is constituted by these shadows, and believe that the movement and voices associated with the shadows are of their own nature, whereas in reality they pertain to the objects whose reflections produce the shadows on the wall.

The source of false consciousness, from this Platonic Idealistic perspective, evidently lies in taking the shadows as real things, and in thinking of what is called the 'real world' as fixed, ontological existence.

Descartes also follows this line of idealism in another fashion. Although he does not deny the existence of the external world, he thinks of it as doubtful and therefore bases his philosophy on the certainty of the mind alone. He argues that the senses now and then deceive us and 'it is prudent never to trust completely those who have deceived us even once' (*Meditations* 12). On the other hand, although he admits that the perceptions of the senses are not dependent on man's will, he still does not think that on that account we should 'infer that they proceeded from things distinct from myself' (ibid. 53-54). He, thus, thinks of the mind as already existing and invested with innate ideas or all the ideas it needs to know both itself and the objects. His philosophy, as is well known, begins with the 'I' or the 'self': *cogito ergo sum* - 'I am thinking, therefore I exist.' (*Discourse on the Method* 36). The self, he also observes, in its existence, is not dependent on anything else. It is a substance 'whose essence or nature is solely to think, and which does not require any place, or depend on any material thing, in order to exist' (ibid.). The ideas of the mind which constitute the only certainty are also only modes of thought (see *Meditations* 26). An idea by nature, he argues, 'is such that of itself it requires no formal reality except what it derives from my thought, of which it is a mode' (ibid. 28). Therefore, in the process of perception nothing exists outside the circle of the mind or the self.

Descartes divides the ideas into two kinds: those which are innate and those which are derived from the outside. He further reduces the ideas taken from the external to either substance or modes. He admits that the idea of substance could be easily derived from the mind and thus is an innate idea. The modes, too, although apparently related to corporeal attributes like shape and movement which have to be derived from the external, nonetheless, looked at closely, are no other than different modifications of substance and thus could be thought of as innate.[1]

The external objects, therefore, are either non-existing or at least doubtful. He believes that it is 'merely some blind impulse that has made me believe up till now

that there exist things distinct from myself which transmit to me ideas or images of

themselves through the sense organs or in some other way' (ibid. 27). All ideas of

objects, then, even if they are existing do not necessarily imply that they are received

from the external. 'As to my ideas of corporeal things,' he argues, 'I can see nothing in

them which is so great <or excellent> as to make it seem impossible that it originated

in myself' (ibid. 29). For Descartes, then, the only thing that exists is consciousness:

the 'I' or the 'self'. But what is the stuff of this consciousness, and what is it made of?

It is, he answers, a 'thing that thinks.... A thing that doubts, understands, affirms,

denies, is willing, is unwilling, and also imagines and has sensory perceptions' (ibid.

19).

The source of false consciousness from Descartes' point of view, then, resides in

trusting the sensory perceptions and in founding one's judgement on them. Insofar as

the ideas of things in the mind are concerned, Descartes thinks they are clear and true.

As mere ideas in the mind and as mere modes of thinking they exist and are true. He

says, 'if I considered just the ideas themselves simply as modes of my thought,

without referring them to anything else, they could scarcely give me any material for

error' (ibid. 26). What is dubious and even wrong is to assume that 'there were things

outside me which were the sources of my ideas and which resembled them in all

respects' (ibid. 25). He says:

> ... the proper purpose of the sensory perceptions given me by nature is simply to
> inform the mind of what is beneficial or harmful for the composite of which the mind
> is a part; and to this extent they are sufficiently clear and distinct. But I misuse them
> by treating them as reliable touchstones for immediate judgements about the essential
> nature of the bodies located outside us; yet this is an area where they provide only very
> obscure information. (ibid. 57-58)

The tendency to form one's judgement on external objects is rooted in man's

participation in nothingness. Man, according to him, possesses both a real and

positive idea of God and a negative illusory idea of nothingness. He concludes that 'in

so far as I was created by the supreme being, there is nothing in me to enable me to go wrong or to lead me astray; but in so far as I participate in nothingness or non-being, that is, in so far as I am not myself the supreme being and am lacking in countless respects, it is no wonder that I make mistake' (ibid. 38).

Descartes, then, to repeat, thinks that the source of false consciousness is rooted in the reification of things which in reality are representations of innate ideas, which in turn are no more than modes of thinking. Thus, he reduces the existents in significance to no other than modes of thought. However, he reifies the self and erects the idol of the mind. He thinks of the mind as existing, eternally present, and invested with all the necessary ideas and as self-dependent.

For Locke and the empiricists, it is the phenomena which are real and existing while the ideas are only reflection of these things. The mind acts mostly like a *tabula rasa* which is inscribed by the impressions received from the objects. Insofar as knowledge is concerned, there are no innate ideas in the mind and knowing is equal to perception. *'To ask, at what time a Man has first any* Ideas,' Locke says, 'is to ask, when he begins to perceive; having *Ideas*, and perception being the same thing' (*An Essay* 108). Perception on the other hand is equal to sensation. He rephrases the above question and answers saying: 'If it shall be demanded then, *When a Man begins to have any Ideas?* I think, the true Answer is, When he first has any *Sensation*' (ibid. 117). He can hardly believe that the soul can think before it is given the necessary sense ideas: 'I see no Reason therefore to believe, that the *Soul thinks before the Senses have furnish'd it with Ideas* to think on' (ibid. 116). The mind is important only insofar as it mirrors the objects and gives a coherent picture of them. From the point of view of Locke all the material of knowledge and reason, thus, is derived from experience: 'In that, all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives it self' (ibid. 104).

Thus, Locke reverses Plato's parable of the cave, taking the ideas as shadows and the objects as real beings. He writes:

> I ... cannot but confess here again, That external and internal Sensation, are the only passages that I can find, of knowledge, to the Understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the Windows by which light is let into this *dark Room*. For, methinks, the *Understanding* is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or *Ideas* of things without; would the Pictures coming into such a dark Room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the Understanding of a Man, in reference to all Objects of sight, and the *Ideas* of them. (ibid. 162-63)

Locke, consequently, thinks that the root of false consciousness lies in thinking of any ideas as innate or that the mind has any source of knowledge other than experience. The mind is passive; it is reduced to a *tabula rasa* to be influenced by sensory perception, or even evaporates. Although thinking, Locke assumes, connotes some sort of voluntary activities and 'signifies that sort of operation of the Mind about its *Ideas*' (ibid. 143), perception is only passive and what the mind perceives 'it cannot avoid perceiving' (ibid.). However, like Descartes, but in a quite contrary direction, he turns the things or the sensory world into a reified hypostesis; it exists and is present, and it influences the mind and originates knowledge.

For Hume, likewise, the mind is not invested with innate ideas. All our ideas come from the external world through our sensations. He divides the ideas into simple and complex ideas. The simple ideas, he observes, are 'derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent' (*Treatise* 1: 18). The complex ideas, on the other hand, are reproduced by the mind by working on the simple ideas. Hume divides the complex ideas into '*relations, modes,* and *substances*' (ibid. 1: 28). It is clear that the first two are insubstantial and cannot be thought of as existents. Substance, moreover, on a closer investigation shows that it is not in any way different from the first two in being insubstantial and nonexistent. We have, Hume argues, 'no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular

qualities' (ibid. 1: 32). From what is said above we can infer that ideas are only a shadowy reflection of the external things and they have no existence whatsoever. The mind also exists as no more than the process of this reflection.

For Hume, then, like Locke, all ideas of the mind are made through perception. Much the same could be said of consciousness. It is formed by perception and man exists insofar as he perceives. For Hume the 'self' is 'that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness' (ibid. 2: 6), and consciousness is 'that connected succession of perceptions, which we call self' (ibid.). He further says: 'I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement' (ibid. 1: 312). Of the mind he writes:

> The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different, whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place where these scenes are represented, or of the materials of which it is composed. (ibid. 1: 313)[2]

However, for Hume, unlike Locke, the ultimate cause of our impressions is 'inexplicable by human reason' (ibid. 1: 113), and, thus, he remains sceptical as to the correspondence of our impressions to the external sources of these impressions, although there is little doubt as to the existence of these partially known or unknown objects. Perception, thus, for Hume, does not reveal a clear and well defined world. It is a world with no definite substance or connected objects. 'We have,' Hume points out, 'no perfect idea of any thing but of a perception. A substance is entirely different from a perception. We have no idea of a substance' (ibid. 1: 291).

By denying substance and identity, Hume tries to defer the question of existence and beingness. He argues that man can comprehend only perceptions and neither identity nor substance are parts of these perceptions. He says: 'identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together, but is merely a quality which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination when we reflect upon them' (ibid. 1: 321). Identity, hence, is not existential but, according to Hume, is only relational. Identity, he observes, 'depends on the relations of ideas; and these relations produce identity, by means of that easy transition they occasion' (ibid. 1: 324). Therefore, identity in its existence only depends on one or more of the three relations of 'resemblance, contiguity, and causation' (ibid. 1: 321). He concludes with the important statement that 'all the nice and subtle questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as grammatical than as philosophical difficulties' (ibid. 1: 324).

It is important to note that imagination for Hume [unlike Shelley] is the source of conferring identity and substance to beings. The ideas of substance and modes, he believes, are 'nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination' (ibid. 1: 32). Imagination, thus, turns what is unknown, insubstantial and in a sense metaphoric to literal fact. It reifies and changes things into fetishes. It is through the action of imagination, Hume assumes, that 'we consider the interrupted and invariable object, and that by which we reflect on the succession of related objects' (ibid. 1: 314). In its easy transition from one impression to another imagination gives us the idea of substance and identity, and thus changes the undetermined, freely floating impressions into identified and determined things and objects. Imagination in this sense constitutes the very ground of the identity of the mind and the independence of the self. Hume says: 'The identity which we ascribe to the mind of man is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe

to vegetable and animal bodies. It cannot therefore have a different origin, but must proceed from a like operation of the imagination upon like objects' (ibid. 1: 320).

Although imagination, according to Hume, is free (see ibid. 1: 24, 25), and interconnects the separate impressions through an easy transition (see ibid. 1: 128-29), its liberty is conventional and the relationships it establishes do not exceed relations of cause and effect. Imagination turns the relations between things into fixed and set causal connections. 'It is this principle,' Hume says, 'which makes us reason from cause and effect' (ibid. 1: 327).

In short, in the philosophy of Hume imagination is the source of reifications and false consciousness. Hume like Locke preempts the mind from innate ideas and makes the experience or perception dependent on the world of objects. He takes a further step in liberating the things from a well defined substance, modes, identity, and causal relations. He, nevertheless, like Locke, reifies the external objects, and although he thinks they cannot be fully understood and their correspondence with the impressions cannot be ascertained, nonetheless, it is the external things that exist and are present.

In discussing the relationship between the mind and things Kant also thinks of the trio of subject, object and representation. He believes that both the mind and the objects are already existing. 'All the matter of knowledge,' he argues, 'is given by the senses alone' ('Inaugural Dissertation' 58), and intuition 'is possible only so far as something is able to affect our senses' (ibid.). Thus, by sensation he understands the 'effect of an object upon the faculty of representations, so far as we are affected by it' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 65). Sensation, however, only 'gives the matter, not the form, of human cognition' ('Inaugural Dissertation' 65). The form is given by the categories which condition the human perceptions. The categories, he assumes, are already existing in the mind which works actively in perceiving its objects. Through the categories the mind conditions all the intuitions received through the senses, and thus, reflects them

as it perceives them, not as they are. However, the mental categories are the grounds for the work of the intuitions or the impressions received in the experience. The categories, Kant points out, 'are nothing but the conditions of thought in a possible experience.... They are fundamental concepts by which we think objects in general for appearances' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 138). By themselves they yield no intuition and in their operation they must be applied to impressions received through experience. The objects, on the other hand, are existing, but they are imperceptible to the mind as they are in themselves. The mind has only an intuition of their existence, but in themselves they are not known. Kant says:

> If our subjective constitution be removed, the represented object, with the qualities which sensible intuition bestows upon it, is nowhere to be found, and cannot possibly be found. For it is this subjective constitution which determines its form as appearance. (ibid. 84)

The things perceived by the mind, therefore, according to Kant, are synthetic representations made simultaneously by the mind and things. Kant in this way makes both the mind and object exist side by side, and insofar as man's perception is concerned both are important and dependent on each other. He states that 'there are two stems of human knowledge, namely, *sensibility* and *understanding*.... Through the former, objects are given to us; through the latter, they are thought' (ibid. 61-62). Therefore, in any mode of knowledge, both intuitions, which are impressions given to us by the means of sensibility, and concepts, which are intuitions thought through by the understanding (see ibid. 65), must be present. In other words, as Kant puts it, our intuition, on the one hand, is 'dependent upon the existence of the object, and is therefore possible only if the subject's faculty of representation is affected by that object' (ibid. 90). On the other hand, things cannot be perceived by the senses 'except by the mediating power of the mind, co-ordinating all sensations according to a constant law implanted in its nature' ('Inaugural Dissertation' 64).

Thus Kant agrees with Hume on the unknowability of things as they are, although they differ as to the reason. The objects perceived by the mind, he thinks, are only representations of the objects in themselves. In other words, they are only appearances of things which cannot be intuited by the mind and which Kant calls the non-empirical or transcendental objects (see *Critique of Pure Reason* 137). Nevertheless, he never doubts that their appearances should conform to the rules of the mind and be subjected to their conditions. In his letter to Marcus Herz on 21 February 1772 he writes:

> ... neither is our understanding through its representations the cause of the object (save in the case of moral ends), nor is the object the cause of the intellectual representations in the mind.... Therefore the pure concepts of the understanding must not be abstracted from the sense perceptions, nor must they express the reception of representations through the senses; though they must have their origin in the nature of the soul, they are neither brought about by the objects nor do they create the object itself. (*Kant: Selections* 82)

Although the objects in themselves are unknown, the rules applied to the representations are known *a priori* by the mind. In 'The Inaugural Dissertation' he writes: 'Although phenomena are, properly, semblances (*species*), not ideas, of things, and express no internal or absolute quality of the objects, knowledge of them is nonetheless perfectly genuine knowledge' (ibid. 58). Time and space, he observes, also have no objective realities nor in any sense are related to the beings. Nonetheless, they are true insofar as human knowledge is concerned. Of the latter he writes: 'Although the *concept of space*, viewed as an objective and real being or affection, is imaginary, nevertheless *relatively to all sensible things (sensibilia)* it *is* not only *altogether true*, but the foundation of all truth in outer sensibility' (ibid. 64)

In his epistemology Kant breaks some of the idols and fetishes erected by some of his predecessors. He makes the things in themselves unknown and unbounded by the fetters of time and space. Things or what we call objects, according to him, are only appearance. 'Nature,' he observes, 'is not a thing in itself but is merely an aggregate of

appearances, so many representations of the mind' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 140). Kant, thus, to a certain extent succeeds in making the world of perception insubstantial insofar as it is considered comprising mere appearances. Appearances as such, he argues, 'cannot exist outside us--they exist only in our sensibility' (ibid. 148).

Kant, moreover, lifts the fetters of time and space and mind's conditions from over the things as they are. He returns their origin to the human mind, and thus prevents them from turning into fetishes. Space, according to him, 'is not an empirical concept which has been derived from outer experiences' (ibid. 68). Nor does space, he believes, 'represent any property of things in themselves, nor does it represent them in their relation to one another' (ibid. 71). He transfers the concept to the other half of perception and makes it an *a priori*. Space, to put it in other words, 'is a necessary *a priori* representation, which underlies all outer intuitions' (ibid. 68). Hence, it is 'nothing but the form of all appearances of outer sense. It is the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us' (ibid. 71). Kant follows the same line of argument concerning time. Time, he thinks, 'is not an empirical concept that has been derived from any experience' (ibid. 74); it is 'a necessary representation that underlies all intuitions' (ibid. 74-75). In 'The Inaugural Dissertation' he argues: '*Time is not something objective and real. It is neither substance nor accident nor relation, but is a subjective condition, necessary because of the nature of the human mind, for the co-ordinating of all sensible things according to a fixed law, and it is a pure intuition*' (60).

Although Kant conceives the things in themselves to be unknown and removes the fetters of time and space from over the noumena, he nevertheless keeps both the entities of the mind and the things in themselves, although neither of them can give an intuition by itself. The mind or understanding is 'something more than a power of formulating rules through comparison of appearances; it is itself the lawgiver of

nature' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 148). It is the pure apperception which constitutes the centre where all representations are correlated to make consciousness possible:

> The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them. All consciousness as truly belongs to an all-comprehensive pure apperception, as all sensible intuition, as representation, does to a pure inner situation, namely, to time. It is this apperception which must be added to pure imagination, in order to render its function intellectual. (ibid. 146)

Kant takes a step to liberate things from the bounds of space and time, he nonetheless makes these two qualities *a priori* intuitions which condition all our perceptions. Therefore, what Kant ultimately does is only to transfer these fetters from the external to the internal. Although he sets the things free from a fixed mould he nevertheless thinks of them as unknown existing objects. In their state of unknowability it makes little difference, then, if they are reifications with one fixed meaning or metaphors with infinite levels of meaning; in both cases they are never to be known.

On the other hand, Reason for Kant becomes a hypostasis ever present and always the same. He says:

> Reason is present in all actions of men at all times and under all circumstances, and is always the same; but it is not itself in time, and does not fall into any new state in which it was not before. In respect to new states, it is *determining*, not *determinable*. We may not, therefore, ask why reason has not determined *itself* differently, but only why it has not through its causality determined the *appearances* differently. (ibid. 478)

The other hypostesis is the world of objects in themselves. Kant not only proves the existence of such a world but invests it with immutability and permanence. He says:

> I am conscious of my own existence as determined in time. All determination of time presupposes something *permanent* in perception. That permanent cannot, however, be something in me, since it is only through this permanent that my existence in time can itself be determined. Thus perception of this permanent is possible only through a *thing* outside me and not through the mere *representation* of a thing outside me; and consequently the determination of my existence in time is possible only through the

existence of actual things which I perceive outside me. Now consciousness [of my existence] in time is necessarily bound up with consciousness of the [condition of the] possibility of this time-determination; and it is therefore necessarily bound up with the existence of things outside me, as the condition of time-determination. In other words, the consciousness of my existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me. (ibid. 245)

It could be easily inferred that false consciousness from Kant's point of view arises from taking the appearances as things in themselves. To think of appearances which are as insubstantial as Plato's shadows in the cave as ontological entities, on the one hand, and the objects as the only source of these representations, on the other, are the sources of all reifications and false understanding. Kant furthermore thinks all knowledge is empirical, that is derived from experience, or transcendent in the sense of being *a priori*, but he categorically denies the possibility of having transcendent knowledge, that is knowledge of things as they are. He argues that 'in order to arrive at such insight [the mind] must make use of principles which, in fact, extend only to objects of possible experience, and which, if also applied to what cannot be an object of experience, thus rendering all practical extension of pure reason impossible' (ibid. 29).

The relationship of mind and nature has also occupied the thought of Romantic poets and thinkers. The Romantic concept of representation is also synthetic in the sense that it is made of both experience and *a priori* intuition, and the mind and nature are given their proper place insofar as perception is concerned. However, the Romantics differ from Kant in their attitude to the world of appearances and the unknowability of the things as they are.

Insofar as the appearances are concerned there are two main attitudes. Appearances are considered as either true means of knowledge leading to the knowledge of the things as they are, or reified entities distracting imagination from the real representation. In other words, nature or the appearances are taken either as a limit

imposed on the free play of imagination or as a source of feeding thought and imagination. The former view is propounded mainly by Blake who observes: 'Natural Objects always did and now do weaken, deaden, and obliterate Imagination in Me' ('Marginalia: Wordsworth's Poems' 1511).

The other view is advocated by many Romantics who think that nature acts as a guide to lead imagination to what is beyond nature. If by 'what is beyond nature' we intend the real representation of nature or things in themselves, then, in this sense it is an escape from nature to nature. Hartman assumes that by 1804 Wordsworth 'sees that it was imagination moving him by means of nature, just as Beatrice guided Dante by means of Virgil' (*Wordsworth's Poetry* 48). Imagination, however, Hartman continues, 'does not move the poet directly, but always through the agency of nature' (ibid.).

It goes without saying that in either case the possibility of knowing things as they are is taken for granted. To put it in other words, things in themselves never remain unknowable for the Romantics. They are to be discovered either intuitively through an immediate mystical experience, as with Blake, or through the means of appearances, as with Wordsworth.

Romantics like Wordsworth, however, think that nature from this perspective could work both as an obstacle and an aid to the work of imagination. Whichever role nature assumes depends on whether we take the objects as definite forms and established reified entities. Wordsworth in his Preface of 1815 points out that the 'anthropomorphitism of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form' (*Prose Works* 3: 34).

The main deterrence to the work of imagination results from restricting the endless layers of meaning to one objectified meaning, the phenomenon which Wordsworth

calls the tyranny of the eyes. He can see who, paradoxically, is not dominated by his eyes, in other words, one, speaking of his sister, whose 'eye was not the mistress of her heart' (*Prel.* xii.153). He speaks of this tyranny:

> I speak in recollection of a time
> When the bodily eye, in every stage of life
> The most despotic of our senses, gained
> Such strength in *me* as often held my mind
> In absolute dominion.
>> (*Prel.* xii.127-31)

He regains his imaginative creativity when he overpowers his outward eyes with inward and spiritual eyes:

> ... and I remember well
> That in life's every-day appearances
> I seemed about this time to gain clear sight
> Of a new world--a world, too, that was fit
> To be transmitted, and to other eyes
> Made visible....
>> (*Prel.* xiii.367-72)

In 'Tintern Abbey' he also reflects on his mystical experience when the eyes, along with other senses, are 'laid asleep' and he becomes a 'living soul':

> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
>> ('Tintern Abbey' 47-49)[3]

The experience is similarly echoed in *The Prelude* when he observes that the poet, like a prophet, entertains that 'peculiar faculty', the sense that 'fits him to perceive/ Objects unseen before' (*Prel.* xiii.304-5).

The deconstructionists have changed the conventional theory of representation, that is, the tripartite system of subject, object, and representation into a system of mere

representations. To put it in other words, truth is no longer considered as the correspondence between things and their representations but as the result of differences between the representations themselves. As Richard Rorty argues, unlike the hitherto 'vertical model' of truth which considered truth as a 'vertical relationship between representations and what is represented', the new model presents the truth 'horizontally as the culminating reinterpretations of our predecessors' reinterpretation of their predecessors' reinterpretation' ('Philosophy as a Kind of Writing' 92). The difference between the two models is the difference between regarding truth as eternally fixed (unchangeable objects or events to be *discovered*) and truth as dynamic (constantly changing modes of relationships to be interpreted).

The first thing that loses its place in the new philosophy is consciousness. Modern philosophy, and especially Deconstruction, follows strictly an anti-Cartesian line of thought in the sense that there is no already formed entity such as consciousness or *cogito*. In other words, there is no pure consciousness, but, as Miller points out, 'consciousness is always consciousness *of* something or other' (*Theory now and then* 23). He continues:

> ... there is never an act of self-consciousness in which the mind is aware of nothing but its own native affective tone. However far back one goes, however seemingly far away from the world, no state of mind can be encountered which is not already an inextricable interpenetration of subject and object, mind and things. (ibid. 23)

The second characteristic of the modern philosophy is the displacement of thing from its ontological position and presenting it as an insubstantial entity which exists because of certain differences.

For the deconstructionists, therefore, neither the mind nor object are ontological, and neither do they exist independently nor have any priority compared to each other. The

things are themselves representations made of differences within the sign system. What we then call reality is an objectification of these relations by the human mind.

False consciousness, therefore, from the point of view of the deconstructionists, is the result of the mind's reifying act and objectification of differences. In other words, the insubstantial ideas are given ontological existence and consequently turned into fetishes and idols. We objectify a structure, Derrida believes, by giving it a centre, a presence, or an origin. On the origin of this misrepresentation he says:

> The sign is usually said to be put in the place of the thing itself, the present thing, "thing" here standing equally for meaning or referent. The sign represents the present in its absence. It takes the place of the present. When we cannot grasp or show the thing, state the present, the being-present, when the present cannot be presented, we signify, we go through the detour of the sign. We take or give signs. We signal. The sign, in this sense, is deferred presence. (*Margins of Philosophy* 9)

The other source of false consciousness is the restriction of the free play of the sign and consequently turning the dynamic overflow of metaphorical meaning into one reified literal signification. As Leitch points out '[i]n their demands for and expectations of totality, in their will-to-power over texts, in their repressed anxiety in the face of continuous uncertainty, these spatial methods turn disorder into Order, differences into Identities and words into Word' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 77-78). Misreading from the point of view of Joseph Riddel will also be equivalent to the restriction of the overflow of meaning and binding the sign in one of its literal significations. He observes that '[m]isreading is not an incorrect reading, but the errancy or deviation of every reading' ('Re-doubling the Commentary' 242). Leitch comments that by stopping the 'infinite play of the text at a particular point--that is, halting dissemination--the reader wilfully or wearily confers meaning in an activity of (mis)reading.' (*Deconstructive Criticism* 99).

II. The Tyranny of Forms [4]

The reader of Shelley is constantly reminded of the existence of a continuous strife presented in different forms between good and evil, despotism and freedom, superstition and intellectual awareness which is epitomised in the fight of the eagle and the snake. If we are not to take it literally,[5] the strife speaks of a deeper conflict rooted in Shelley's understanding of reality as metaphoric insubstantial relations rather than substantial ontological entities. Whatever form it takes, one can say, the strife remains a manifestation of his belief in metaphor and the forces which act to disrupt metaphoric perception and replace it with reified literal facts. Ontologically, he believes, there is but one existence and the whole is only one being (see 'Chapter Two'). But this ontological one is unknown, undefinable and imperceptible. What we call reality is the metaphoric understanding of this being, that is, presence put into signs and symbols. 'Things' are the translation of this existence into metaphors, and although they are the only means to knowing the unknown Power which is the only pure presence, they are themselves no more than insubstantial relations. In other words, things are not essential entities defined by themselves, but exist in their relationship with their others. Man by nature enjoys such a unitive metaphoric view of existence. But due to habit and familiarity with life, on the one hand, and the activity of the analytical mind, on the other, there is always the danger of turning these relationships into fixed objects, and the metaphors into literal facts. On the fulfilment of this potential threat man forfeits the power to see things as they 'are', that is as infinite dynamic relationships, and begins to reify and objectify these relationships. He fills his world with mechanically fixed objects or dead metaphors. Thus, he learns to differentiate between beings as different entities with impenetrable essence. The shifting lines of relations become fixed insurmountable boundaries and lines of demarcation between things. The divisions once made only for the sake of knowledge assume a life of their own with their rules and principles. Man becomes a slave to

what he was once master of and begins to worship, that is to sanctify and hold venerable what he has created himself.

Shelley is strongly aware of the danger of what I call the tyranny of Forms or the reification of signs and symbols, and the strife we come across constantly in his poetry is a metaphor of the struggle against this false consciousness. It is the continuous replacement of two world views, the metaphoric and the literal. The former displays a world that is insubstantial and made of interdependent relationships, and, therefore, unity and integrity, while the latter is grounded in Forms or reified relationships and the power they consequently exert on the mind. Integrity and disintegrity and unity and diversity become other names for the same dichotomous phenomenon. Looked at from this point of view, the fight of Prometheus is the fight for the emancipation from the tyranny of Forms, and Cythna's war against the self-made Gods is the war against man's slavery to the same Forms. Beatrice's mutiny against her father is the rejection of the tyrannical Form and her execution by the Fathers bespeaks how powerful such Forms can become so that man's release from their grip becomes next to impossible, and finally the triumph of Life is equal to the defeat of man in confronting the triumphal Form.

To give an exact definition of Forms, it should be said that they are the same beings though not as epistemological divisions but independent ontological entities. Forms are beings which exist not as relations inside but beings besides the one Being. They are characterised by essence rather than relationships, and act not as different modes and attributes of the one Reality, but realities with different modes and attributes. It goes without saying that Forms, in consequence, unlike beings which 'exist' as different relationships, are non-existent and as such they are the creation of man's mind. Shelley's struggle with Forms, then, is not with beings as insubstantial relationships displaying the one ontological being or the unknown Power, but against beings when they assume ontological existence. What he contests as false

consciousness is putting these dynamic, infinite relations into set patterns and fixed, unalterable models. It is against this turning of metaphors into fetishes, or, as he puts it, 'indefiniteness' into 'idolatry and anthropomorphism' ('On Christianity' 202) that he fights. All things, he understands, are dependent in their being on their relationship with others, the pattern which he sets in his well-known words: 'the good want power' while 'the powerful goodness want', and the 'wise want love; and those who love want wisdom' (*Prometheus Unbound* I.625-627).

II. i. *Prometheus Unbound*: A Case Study

This dual perspective is most evident in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Prometheus is the theatre where these two contradictory attitudes are at work. In his unfallen state he stands for an attitude based on a metaphoric understanding of beings and an understanding of the world as no more than interdependent relationships with no reified or ontological entities. In his fallen state, on the other hand, he displays a view of the world based on a literal perception of things as self-independent entities, with certain and already determined meaning. Prometheus, thus, in his fall and redemption draws a circle where relational beings and ontological Forms replace each other continuously. The transition from one attitude to the other could be ascribed to man's tendency to project himself and objectify what are no more than intellectual measures and ideal relationships, on the one hand, and his restlessness to free himself from set patterns and definite forms, and return to his original metaphoric outlook, on the other. The substitution of essence by relations, hate by love, and Jupiter by Demogorgon, from Shelley's point of view, becomes the never ending mission of life, or, as Carol Jacobs puts it, the 'abyss of Demogorgon, the "revolving world" of shapelessness as perpetual transformation, Demogorgon's refusal to be reified, his refusal to speak a language that delimits its referent, now appears as the very possibility of art' (*Uncontainable Romanticism* 51).

The play's major theme, then, is man's tendency to objectification and his fight against it as the main source of false consciousness. By giving power in the form of wisdom to Jupiter and again by fighting against him Prometheus represents this contradiction in feeling and attitude. Jupiter is the symbol of all tyrant Forms and fetishes that are established and erected by man himself. He is the result of turning a relation into an ontological being. In reality, he is nothing other than Prometheus himself in his fallen state. In his speech Prometheus implies that Jupiter in a sense is his creation. It is he who gave wisdom to Jupiter and made him sovereign over man. Jupiter, to use Bloom's words, 'is only the boundary or outward circumference of the Titan's energies and desires' (*Visionary Company* 299). As Lloyd Abbey also points out, Jupiter is 'no more than Prometheus's objectification of his own fallen nature' (*Destroyer and Preserver* 56). The Furies likewise stand for Prometheus's thought and attitude. In the tormenting dark picture they give him of the future and the gloomy destiny they show him awaiting any revolution or idea of reformation, the Furies, as Jean Hall points out, 'picture not the inevitable way of the world, but the way Prometheus himself fears the world goes' (*Transforming Image* 78). In other words, the Shelleyan Furies 'feed upon whatever is already present in their victim' (ibid.).

The one passage that best presents the true nature of Prometheus's unfallen state is the song of the fourth spirit in the chorus of spirits, where the character of the poet in his attitude reflects the Titan before his fall:

> On a poet's lips I slept
> Dreaming like a love-adept
> In the sound his breathing kept;
> Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
> But feeds on the aëreal kisses
> Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
> He will watch from dawn to gloom
> The lake-reflected sun illume
> The yellow bees i' the ivy-bloom,
> Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
> But from these create he can

Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!

(*Prometheus Unbound* I.737-49)

The poet, especially for the Romantics, represents imagination in its metaphoric activity. The attitude of Prometheus as a poet is dominated by metaphoric perception. This perception is characterised by regarding things as metaphors or certain relations generating an endless reservoir of meaning. While things are looked at as metaphors there is no separation, definiteness, or fixed meaning and final signification. Shelley's range of words in this passage also speaks of his consciousness of this shadowy or relational world view. Words like lips, sound, breathing, aerial kisses, sleeping, dreaming, and the ideas of not seeking and not finding, watching and not heeding nor seeing the things as they appear (essences or entities), display the poet's passivity and his disapproval of any dualism that separates sign from meaning. And finally the poet can create 'Forms more real than living man', in generating the endless levels of meaning. In short, in this passage there is no place for fixed entities and set patterns. All that the picture displays are lines, signs, shadowy shapes, entertaining minimal physical action or movement and infinite imaginative creativity.

The fall of Prometheus occurs when he begins to seek 'mortal blisses' by turning the aerial shapes of his creation into reified external objects. To use Abbey's words, the Titan falls when he comes 'to ascribe autonomous existence to the objects of his thought' (*Destroyer and Preserver* 56). Thus Shelley ascribes the root of false consciousness to the reification of these insubstantial thoughts and the projection of the human mind. The passage which reflects both these fatal changes, and, consequently, Prometheus's fall is the song of the sixth spirit of the chorus of spirits:

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

> Dream visions of aëreal joy, and call the monster Love,
> And wake, and find the shadow Pain--as he whom now we greet.
> <div align="center">(Prometheus Unbound I.772-79)</div>

The play begins *in medis res* at the eve of Prometheus's regeneration. In a flashback Prometheus speaks of the time when he was with Asia, the spirit of love and beauty in nature, 'drinking life from her loved eyes.' This prelapsarian state of unity governed by love and sympathy then, we are told, is replaced by three thousand years of torture and hate. For centuries, thus, Prometheus is fastened to a rock and tormented by the Furies sent by Jupiter. This, he reflects, however, is a self-inflected agony, since it was he who gave dominance to Jupiter, the incarnated 'wisdom', over the universe, on the condition or to the end of letting man be free. As Hogle points out, Prometheus transfers strength and wisdom 'from primitive humanity's desire for such seemingly distant powers to a raised-up Jupiter (initially another reflector of several human aspirations), with the proviso that people remain distinct and "free" from a wisdom that might impose its fancied strength on whatever it views' (*Shelley's Process* 173). This, however, ends paradoxically with the dominance of wisdom and with a world filled with fetishes and idols, an earth

> Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
> Requitest for knee-worship, prayer and praise,
> And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
> With fear and self-contempt and barren hope....
> <div align="center">(Prometheus Unbound I.5-8)</div>

Prometheus conscious of the fall tries to loosen himself from the dominion of Forms, Jupiter, the Furies and the fragments with which Jupiter has peopled the earth, and to undo the spell he has brought unto himself and mankind. He confronts the dilemma of either to be the 'saviour and the strength of suffering man,/ Or sink into the original gulf of *things*' (ibid. I.817-18; italics mine) where he is now. If he is to liberate himself from the dominance of Jupiter, however, he has to fight to replace a world of 'things' with one of metaphors. But no matter how hard he has tried for three thousands years, he is still 'Nailed to this wall of eagle baffling-mountain,' and

chained to the Car of Life to which the 'wise, the great, the unforgotten' are chained. The Furies, according to Hogle, are constantly at work to convince Prometheus that 'these turnings of metaphoric relations into signs with fixed meanings, will be repeated henceforth without significant differences' (*Shelley's Process* 178). They try to 'trap him in a consistent pattern', and enforce 'dominant images of authority' (ibid.) and fixed relationships. The secret of the triumph of the Furies and his failure resides in his desire to renounce Jupiter as his projection and yet retain his hate which lives on projected relationships. Hate by nature is reifying and is based on exclusion, and the world it presents is one of separation and alienation. Thus, in his hate, Prometheus is

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

In short, as Abbey points out, 'the fallen Prometheus has made the environment a mirror of his own hate and is responsible for the fall of his own world' (*Destroyer and Preserver* 58). The turning point of Prometheus's regeneration is his repentance for his hate. Now, he repeats the curse but for another purpose. He repeats it because it gives him a recognition of his hate, and, thus, a dominance over it. The curse, which displays his hate, is in fact, as Isobel Armstrong argues, 'a shadowing forth of the mind of Prometheus which achieves new being and dominance through repetition' ('Shelley's Perplexity' 94). However, this time he does not repeat the curse himself nor let any one who resembles him do it, but he summons the double or phantasm of Jupiter to pronounce it:

> ... let not aught
> Of that which may be evil, pass again
> My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
> > (*Prometheus Unbound* I.218-20)

Blind with grief, he had made that 'unutterable curse,' which like a cloud of darkness, 'clings upon mankind.' Changed 'so that aught evil wish/ Is dead within,' he revokes his curse, his hate, saying, 'I wish no living thing to suffer pain,' knowing that there is indeed no 'thing', but interdependent beings defined in their relationship with each other. By cursing his foe, he has turned one of the relations into an icon, and by cursing his other he has brought a curse on himself and mankind. Once his attitude is changed, the grip of the tyrannical Forms begins to loosen and simultaneously the circle of 'self' begins to grow wider and the fragmented picture moves towards reintegration. This is the moment when the wall of 'things', of Forms, Prometheus had built for three thousand years falls down. This is how pity instead of hate marks the end of the Furies and the beginning of his regeneration:

> *Prometheus*: Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
> And yet I pity those they torture not.
> *Fury*: Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [*vanishes*.
> (*Prometheus Unbound* I.632-34)

It is on this ground that Shelley bases his social antipathy to whatever action arises from hatred and violence in general. This is why, perhaps, he is more in favour of reform rather than revolution because of the latter's association with force and violence, though the former is slow and less satisfactory to the immediate need for change. In his 'Address to the Irish People' he declares that he would rather not 'see things changed now, because it cannot be done without violence, and we may assure ourselves that none of us are fit for any change, however good, if we condescend to employ force in a cause which we think right' (51). He later reinforces the peaceful process of the scheme of his reform, saying, 'nothing would be further from the views of the associated philanthropists than attempting to subvert establishments forcibly, or even hastily' ('Association of Philanthropists' 63). Introducing any reform through violence, he believes, is using the same weapon as the enemy which no doubt will bring the very reform into tyranny and finally ruin:

Some restraint ought indeed to be imposed on those thoughtless men who imagine they can find in violence a remedy for violence, even if their oppressors had tempted them to this occasion of their ruin. They are instruments of evil.... ('On the Death of the Prince Charlotte' 166)

Thus, Shelley's poetry and prose are heavily marked by precepts advocating restraint and tolerance. His condemnation of violence and his criticism of those who find a remedy for social misfortune in violent action is, indeed, a motive which lies behind many of his plays, poems, and essays, and it is in this light that his characters should be analysed and judged, and the scheme of action and events discussed. Despite his strong hate of oppression and his lifelong struggle against tyranny, Shelley never doubted the ineffectiveness of revenge and retribution.[6] Violence, according to him, creates a vicious circle of hatred and revenge. Tyranny and oppression as evil instigate revenge and hatred, and violence, arising from these two, in turn, would bring more evil into the society. A way out of this circle of evil is made possible through the renunciation of hate and revenge. In his 'Essay on the Punishment of Death' Shelley reinforces this claim, saying:

It is sufficiently clear that revenge, retaliation, atonement, expiation are rules and motives so far from deserving a place in any enlightened system of political life that they are the chief source of a prodigious class of miseries in the domestic circles of society. (155)

Shelley, because of the evil that he knows is lurking in actions of violence and man's propensity to such actions while in a group, strongly opposes what he calls the 'mob' as a means to securing social or political objectives through the use of force. He defines the mob as 'an assembly of people who, without foresight or thought, collect themselves to disapprove of by force any measure which they dislike,' and concludes that an 'assembly like this can never do anything but harm' ('Address to the Irish People' 46). He further emphasises that '[a]ssociations for purposes of violence are entitled to the strongest disapprobation of the real reformist' (ibid.).

Shelley's condemnation of force as a means to advance or enhance the views and objectives of a certain class or group of people in society even goes beyond its wide abuse by the mob to include power in its general definition as being corrupt and destructive even to the innocent and to those with benevolent will and good intent:

> This power made them bad men; for although rational people are very good in their natural state, there are now, and ever have been, very few whose good dispositions despotic power does not destroy. (ibid. 42)

In 'An Association of Philanthropists' he further underlines the fact that '[p]ower and wealth do not benefit, but injure the cause of virtue and freedom' (61).

Although government in present circumstances, is necessary, yet, as a centre of power it is evil and not without its corollary mischief. Shelley thinks that in an ideal society there is no need for government, and the only government will be the 'opinion of your neighbour': 'Government is an evil, it is only the thoughtlessness and vices of men that make it a necessary evil. When all men are good and wise, government will of itself decay' ('Address to the Irish People' 51).

The *Revolt of Islam* in contrast to *The Cenci* in which force is used as a bad means to promote a good cause, a horrible and condemned policy for Shelley, is in fact an illustration of the idea of reform through love and pity instead of violence and hate, the theme of which could be that

> ... the chastened will
> Of virtue sees that justice is the light
> Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.
> (*Revolt of Islam* V.304-6)

And any change, whether social or political, for the benefit of man and the prosperity of society should be endorsed by the replacement of hatred with love, otherwise it is a change only in name and title:

> If blood be shed , 'tis but a change and choice
> Of bonds,--from slavery to cowardice
> A wretched fall!
>   (*Revolt of Islam* VI.244-46)

As historical evidence for his claim Shelley provides a long list of events which shows that the use of force to promote a cause or suppress its opponents ends either in the users' defeat or the opponents' strength, or, at least, it becomes the cause of diversion from benevolent objectives and turns them into malevolence. The two historical events that Shelley frequently mentions are the emergence of Christianity as evidence for the former and the decline of the French Revolution evidence for the latter. On Christianity he says, 'had the Jews not been a barbarous and fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even [have] existed.' ('Letter to Lord Ellenborough' 78). He then gives his historically proved theory that whatever system has 'arisen and augmented' by force, suppression or deceit, it is impossible that it could stand the test of time and not perish. And finally, the use of power to promote any idea becomes a test of its insufficiency and falsehood as it is 'ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use power and coercion, not reasoning and persuasion, to procure its admission' (ibid. 74).

As an instance of how violence could act as a means of diverting and misleading the efforts arising truly from goodness of heart and sympathy to others Shelley uses the French Revolution: 'The French Revolution, although undertaken with the best intentions, ended ill for the people, because violence was employed' ('Address to the Irish People' 47).

To return to our subject play, the moment of forfeiting hate is the moment of iconoclasm and destroying the idols erected for centuries through the act of projection and familiarity with life. In repenting his hate, Prometheus refuses to bind the infinite images into fixed patterns and turn one of the relations into a dominant fixed Power. He has to suffer, however, the strain of leaving his hate for love and facts for metaphors. On the one hand the Furies, which are his projected thoughts, will constantly remind him that there is no way out of this literal perception of life. The moment of metaphor and the confrontation with life in its infinitude and its dynamic 'form', on the other hand, is so deep and laboriously exhilarating that Prometheus as a typical man will likely prefer the veil of familiarity with life to the breath-taking experience. 'It is well,' he argues, 'that we are thus shielded by the familiarity of what is at once so certain and so unfathomable from an astonishment which would otherwise absorb and overawe the functions of that which is its object' ('On Life' 173).

At a crucial point of the drama, Prometheus is asked about a secret which in effect will lead to his freedom and Jupiter's destruction in the future of the play. Beatrice, apparently, shared to some extent the same secret of which Savella speaks: 'Thou hast a secret which will answer not' (*Cenci* IV.iv.106). This eventually led to the overthrow of her father, though not to her freedom. The secret becomes a motif in many of Shelley's plays and poems and is reiterated under this name or others in *The Revolt of Islam*, *The Cenci*, and *The Triumph of Life*, to name but the main poems. Shelley mentions this but in passing and its significance in the case of *Prometheus Unbound* is usually returned to what we understand from the myth itself. To understand it in the range of all these contexts, however, needs a wider interpretation. The original myth speaks of Jupiter begetting a son who will bring an end to the reign of his father. [Baker speaks of this secret thus: 'Necessity must eventually institute what are in effect proceedings of impeachment against Jupiter, for this monarch has been guilty of high crimes, misdemeanors, and malfeasance in office from the moment he assumed the throne' (*Shelley's Major Poetry* 102)]. Shelley manipulates the story to reflect on

life and existence, and the cause of man's fall and redemption. As is known, he finds it easy and even necessary sometimes to deviate from the original myth, and we see this in his rejection of one of the events which leads to the peace settlement between Jupiter and Prometheus. In the preface to the play he says: 'I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary' (*Poems and Prose* 107). He was no less averse, I believe, to thinking of any Power liberating the hero except that which arises from within himself. This is why the course of action in the play is kept to a minimum, and though Demogorgon is present as the omnipotent Destiny in the play, any confrontation with Jupiter, except for a few verbal exchanges, is almost non-existent. Shelley's major conflict is intended to be internal rather than external, and Prometheus, thus, was liberated by his change of attitude rather than by Demogorgon's interference.

The cause of the fall of the multitude along with the 'wise, the great, the unforgotten', and the secret of the reunion of the 'sacred few', likewise, has to be internal. It is what Shelley sometimes calls the 'new lore' which could be summed up in the idea of developing a new understanding of the 'self'. In his dedication to *The Cenci* Shelley hints at this notion arguing that the 'highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching of the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind' (*Poems and Prose* 147). In his 'Defence of Poetry', after enumerating the miseries of the modern man, he asks: 'From what other cause has it arisen that the discoveries which should have lightened, have added to the curse imposed on Adam?' The answer is 'the principle of Self' (503). Thus, there is much reason to think of the secret as being linked to the self, but in the unconventional understanding which he has of the word.

Shelley thinks of the self as a metaphor defined by its relationship with others instead of being an essence marked by an impenetrable and independent presence. The secret of life, then, is hidden in this unconventional outlook which sees things not as separated substantial beings but rather as modes of relationships. The most important change, thus, results from moving the self from being a centre and dissolving it in the insubstantiality of 'things'.

Those who define the self in terms of essence rather than relationships in a Cartesian mode logically make a division between the self and things, and initiate a continuous strife with life to penetrate the world of things and reach what is beyond life's appearances. They are caught, however, in the veil which they call life, and are destroyed, for 'in the battle life and they did wage,/ She remained conqueror.' Despite all his endeavour, because of his narrow conception of the self which is reflected in his 'curse' and hate, Prometheus was tyrannised by Jupiter and held captive to the Forms, and like others among 'the wise, the great, the unforgotten' was chained to the Car of Life, since

> ... their lore
> Taught them not this--to know themselves; their might
> Could not repress the mutiny within,
> And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night
> Caught them ere evening.
> <div align="right">(Triumph of Life 211-15)</div>

'To know themselves,' is the secret of life and the way to real knowledge. Unless, Shelley would have warned, man knows that the minds or selves, are but one mind and one self and the apparently separate lives are one Life, he cannot release himself from the dominance of Forms. 'Nothing in the world is single' and independent in its 'self', and the 'words *I, you, they* are not signs of any actual difference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts thus indicated, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the mind' ('On Life' 174). The sacred few,

knowing this, gave up that unprofitable lore of the 'deluded crew' for a realisation and

a new insight:

> New lore was this--old age with its grey hair,
> And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
> And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare
> To burst the chains which life for ever flings
> On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
> So is it cold and cruel, and is made
> The careless slave of that dark power which brings
> Evil, like blight, on man, who still betrayed,
> Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.
>
> *(Revolt of Islam* II.289-97)

The murder of Count Cenci has to be interpreted in this light and as a sign of the

overthrow of these dominant Forms. Beatrice's possession of the secret 'which may

transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,/ The fear of which perplexes the Supreme,'

makes the Fathers as holders of this 'sceptre of wide Heaven' ponder in fear:

> Parricide grows so rife,
> That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
> Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.
> Authority, and power, and hoary hair
> Are grown crimes capital.
>
> *(Cenci* V.iv.20-24)

The regenerated Prometheus by now has learned the lore of the 'self'. He has

penetrated the veil of 'things' to see that Forms are non-existent; that they are the

names we give and the divisions we make. They are the 'Shape' we place in the 'coach'

of our mind and through years of custom wrap in a veil of sanctity, and 'Beneath a

dusky hood and double cape' we mystify it till its glare 'obscured with blinding light/

The sun' of the truth, and in consequence we, 'The shapes which draw it in thick

lightnings/ Were lost.'

Armed with the new vision Prometheus sees that whatever is there and comes under

man's perception is the one world of insubstantial relations, which we call Reality,

Spirit or Power. He has realised the secret that even the Furies, in affirmation of his

newly gained lore, cannot but betray themselves to him, revealing their true identity,

testifying their no-*thing*-ness, and admitting that it is man who gives them existence

and life, and that otherwise they are shapeless and insubstantial:

> As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
> To gather for her festal crown of flowers
> The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
> So from our victim's destined agony
> The shade which is our form invests us round,
> Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.
> > (*Prometheus Unbound* I.467-72)

This is what is seen by Panthea, too, as a vision of the true nature of things:

> The Heaven around, the Earth below
> Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
> All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
> Though some appeared the work of human hearts....
> > (*Prometheus Unbound* I.586-89)

This is the secret that brings down Jupiter, as one of these shapes made by the human

heart, from the top of his throne and hurls him down into the deep 'dark void' and

makes him to be 'sunk to the abyss.'

It is on this philosophical view that Shelley builds his ethical system based on human

love, and proposes the establishment of the Association of Philanthropists. Here he no

longer sees man as an independent self whose existence and destiny does not exceed

his selfhood, the 'I', but as a part of the whole, the loss of which is the loss for all. He

sees the one as reflecting all, and the '[a]ll is contained in each' (*Hellas* 792), and the

annihilation of one person, therefore, becomes the destructive tempest that shakes the

foundation of the whole of existence. To this end he says: 'Nothing is more horrible

than that man should for any cause shed the life of man' ('On the Death of the Princess

Charlotte' 165). Cythna, too, knowing this asks each of her assailors 'for thine own

sake/ I prithee spare me' (*Revolt of Islam* IV.161-62). Even those who do evil out of

ignorance and thus serve the evil powers in society may be excused on this ground and the all-embracing act of sanctification of life:

> We all are brethren--even the slaves who kill
> For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed
> On misdoer, doth but Misery feed
> With her own broken heart!
>
>   (*Revolt of Islam* V.93-96)

From this Promethean perspective, there is no enemy, and if there is it is ignorance. To fight this is not to avenge, kill or destroy, but to awaken and bring to light again. Revenge of any kind and under whatever pretext becomes an act of murder, though it be on a tyrant's soldiers: 'Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain./ Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!' (*Revolt of Islam* V.82-83).

Despite the admiration he holds for Beatrice, this 'most gentle and amiable being,' the 'creature formed to adorn and be admired,' Shelley does not hesitate to display his dissatisfaction with her tragic deed of plotting against her father and his murder: 'Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner, she would have been wiser and better' (*Poems and Prose* 147). Those who do not learn the lore, despite their noble soul and their wisdom, remain chained to the Car of Life. No-one is more tragic than Beatrice who overthrew the minor Form imaged in her tyrant father to perish in the grasp of a more powerful Form, this time 'a marble form,/ A rite, a law, a custom, not a man.' So are many others whom the 'deep night/ Caught ... ere evening.'

It is important to note, however, that the secret Shelley speaks of does not reside in rejecting Forms as beings, as Prometheus did in his hate, or as with the *Alastor* Poet who 'eagerly pursues/ Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade', nor in a slavish submission to them, as it is with the multitude, but in rejecting them as existential entities and accepting them as relationships. The secret is, then, to take things as the

outcome of these relations, and therefore not separate entities, but related to and defined by each other. In the light of the new understanding, there is no strife between the self and things, but there is an acceptance of all shapes as infinite relationships in relation to which the self is identified.

Shelley thus often speaks of assuming the shape of what is observed and contemplated: 'Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest' (*Hellas* 761). He observes that 'a lover or a cameleon/ Grows like what it looks upon' (*Prometheus Unbound.* IV.483-84), and that

> ... a violet's gentle eye
> Gazes on the azure sky
> Until its hue grows like what it beholds....
> 　　　　　　　　(*Prometheus Unbound* IV.485-87)

To recapitulate. By projecting his desires, man has initiated the first division in being: the self and non-self. Prometheus, in reifying one of his desires, thirst for knowledge or wisdom, has put himself under the dominance of Jupiter and has filled the universe with infinite reified forms. Wisdom, then, becomes a matter of knowing these forms and discovering their external origin. Man, thus, starts a futile search for what can never be found. He, moreover, in order to know divides, but these divisions turn out to be more than a means for knowledge and assume ontological existence. Consequently, he loses his vision of the oneness of life and of things as insubstantial metaphoric relationships. Form making, thus, can be regarded as coeval with man's knowledge.

The legacy of Prometheus is a man without love, with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, lack of 'self-content', and a desire for he knows not what. The outcome of Prometheus' ideal picture of a man dominated by his intellect is Shelley's typical youth, 'A youth with hoary hair and haggard eye,' ('Death' 3), a 'Spirit that strove/ For

truth, and ... found it not,' ('Sonnet' 13-14), whose destiny is an endless roaming and an untimely death:

> There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,
> Had grown quite weak and grey before his time;
> Nor any could the restless griefs unravel
> Which burned within him, withering up his prime
> And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.
>
> ('Prince Athanase' I.1-5)

'What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?' What made Prince Athanase, the Poet in *Alastor*, Rousseau, Manfred, Frankenstein and many others of 'the wise, the great, the unforgotten' bear their lot of life, a 'weary waste of hours', in agony and torment, and cut them off from 'light and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime'? (*Cenci* V.iv.86). It is the tendency to reification represented in the wisdom that Prometheus objectified, and the desire to put the infinite images into fixed patterns. It is the habit of dividing between sign and meaning, self and non-self, feeling and intellect, and, in short, the disposition reflected in the Prince's feeling, as it is the feeling of other youths, that 'there was drawn an adamantine veil/ Between his heart and mind' ('Prince Athanase' I.87-88). It is the absence of love which is based on imagination and the sovereignty of the mind and the hate that it creates. It is the effect of the

> ... many sided mirror,
> Which could distort to many a shape of error,
> This true fair world of things....
>
> (*Prometheus Unbound* IV.382-84)

In other words, it is the desire for knowledge and wisdom which Prometheus awakened in man's heart that produced within him

> ... a thirst which outran
> Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
> Hope, love, doubt, desire--which consume him for ever.
>
> (*Prometheus Unbound* I.542-45)

It is because of this absence of love and centralisation of the self that Shelley's characters despite or perhaps because of, their exceptional intellect remain prisoners to the dominant Forms. It is a question as to really what made Prometheus undergo the separation from Asia and to give in to Jupiter's dominance. What caused the fall of Rousseau and made him obscure that 'spark with which Heaven lit' his spirit? What made Shelley undertake an arduous journey like Saint John of the Cross in search of a lost love--

> And struggling through its error with vain strife,
> And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
> And half-bewildered by new forms, I passed
> Seeking among those untaught foresters
> If I could find one form resembling hers,
> In which she might have masked herself from me.
> <div align="center">(Epipsychidion 250-55)</div>

--to find, eventually, not the beloved Christ, but, 'One, whose voice was venomed melody'? And finally, among many others, what made the *Alastor* Poet, who like a saint

> ... the doves and squirrels would partake
> From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
> Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
> And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
> The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
> Her timid steps to gaze upon a form
> More graceful than her own,
> <div align="center">(Alastor 100-106)</div>

forsake and overlook the Arab maiden's love?

Shelley, I think, in presenting these characters, is among the first of poets to promote the cult of modern man as a 'Saint without Love', a man with vigorous mind and outstanding intellect but destitute of love and happiness. A man who has projected one of his dimensions, wisdom, into a demi-god at the cost of forgetting all other aspects. In his poem 'The Question' Shelley gives a synopsis of the development of

modern spirituality and ends, thus, not in a union but in a question. He puts the story of man's quest into the appropriate form of a parable, a search in a dream vision, a style reminiscent of divine poets like Dante and Vaughan, but comes to an unexpected climax:

> Methought that of these visionary flowers
> I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
> That the same hues which in their natural bowers
> Were mingled or opposed--the like array
> Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
> Within my hand ... and then elate and gay
> I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
> That I might there present it!--Oh! to whom?
>   ('Question' 33-40)

It is a question which can never find an answer. The modern man who has shattered the icons of the past but has made the icon-making intellect his guide in this journey is, indeed, in quest of something he knows not and, thus, serves 'the unknown God in vain.' Hence, the more he advances, or better to say, the more he moves, since in this search there is no advancement, the more disappointed and perplexed he becomes. It is the illusory light of the reified life and the projected god of wisdom, and not the sudden unveiling of a Divine light and splendour, that has kept him dazzled in his perplexity. It is under the spell of this magic that the 'poet' rejects coldly the Arab maiden's love in pursuit of the heart-image which turns out at the end to be his Alastor and Angel of death. It is the glare of the false and cold light of the procession of Forms that eclipsed the true Sun, and its clamour made the multitude deaf so that though 'weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,' they

> Heard not the fountains whose melodious dew
> Out of their mossy cells for ever burst,
> Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
> Of grassy paths, and wood lawns interspersed....
>   (*Triumph of Life* 67-70)

What differentiates Rousseau and the unregenerated Prometheus from others, however, is that they are ultimately aware 'Of whence those *forms* proceeded which

thus stained/ The track in which we moved' (*Triumph of Life* 517-18; my italics). But the wisdom of Rousseau and those like him has proved defective in uncovering the truth and cannot lead them above or beyond the world of reified objects; it even becomes a fetter to their soul and a veil to their dim insight:

> ... Reason cannot know
> What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;
> There is delusion in the world--and woe,
> And fear, and pain--we know not whence we live,
> Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give
> Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
> Or even these thoughts.... I do weave
> A chain I cannot break--I am possest
> With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast.
>   (*Revolt of Islam* IX.290-98)

Thus, despite his new awareness, Rousseau remains confounded and confused: 'Why this should be, my mind can compass not,/ Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less' (*Triumph of Life* 303-304). In short, understanding alone cannot lead to the truth. The intellect divides but is unable to recreate, and in the process of this division all the traces of life and beauty vanish, so that the poet has to see in great disappointment how

> The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
> The action and the shape without the grace
> Of life....
>   (*Triumph of Life* 521-23)

This is why, perhaps, Shelley and other Romantics are so obsessed with the concept of joy for they think that it has been nothing but man's joy that has perished due to reification and become its first victim. On the other hand, they know that joy is the essence of life without which 'How tedious, false and cold seem all things' (*Cenci* V.iv.80). They thus could see the gloomy life under the dominance of the projected wisdom and predict that 'joy, once lost, is pain' ('The Past' 12). They think of joy as the dearest thing that man can possibly possess:

> For, when the power of imparting joy
> Is equal to the will, the human soul
> Requires no other heaven.
>   (*Queen Mab* III.11-13)

Joy, however, has a deeper philosophical bearing in Shelley's system. It is defined in the light of the freedom of the self from any determination or projection and from appearing as an independent essence. Joy, thus, resides in thinking of the self as a relational entity which is determined by its relations with others. It likewise arises from destroying the definite Forms, and living in a world of metaphors where meaning is never bound by fixed patterns as it is never the same and is never repeated. Joy, in other words, is where meaning is presented in its endless levels and shapes. In short, it is the outcome of an attitude based on a metaphoric understanding of life, an imaginative world view based on sign making and iconoclasm. The result is the exhilarating experience of feeling connected to the whole, of living the Spirit that animates existence, of sharing the one Life, and seeing the whole as one Being. Shelley would say with Coleridge that joy

> ... is the spirit and the power,
> Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower
> A new Earth and new Heaven,
> Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud-
> Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud-
>   ('Dejection: An Ode' v.ll.67-71)

Shelley writes: 'It is because we enter into the meditations, designs, and destinies of something beyond ourselves that ... the ocean, the glacier, the cataract, the tempest, the volcano have each a spirit which animates the extremities of our frame with tingling joy' ('Collosium' 227). Man, however, has separated himself from this 'something beyond' the 'self', and imprisoned himself within his selfhood and surrounded himself with an infinite number of separate ontological entities. He has smothered the spark of light and the Spirit that unifies and makes 'every part

depending on the chain/ That links it to the whole,' and thus bewildered and confused remains to ask:

> Whither have fled
> The hues of heaven that canopied this bower
> Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
> The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
> The joy, the exultation?
> > (*Alastor* 196-200)

The dividing mind isolates man from other beings; and separates the things by making each of them an essence and a presence in itself. It also separates him from beings by making him the centre of life and wisdom among infinite hostile, inanimate things. Man duly feels the agony of loneliness, separation and disharmony and incongruity in living among other beings, and always feels the dejection of being betrayed or wasting

> ... surpassing powers
> In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
> That echoes not my thought....
> > (*Alastor* 288-90)

Although he is possessed 'with that within which dims not' and has his glimpses of the true light and moments of the real life, these cannot endure for long. The procession of Forms comes to parade in his sight, to turn his delight into sadness through distraction, and to darken the light he has in joy, though only for moments, contemplated:

> ... and no beam
> Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned
> In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure....
> > ('Prince of Athanase' I.102-104)

It is not easy to say whether Shelley's obsession with the mutability of life and mortality is the cause or the effect of this flight from joy. What is certain is that the predominance of Forms over man's insight is at the very root of this obsession.

Change is an inseparable part of the nature of beings determined by their essence rather than their relationships. Insofar as the essence is the determining factor in entities, their change is equal to their death and deterioration. Such an outlook is the very reason for thinking of mortality and mutability in all their negative bearings. While things are considered in their diversity and independence 'Nothing endure[s] but mortality.' Whatever the poet sees reminds him of death, and all beings change into metaphors for mortality and transience:

> We are clouds that veil the midnight moon;
> How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
> Streaking the darkness radiantly!--yet soon
> Night closes round, and they are lost for ever....
>
> ('Mutability 1-4)

The secret of immortality and immutability, however, was not hidden from Shelley. The mind, he observes, cannot perceive but in the context of place and time and number (see 'Defence of Poetry' 483), and for this very reason nothing remains immutable to its sight. Imprisoned in the grasp of time man sees things either in their past or future and cannot live in the present. On the other hand, in order to know he has to divide and distinguish between '*I* and *you* and *they.*' Shelley knew that if man can simply step out of this diversity created by the mind in its perception and liberate himself from the tyranny of the mind and the projected Forms, no doubt he will see not only himself, but indeed everything in the universe, enjoy an eternal life. Let man, he argues, stop talking of 'thee and me, the future and the past,' and he will see 'that which cannot change--the One' (*Hellas* 768). It remains only a change of outlook and a matter of a new realisation to live that eternal moment:

> ... all sweet shapes and odours there,
> In truth have never passed a way--
> 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed--not they.
>
> ('Sensitive Plant', the conclusion 18-20)

Man, however, has projected his self and erected the idols in order to satisfy his desire for strength and wisdom. He has drunk the chalice offered to him by the goddess of

wisdom in the hope of gaining a new vision; he gained this wisdom but at the price of forfeiting his love, his joy, his freedom and integrity. He became an immortal unenvied by the dead, and his life turned into a curse, an Alastor, and left him no more than a

> Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
> No proud exemption in the blighting curse
> He bears, over the world wanders for ever,
> Lone as incarnate death!
>
> (*Alastor* 678-81)

Rousseau 'touched with faint lips the cup,' this goddess raised to him and then on his sight there 'Burst a new vision, never seen before'; but this left him far from being enviable-- only 'Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness.'

To sum up. In his poems Shelley gives the outlines of the configuration of modern spirituality, and comes out with a picture which in its bearings and details is highly representative of the modern age. The picture turns out to be of a man who has lost his joy, his love, and his integrative outlook. He has tasted the fruit that yielded only death, and explored the roads that but added to his fear. He is the young man who made his journey deep into life to see that only evil lurks in the human heart. He sought to find the truth, but found it too bitter and heart breaking. The reason behind his 'mis-finding' is that he made the mind his means to search for truth. He sought for love in a realm that can raise but hate, and for happiness in the 'dim vast vale of tears.' In his 'Sonnet' Shelley sums up all the routes of this long journey into the dark, and gives a diminutive but very clear picture of this unprofitable quest in colours of despair and unbearable sadness. In this poem he puts into words the experience of Prometheus, the Poet of *Alastor*, Beatrice, the Prince of Athanase, Rousseau and generations of intellectuals and men with tender heart and all those, above all himself, who ardently sought for the truth but 'found it not':

> Lift not the painted veil which those who live

Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread,--behind, lurk fear
And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.

('Sonnet 1-6)

III. Ibn Arabi and the Cause of False Consciousness

Ibn Arabi believes that the cause of false consciousness arises from considering things as other than God. In his philosophy there is nothing called 'thing'; all things, paradoxically, are *nothing*, since in reality there is no thing, 'the thing is God and God is named a thing' (*Treatise on Unity* 3). However, he does not define God as an essence, but he defines Him in term of relationships. He often repeats that God or 'Lordship has a secret, and that secret is you.' This statement, taken with other explanations given by Ibn Arabi, underlies a kind of existence which is no doubt determined not existentially but only through relationships. He often uses the metaphor of the mirror to reflect on this point: 'In your seeing your true self, He is your mirror and you are His mirror in which He sees His Names and their determinations, which are nothing other than Himself' (*Fusus* 65). He continues that the 'natural order may thus be regarded [at once] as [many] forms reflected in a single mirror or as a single form reflected in many mirrors' (ibid. 87). Reality in its divinity is so interconnected with nature that without the latter there would be no definition for the former. It 'never withdraws from the forms of the Cosmos in any fundamental sense, since the Cosmos, in its reality, is [necessarily] implicit in the definition of the Divinity' (ibid. 74). Relationship, moreover, is the very ground on which divinity is based, and Reality as an essence, 'being beyond all these relationships, is not a divinity' (ibid. 92). He argues that 'it is we who make Him a divinity by being that through which He knows Himself as Divine. Thus, He is not known [as "God"] until we are known' (ibid.).[7] The secret of Lordship, therefore, is the self or man since it is

he who determines the meaning of that term, and vice versa. Hence Ibn Arabi believes that knowledge and felicity lies in knowing this secret.

What he understands by the 'self', however, is not the soul nor the ego, but whatever exists beside God. According to this definition the 'self' is equal to all beings and all things. On the other hand, he states that Reality has 'prevented the real secret from being known, namely that He is the essential Self of things. He conceals it by otherness, which is you [as being not He] (ibid. 133). Thus, Ibn Arabi first equates the self with all beings, and then de-iconises the things as no-thing except God Who in turn is determined by the self. Ibn Arabi in this way argues that beings are not existential Forms but separate epistemological and relational divisions determined by each other and dependent on their others. Things are a veil that hides and manifests Reality at the same time. They make Reality perceptible, which otherwise is unknown and undifferentiated, and simultaneously hide its oneness with the apparent diversity of shapes and Forms. To this end he stresses the fact that the more we know the beings the better we understand Reality, and observes that '[w]hoever wishes to know the divine Breath, then let him know the Cosmos' (ibid. 181).

On this notion of relationship Ibn Arabi bases his call for human love and philanthropy. He believes that 'every part of the Cosmos is the totality of the Cosmos in that it is receptive to the realities of the disparate aspects of the Cosmos' (ibid. 191). Reality in its perceptible aspect is manifested in signs and measures which are metaphoric in the sense that there is no fixed meaning or definite forms for these symbols and relations. The complete knowledge or gnosis, therefore, would be an acceptance of every form in which Reality appears, and making the heart a mirror reflecting all shapes and images. In one of his frequently quoted odes he says,

> My heart has become capable of every form, it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent
> for Christian monks,

> A temple for idols and the pilgrim's Kaʻba and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.
> I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take, that is my religion and my faith.
>> (*Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* 13-15)

It is on this philosophy that Ibn Arabi's and Shelley's major contribution to mutual understanding and thought-reconciliation in their advocacy and support for doctrinal tolerance and religious endurance is founded. Both call for the reconciliation of Religions and Faiths, and they combat bigotry and intolerance.

Although they follow this doctrine to the same end, they nevertheless differ in their approaches and philosophical concerns. Their systems, insofar as their claim for tolerance is concerned, reflect different degrees of substantiality and consistency. The main difference is that Ibn Arabi bases his claim on acceptance while Shelley bases his on division and rejection, and that is what makes Ibn Arabi's claim sounder and more substantial and Shelley's less plausible.

Ibn Arabi's recommendation for tolerance is rooted in his theory of 'Oneness of Being.' According to him, not only beings but also all the doctrinal forms have their existence in Reality. In his approach to religion, Ibn Arabi makes an important distinction and gives the world a new theory which for its time was daring and unprecedented. In speaking on the God of Religions he differentiates between the two concepts of Reality and God. 'The Reality,' he says, 'in Its Essence, is beyond all need of the Cosmos. Lordship [which to him is equal to God in Faiths], on the other hand, does not enjoy such a position' (*Fusus* 148). Reality in itself is unknown and indefinable since it is infinite, indivisible and undifferentiated. Man, however, can recognise a defined and determinate form of Reality. This understanding is determined by the Names and the attributes of Reality which are certain measures determined in their relations with beings and man. And since each man displays a certain relationship with Reality through one of these Names, then he will have his

own understanding of Reality through that special Name and no other. Consequently each man's realisation of Reality will be different from that of others. Thus, although Reality is one and unique, each man has his own Lord which amounts to his relationship with Reality through one specific Name, and which is no other then his self as the other of this double-sided relationship. The self or man's identity, as Ibn Arabi says, 'is not other than the divine identity Itself' (ibid. 151). 'Man's consciousness of himself,' consequently, 'is indeed God's consciousness of him' (ibid. 184).

This thought, in turn, gives rise to Ibn Arabi's unconventional theory of the personal Deity. He first of all divides the word 'God' into Essence and Names, and then explicates that man in his conception of God is related not to the Essence but to the Names, and not all the Names but only one of them which is his personal Deity and particular Lord. He writes:

> Know that which is termed 'God' is one through the Essence and all through the Names. Each created being is related to God only as being its particular Lord, since its relationship to [God] as the all is impossible. As regards the divine unity there is no place in it for one as being one of many, nor does it admit of any differentiation or distinction. (ibid. 106)

Then he concludes: 'Thus, from the totality [of divine aspects] each being is assigned one particularly suited to be its Lord. This [Lord assigned from the God in His Names] not from [God] in his unity' (ibid. 107).

Ibn Arabi believes that it is man who constructs the image of his Deity and sees but himself in that image which is one of the infinite forms of Reality:

> In general, most men have, perforce, an individual concept [belief] of their Lord, which they ascribe to Him and in which they seek Him. So long as the Reality is presented to them according to it they recognise Him and affirm Him, if presented in any other form, they deny Him.... One who believes [in an ordinary way] believes only in a deity he has created in himself, since a deity in 'beliefs' is a [mental construction].

> They see [in what they believe] only themselves [as relative beings] and their own constructions within themselves. (ibid. 137)

He expands further the idea of the personal Deity illustrating this philosophical point through his favourite metaphor of a mirror to underline the oneness of the Essence represented in the metaphor and the multiplicity of reflections seen within the mirror that correspond to the multiplicity of beliefs. He says:

> It is as if the single Essence were a mirror, so that when the observer sees in it the form of his belief about God, he recognises and confirms it, but if he should see in it the doctrinal formulation of someone of another creed, he will reject it, as if he were seeing in the mirror His form and that of another. The mirror is single, while the forms [it reveals] are various in the eye of the observer. (ibid. 233)

Through the same metaphor he explains another important point of his theory of the personal Deity to hint at the impossibility of knowing or comprehending Reality or God in His state of unity, as it is impossible to see the mirror itself while contemplating the images within the mirror. The metaphor, however, has to be dematerialised and restricted to reflecting the points Ibn Arabi explains here, and not thought of as conveying any notion of duality between the image and its reflection, as this has no place in his non-dualistic system. He rather emphasises that what is known to man as God is no other than Reality, but in one of its determinations:

> Thus, the recipient sees nothing other than his own form in the mirror of the Reality. He does not see the Reality Itself, which is not possible, although he knows that he may see only his [true] form in it. As in the case of a mirror and a beholder, he sees the form in it, but does not see the mirror itself, despite his knowledge that he sees only his own and other images by means of it. (ibid. 65)

Having said that, Ibn Arabi makes his appeal for religious tolerance, or rather acceptance, of all other creeds, believing that Reality 'might be worshipped in every form' (ibid. 246). He thinks a true searcher for truth never shows any sign of bigotry, as 'he would allow to every believer his belief and would recognise God in every form and in every belief' (ibid. 283). He warns against orthodoxy, as Shelley does, and

although he accepts that each person is directed by the very Name which is manifested in him, nevertheless, he does not hesitate to recommend: 'do not tell yourself that He is in that direction only.... God has made it clear that He is in every direction turned to, each of which represents a particular doctrinal perspective regarding Him. All are [in some sense] right [in their approach]' (ibid. 138).

Ibn Arabi never ceases to warn against the great loss of restricting Reality not only to one of the forms, but also to one of the creeds, excluding all others. He thinks each creed represents one of the attributes of Reality, and nothing can be farther from Reality than clinging to only one of its attributes and ignoring, to say nothing of rejecting, all its other attributes. He says:

> So, beware lest you restrict yourself to a particular tenet [concerning the Reality] and so deny any other tenet [equally reflecting Him], for you will forfeit much good, indeed you will forfeit the true knowledge of what is [the Reality]. Therefore, be completely and utterly receptive to all doctrinal forms. (ibid. 137)

On this basis Ibn Arabi founds his understanding of worship and gives his own interpretation of that theological concept. He thinks of worship as the highest act of love, and it is love in its highest degree of performance. Worship, he believes, is the utmost limit of adoration and admiration. Therefore, when he speaks of worship, although it, no doubt, includes ritual performances and prescribed acts of devotion, in general it is devoid of accessories beyond love itself. Knowing that, Ibn Arabi makes worship a vehicle for love to embrace all doctrinal forms as 'He might be worshipped in every form' (ibid. 246). 'The perfect gnostic,' he says, 'is one who regards every object of worship as a manifestation of God in which He is worshipped. They call it a god, although its proper name might be stone, wood, animal, man, star, or angel' (ibid. 247). And those who were diverted from the One true Spirit, he argues, 'were not rejecting Him, but showed their amazement, being limited to a notion of multiple forms and attribution of divinity to them' (ibid.). Thus Ibn Arabi acts not in negating

others, as Shelley does sometimes, but in recommending comprehensiveness and acceptance: 'The man endowed with knowledge ... knows that the object of worship is the vehicle of divine manifestation, worthy of reverence, while not restricting himself [to that particular object] (ibid. 78). He further adds:

> He who restricts the Reality [to his own belief] denies Him [when manifested] in other beliefs, affirming Him only when He is manifest in his own belief. He who does not restrict Him thus does not deny Him, but affirms His Reality in every formal transformation, worshipping Him in His infinite forms, since there is no limit to the forms in which He manifests Himself. (ibid. 149)

Shelley often recommends doctrinal toleration, nevertheless, more as a superficial means for propagating a better understanding to the effect of enhancing the social and political situation of society rather than as a systematic approach based on philosophical acceptance of shared bases. In 'An Address to the Irish People' he says: 'There is no reason why both [Catholic and Protestant Religions] might not be tolerated; why every religion, every form of thinking might not be tolerated' (44). He adds that, 'anything short of unlimited toleration and complete charity with all men, on which you will recollect Jesus Christ principally insisted, is wrong.' And on this basis he opposes prejudice and bigotry manifested in its worst form in orthodoxy:

> What can be more vain and presumptuous in any man or any set of men, to put themselves so out of the ordinary course of things as to say, 'What we think is right; no other people throughout the world have opinions anything like or equal to ours. (ibid.)

Despite this wide call for toleration and acceptance of others' views, Shelley's metaphysical assumption of the unknown Power and its manifestation in the creeds, however, is totally different from that of Ibn Arabi. While he, like Ibn Arabi, approves the diversity within the one Mind and the multiplicity in the One Life, he denies any gradation or determination to Reality within the creeds. To him the Power is ever an unseen but felt Spirit of Nature which is one and should remain one, undivided and undetermined by formal doctrines. It is absolutely 'Unlike the God of human error'

(*Queen Mab* VI.199). All other conceptions of God represent only 'a fiend/ Whose name usurps thy honour.' Thus, by rejecting the Gods of the creeds and insisting on the sole God of his understanding, his philosophy, despite his hate of orthodoxy, in practice leads to another form of orthodoxy:

> The exterminable spirit it contains
> Is nature's *only* God; but human pride
> Is skilful to invent most serious names
> To hide its ignorance.
> > (*Queen M*ab VII.23-26; my italics)

The various determinations of the Power and the emergence of different Gods of religions, Shelley believes, are the works of the mind, to people the earth with different illusory conceptions of a god who is

> Himself the creature of his worshippers,
> Whose names and attributes and passions change,
> Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord.
> > (*Queen Mab* VII.28-36)

Shelley speaks of the same idea of the personal deity but for a totally different purpose. 'Every man,' he says, 'forms as it were his God from his own character' ('Vindication of Natural Diet' 89). No two ideas on personal deity could be so surprisingly close to each other, yet be so different. The metaphors, especially that of the mirror, and the substance of the understanding of Shelley and Ibn Arabi regarding the personal deity are amazingly similar, yet lead to two completely different ends. While Ibn Arabi gives credit to what man sees as God, Shelley strongly dismisses this as a false perception of

> Some moon-struck sophist [who] stood
> Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
> Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
> The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
> His likeness in the world's vast mirror shewn....
> > (*Revolt of Islam* VIII.46-50)

Shelley looks to the Gods of the creeds in the same way as he looked to beings as Forms which usurp what they have not. Like the Furies they have no existence of their own but it is man who gives them shape and substance:

> 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep
> With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
> And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
> Invulnerable nothings.
>
> *(Adonais* 345-48)

And, denying popular religion any truth and its God any real existence, he thinks of worship called for by these creeds not as an affectionate adoration of the Spirit that invests beings with love and beauty, but as arising from fear of an ugly god and a cruel supernatural being, himself being the creation of man's fancy: 'Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips/ Worshipped their own hearts' image' *(Revolt of Islam* X.262-63).

The root of this misjudgement, Shelley believes, lies in the mind and its tendency to devotion which sometimes turns out to be fatal and corrupting. 'There is a tendency to devotion,' he states, 'a thirst for reliance on supernatural aid inherent in the human mind.' ('Refutation of Deism' 130). Man, out of this natural but misdirected tendency, sanctifies and worships what he knows not: 'What is that God? Ye mock yourselves, and give/ A human heart to what ye cannot know' *(Revolt of Islam* VIII.37-38).

Shelley frequently warns against these unknown Gods: 'Serve not the unknown God in vain' *(Hellas* 735). Considered in the context of Ibn Arabi's system, this warning, however, becomes totally devoid of sense and meaning, since what is meant by worship other than the highest degree of love and adoration, and how then can one love and adore a being who is not known? Throughout his poetry and prose Shelley expresses his love and adoration for that Spirit that fills the world with beauty and his heart with tenderness and leaves its marks on his being after its visitations:

        In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,
Like an inspired and desparate alchemist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made
Such magic as compels the charmèd night
To render up thy charge....
                    (*Alastor* 29-37)

It remains to ask is this love for the 'unknown Power', the Power that 'dwells apart in its tranquillity,/ Remote, serene, and inaccessible' ('Mont Blanc' 96-97)? Certainly such a Being could not be the subject of Shelley's love and admiration. It could be a subject of fear, awe, and mystery, but how can one love a being of whom he could have no idea? After all it is unknown, and, according to what he says, the unknown God should not be worshipped or served. Or is it for that 'cause of Life', 'Necessity', and that 'awful Power', which although it may be the originator of beings, yet its 'nature cannot feel' their 'joy or pain' (*Queen M*ab VI.217)? Is it for this cold and passionless God, the kind of God whom Shelley divests of any feeling when he speculates: 'To attribute to God the moral qualities of man is to suppose him susceptible of passions which, arising out of corporeal organisation, it is plain that a pure spirit cannot possess' ('Letter to Lord Ellenborough' 77)? Such a God again could be the subject of metaphysical speculation and rational reasoning, yet He cannot be the subject of love which is based on reciprocal passion and mutual sympathy and which above all is motivated and sustained by Beauty. Then what is it that Shelley loves when he says:

        Mother of this unfathomable world!
        Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
        Thee ever, and thee only....
                    (*Alastor* 18-20)

It is for its divine Beauty, surely Shelley would say, that the Spirit is adored and wanted; it is for Beauty that the Sensitive Plant, the symbol of the affectionate heart of

a pure being, 'loves--even like Love--its deep heart is full--/ It desires what it has not-- the beautiful' ('Sensitive Plant' I.76-77). It is beyond doubt that this Spirit is not that 'Remote, serene, and inaccessible Power.' If we think in terms of Shelley's definition of Love as 'a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness; a soul within our soul' then we can somehow conclude that the Spirit that is subject to love and affectionate feelings is one of the determinations, a shadow of that 'awful Power'. And after all, if we can define the Spirit with one attribute, Beauty, there is no reason why it should not be defined with others, and, thus, a being invested with attributes will no longer remain the 'unknown Power' undefined and inaccessible. We can conclude, therefore, that Shelley knew the Power through one of its determinations, but rejected its other formal manifestations and spoke of the 'only God', since as a recipient he saw 'nothing other than his own form in the mirror of the Reality' (*Fusus* 65), unless we want to say that he, too, worshipped the unknown God:

> I loved, I know not what--but this low sphere,
> And all that it contains, contains not thee,
> Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere....
> ('Zucca' 20-22)

Thus, we see that Shelley's call for doctrinal tolerance is devoid of a firm philosophical basis, and his recommendation for toleration is evidently based on contradiction, or, at its best, could be justified as a toleration of what is fundamentally wrong or superstitious.

Whatever the difference may be, both Ibn Arabi and Shelley agree on the point that there is always the risk of forgetting the one Spirit and replacing it with one of its manifestations; of adoring the part instead of the whole and falling into the trap of idolatry. And both also agree that it is the mind that divides and deifies. The sanctification of Forms is caused by the analytical mind; it exists because, in Ibn Arabi's assumption, 'the intellect restricts and seeks to define the truth within a particular qualification, while in fact the Reality does not admit of such limitation'

(*Fusus* 150). Man among all other beings who live in 'Peace, harmony, and love,' and who 'all fulfil the works of love and joy,' alone has the tendency to Form making and enthroning tyrants, and consequently, losing his joy and freedom:

> He fabricates
> The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth
> The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raises up
> The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
> Whose sport is in his agony.
> (*Queen Mab* III.199-203)

Shelley's atheism, if we could avoid the danger of falling into the 'vulgar error' of literal interpretation, I think, should be interpreted and explained in this light and as a reaction to the supremacy of the intellect and the tendency to Form making. Shelley's attack on historic Christianity, as John Symonds in his life of Shelley very early noticed, must be understood as 'directed against an ecclesiastical system of spiritual tyranny, hypocrisy, and superstition, which in his opinion had retarded the growth of free institutions, and fettered the human intellect' (*Shelley* 101). Trelawny in his recollections of Shelley remembers asking the poet why he called himself an atheist, and Shelley replies that, 'I used it to express my abhorrence of superstition; I took up the word, as a knight took up a gauntlet, in defiance of injustice' (*Recollections of Shelley and Byron* 60). As Baker has observed, Shelley's use of the word 'atheism' is very narrow in the sense that he only meant that 'he does not believe in the Old Testament God of Wrath' (*Shelley's Major Poetry* 29). Otherwise his position in most of his works is Agnostic rather than atheistic, for, as Baker also points out, his argument is not that 'God does not exist, but rather that no proofs of his existence thus far adduced will stand up under rational scrutiny' (ibid.). Shelley never rejected the idea of the existence of a Supreme Being and the presence of a Soul in the Universe or a Spirit in Nature. No-one, perhaps, among his contemporaries lived the rapturous moment of the mystical experience of the presence of this Spirit and felt its Beauty more deeply than Shelley. More than any other Romantic, existence for him was elevated to one state of divinity and every being opened him to a new world of joy and

delight. The verses that record the moments of his experiential unity with the Spirit of Nature in their intensity of passion and tenderness and sincerity of expression are of exceeding beauty and excitement:

> Spirit of Nature! here!
> In this interminable wilderness
> Of worlds, at whose immensity
> Even soaring fancy staggers,
> Here is thy fitting temple.
> Yet not the lightest leaf
> That quivers to the passing breeze
> Is less instinct with thee:
> Yet not the meanest worm
> That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
> Less shares thy eternal breath.
> Spirit of Nature! thou!
> Imperishable as this scene,
> Here is thy fitting temple.
>   (*Queen Mab* I.264-77)

In many passages he reflects on the presence of this unseen but not unfelt Power that animates the universe and fills the world with beauty and delight:

> In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
> When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
> Joy which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
> When thought revisits them....
>   (*Revolt of Islam* I.406-9)

He had an ever-open eye for the visitations of this Power, and found the passive heart of man a fit ground for its operation. He never stops telling his reader to open his heart to these visitations: 'Permit, therefore, the spirit of this benignant principle to visit your intellectual frame' ('On Christianity' 210). It is on this ground that he bases his optimism of the future of man and his eventual felicity. 'There will come a time,' he says, 'when the human mind shall be visited exclusively by influences of the benignant Power' (ibid. 204). Few could be more nostalgic, yet haunted by more grief and sorrow for the cessation of these visitations; no-one perhaps but those great mystics who experienced in depth the torment of the 'dark night of the soul' when in agony and despair searched in vain the lost glory of the Divine presence:

> Alas that these visitings of the spirit of life should fluctuate and pass away! That the moments when the human mind is commensurate with all that it can conceive of excellent and powerful should not endure with its existence and survive its most momentous change.... The necessity of daily occupation and the ordinariness of that human life, the burthen of which it is the destiny of every human being to bear had smothered, not extinguished, the divine and eternal fire. ('The Assassins' 148)

Shelley's conception of the Power in its identity and its relationship to beings bears a remarkable similarity to the concept of Reality in Ibn Arabi's system. Aside from other attributes with which he characterises the Spirit, Shelley diverges from the orthodox belief in its conception of God mainly in two points: immanence and creation.

Shelley was aware of the existence of a Spirit that rules the universe, not as a transcendent Power ruling the world from above but immanent in nature. Nevertheless, this Power has another aspect which is not determined in its relationship with beings, but exists where all these signs and relationships are obliterated. Shelley's conception of the Power, therefore, is both transcendent and immanent; transcendent in its essence, immanent in its relationships; transcendent in itself, but immanent in Nature. The former, he believes, is infinite, ontological, and unknown. The latter, however, is relational, insubstantial, and perceptible. What he understands by a deity, or the Soul of the universe, then, is that relational and perceptible Power to which Nature is a vesture and which to Nature is a soul and spirit. He speaks of this immanent Power in its relationship with and penetration of the phenomenal world:

> The Spirit whom I loved in solitude
> Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
> The waves, the fountains, and the hush of the night--
> These were his voice, and well I understood
> His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
> With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.
> (*Revolt of Islam* I.400-5)

In another passage he speaks even more openly of this immanent nature of the deity:

> By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
> Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden,
> Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
> When for a moment thou art not forbidden
> To live within the life which thou bestowest,
> And leaving noblest things, vacant and chidden,
> Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
> Blank as the sun after the birth of night.
> ('Zucca' 25-32)

The other point in which Shelley differs from the orthodoxy is the 'creative deity', in its conventional sense, which he could not accept since it does not come in line with his pantheistic or monistic views of the oneness of life and being. He could not believe but in the eternity of Life and universe. In one of his essays which is deliberately written in negation of God, he openly says: 'This negation must be understood solely to affect a "creative" Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken' ('There is no God' 97). He also dismisses the hypothesis of a 'creative deity' since creation contradicts infinitude, one of the major principles of his philosophy:

> Let every part depending on the chain
> That links it to the whole, point to the hand
> That grasps its term...
> ...infinity within,
> Infinity without, belie creation....
> (*Queen Mab* VII.17-22)

[As to the place of these ideas in Ibn Arabi's system who always repeats that the 'being always exists and the Lordship never ceases' (*Fusus* 106), see chapter two].

Among Shelley's constant negation and affirmation, therefore, one can easily discern his belief in the benevolent Spirit that pervades the universe, and his rejection of what he thinks of as unfounded superstition. In his preface to the *Revolt of Islam* Shelley writes: 'The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself' (*Poems and*

Prose 60). Sometimes he even moves to the verge of dualism and becomes quite conventional in his belief: 'All rose to do the task He set to each,/ Who shaped us to His ends and not our own' ('Boat on the Serchio' 30-31).

Though an opponent to Christianity as an orthodox institution, Shelley finds his belief in the benignant Spirit of the universe very close to the conception of God propounded by Jesus, whom he regarded with deep respect and admiration:

> We can distinctly trace in the tissue of his doctrines the persuasion that God is some universal being, differing both from man and from the mind of man.... But the word 'God' according to the acceptation of Jesus Christ unites all the attributes which these denominations contain and is the interfused and overruling Spirit of all the energy and wisdom included within the circle of existing things.... He everywhere represents this [ruling] power as some thing mysterious and illimitably pervading the frame of things. ('On Christianity' 201)

Shelley's atheism, then, is nothing other than a rejection of the conception of God in Religion in its orthodox form which he found too cruel, and whose image he found too naive and incompatible with any metaphysical certainty. His atheism, then is the replacement of this God with an adorable benevolent Spirit which he thought existed. He reflects on this distinction when he says: 'It is surely no perverse conclusion of an infatuated understanding that the God of the Jews is not the benevolent author of this beautiful world.' ('Refutation of Deism' 123-24).

What he does not approve of and fights vehemently, then, is not the idea of God but the tyrant Gods, the 'almighty fiend/ Whose name usurps thy honours.' He doubts and debates the validity of anthropomorphism: 'Barbarous and uncivilised nations have uniformly adored under various names a god of which [they] themselves were the model' (ibid. 122). A God, 'Himself the creature of his worshippers,'

> Who, prototype of human misrule, sits
> High in heaven's realm, upon a golden throne,
> Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work,
> Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves
> Of fate, whom he created, in his sport,

To triumph in their torments when they fell!

(*Queen Mab* VI.105-110)

Consequently, religion in its orthodox form becomes the subject of his disapproval and mistrust as a haunt for bigotry and superstition:

... but for thy aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
And heaven with slaves!

(*Queen Mab* VI.68-71)

To sum up. In exploring the causes of false consciousness Shelley speaks of different factors. First, man by projecting his wishes and desires has turned one of his dimensions into a demi-god to dominate later all his other dimensions and aspects. Jupiter is the result of turning one of these desires--for absolute knowledge and wisdom--into an idol which has kept man in servitude for three thousand years. Second, through centralising the self and giving it an independent and essential existence, man has divided the one existence into the self and non-self and has started a strife with life. The *Alastor* Poet, Prince Athanase, Rousseau, and many others of Shelley's characters have followed this line of narcissism and thus could not reconcile themselves with the world. Third, by turning insubstantial dynamic relations into substantial ontological entities, man has lost his metaphoric vision and developed a literal perception of life and beings. Fourth, through losing his metaphoric perception man has turned the endless levels of meaning into one fixed and static meaning. And fifth, through substituting hate for love man has divided the one life and established the barriers and demarcation lines between 'beings'. However, all these causes could be summed up by one major cause: reification. By turning the insubstantial relationships or mere representations into reified objects man has filled his world with idols and fetishes and established all the sources of errors and false consciousness.

Shelley differs from Plato and Descartes, who reify the Ideas and the self, and from Locke and Hume, who turn the world of objects whether totally or partially known into fetishes and idols. He is dissimilar to Kant who reified both the mind and the world, and to the deconstructionists, who risked the meaning of existence in placing it in the void. Shelley does not idolise but he also does not throw meaning into nothingness. Insofar as the meaning is concerned and the sign and the text are discussed, there is no idol, no reified object and no thing. But where being is concerned, there is no void, though there are still no relations, no signs, and no perception to be reified or idolised.

Notes to Chapter Four

[1]Descartes writes:

> With regard to the clear and distinct elements in my ideas of corporeal things, it appears that I could have borrowed some of these from my ideas of myself, namely substance, duration, number and anything else of this kind.... As for all the other elements which make up the ideas of corporeal things, namely extension, shape, position and movement, these are not formally contained in me, since I am nothing but a thinking thing; but since they are merely modes of a substance, and I am a substance, it seems possible that they are contained in me eminently. (*Meditations* 30-31)

[2]Hume in his appendix to the *Treatise of Human Nature* negates the existence of an independent and already existing self in his well organised argument:

> When I turn my reflection on *myself*, I never can perceive this *self* without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. It is the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self.
> We can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduced even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that perception? Have you any notion of *self* or *substance*? If not, the addition of other perceptions can never give you that notion. (*Treatise* 2: 549-50)

[3]See the root of this paradox most beautifully illustrated by Vaughan:

> For where thou dost not close the eye
> It never opens, I can tell.
>   ('Cock-crowing')

[4]For the particular meaning of Forms see page 257.

[5]Shelley himself warns against this folly, 'If we would profit by the wisdom of a sublime and poetical mind, we must beware of the vulgar error of interpreting literally every expression which it employs,' ('On Christianity' 209).

[6]He often wonders 'wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,/ And pain still keener pain for ever breed?' (*Revolt of Islam* V.91-92).

[7]Ibn Arabi further elaborates on this point, saying paradoxically that 'If it is agreed that existence may be attributed only to the Reality and not to you, you will [nevertheless] determine His existence' (*Fusus* 94). He continues: 'You are His nourishment as bestowing the contents of His Self-Knowledge, while He is yours as bestowing existence, what is assigned to you being assigned also to Him. The order is from Him to you [*be!*] and from you to [what He shall be]' (ibid. 95).

V

Necessity, Free Will and the Question of Perception

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
That plant-crested Shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light--but as I past 'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind....

(*Promethus Unbound* I.763-68)

Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador,
Whilst the empty wolf from which they fled amazed
Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore
Until the second bursts....

(*Triumph of Life* 406-410)

I. Introduction

The doctrine of Necessity has been the subject of debate and endless subtle analysis by philosophers, theologians, and historians for as long as man has thought about his destiny and his moral responsibility for his actions. Some philosophers think Necessity exists on the assumption that an omniscient principle of causality rules over the universe, and theologians say Necessity is inevitable since freedom contradicts God's foreknowledge of things. Most of the British empiricists like Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Godwin, and Bentham, and theologians like Luther, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards were in one way or another believers in Necessity. For Kant, also, the objects and the phenomenal self, at least, are determined and act out of Necessity. And finally, most of the Romantics like Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and especially Shelley believed at some stage of their philosophical life, at least, in determinism. According to Hazlitt, in his youth Wordsworth was heard saying to one of the students of the Temple: 'Throw aside your books of chemistry and read Godwin on Necessity' (*Collected Works* 4: 201). He even thinks of his vocation as a poet as being predetermined for him and not a matter of will or volition:

> ... I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit.
> > (*Prel.* iv.334-37)

Coleridge also writes to Southey in 1794 that 'I am a complete necessitarian.' As it is noted by Gingerich, '[e]verywhere in Coleridge's early poetry man is "predoomed,"... to be precisely what he is in whatever state you conceive him' ('Doctrine of Necessity' 452). Later both Wordsworth and apparently Coleridge abandoned their belief in Necessity and embraced the doctrine of free will.[1]

Generally speaking Necessity is of two kinds: transcendent or immanent. In other words, those who assume that man is preordained and determined in his thought and action generally think that the source of this predetermination is either supernatural or natural. Up to the eighteenth century, thinkers presupposed the existence of a God, Fate or a Power which draws man's destiny and makes him act in a certain way. This form of Necessity, which is better to be described as fatalism rather than general Necessity, entails, as Thorslev points out, a 'conscious design and even interference in the natural course of events by some supernatural agency' (*Romantic Contraries* 20). From that century onward philosophers began rather to think of natural causes for Necessity, that is, causes within nature itself, those thought to be either mechanical or pantheistic. In other words, immanent Necessity is either mechanical or materialistic (Newton's and Holbach's conception of the word), or pantheistic like Spinoza's determinism and that of the Romantics. The mechanical natural causes are the invariable laws of Nature or the natural necessity, that is, physical causes or any other factor or factors which determine the direction of life and man's behaviour. The pantheistic causes are the divine essence or nature which acts necessarily in the way which it does.

Immanent Necessity in another distinction is divided into logical determinism and empirical determinism. Logical determinism, as Thorslev points out, is 'a determinism a priori, as a precondition for our conceptions of reality' (ibid. 22). According to this form of Necessity, every thing is determined by laws of logic. For Spinoza who is the main propounder of this doctrine, even God in his action is determined by his essence. Empirical determinism, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that 'there is a high degree of regularity and uniformity in the events of our experience' (ibid. 24). Accordingly, not only physical and biological events are determined but also man's moral decisions come under the sway of Necessity. Therefore, one of the connotations is that man is not responsible for even his decisions.

The dramatic turning point happened when thinkers began to attribute determinism rather to internal psychological factors which preconsciously determine man's action. The shift from the supernatural to the natural, on the one hand, and the mechanical or pantheistic to the psychological causes of action on the other, opened a new era in the debate over Necessity and determinism. Man came to understand that he is not determined by God or Nature but by himself. Thus psychological factors replaced theological and mechanical factors. The new theory of Necessity made many previously central things unimportant and even redundant. Among these concepts were the ideas of God, design and teleology.

II. *The Triumph of Life*: The Triumph of Necessity

Necessity, no doubt, is one of the main elements of Shelley's philosophy. However, there are two views regarding Shelley's acceptance of the doctrine and its impact on him. The first view is that Shelley was under the spell of the doctrine of Necessity for only some stages of his life. Propounders of this view generally argue that by 1815 or at most 1816 Shelley abandoned the doctrine of Necessity for that of Intellectual Beauty or Love.

Grabo believes that Shelley's necessitarianism, which is mostly influenced by the materialism of Holbach, formed a kind of 'blindly-working will', which he called the Spirit of Nature, and was in internal contradiction with his belief in animism and immortality. He observes that Shelley's predominant philosophical views in *Queen Mab* are 'largely necessitarian and materialistic. But the beliefs that all matter lives, that spirit is immortal, that there is soul as well as body, are of different origin' (*Magic Plant* 117-18). Under the influence of Spinoza, Berkeley, and Plato Shelley separates himself from Holbach's necessitarianism and moves towards accepting a more liberal doctrine on the freedom of will. Thus, after *Queen Mab* and by 1815 Shelley

explicitly repudiates materialism and implicitly accepts the doctrine of freedom and moral will (see ibid. 168). As Grabo argues, a 'belief in moral freedom becomes fundamental to his philosophy and therewith, in his political speculations, the definition of the kind of society which man, a free agent, should seek to create' (ibid. 425).

Newman White also observes that Shelley initially was a believer in Necessity but later abandoned. In *Queen Mab*, he observes, one of the major themes is Shelley's belief in an omnipotent Necessity which he defines as 'a passionless, impartial force knowing no limits or decay. It extends throughout the whole universe and governs every minute action of every atom of the natural world, and every whim of thought. Nothing acts but as it must act and was predestined to act, without the variation of a hair, from the first instant of time' (*Shelley* 1: 293). Obviously such a doctrine could not be in harmony with Shelley's views on man and his sympathetic nature. White emphasises that by the time Shelley 'wrote *Alastor* (1815) he was already searching for a more satisfactory deity' (ibid. 2: 438). And finally at the time he was writing 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' (1816), he replaced the old doctrine of Necessity with the doctrine of Intellectual Beauty or Love. For Shelley Intellectual Beauty, as White points out, was 'an ideal of beauty and sympathy capable of being dimly recognized by the mind, but far too intensely bright ever to be seen except through various veils of human thought' (ibid. 2: 438).

Carlos Baker like White thought that by 1815 Shelley began to abandon his belief in necessitarianism or natural law for a doctrine of Love or human law. Necessity, though, he observes, coloured his thought even as late as the time he wrote *Prometheus Unbound*; nevertheless 'by that time it has receded considerably in importance, while the idea of power and priority of the mind has usurped the prominent position formerly occupied in Shelley's thought by necessitarianism' (*Shelley's Major Poetry* 36). In his comment on *Prometheus Unbound* he argues that

Shelley gives priority not to Necessity or the climactic action of Demogorgon, but to the protagonist's internal reform, and thinks of the latter as the direct cause of the work of Necessity. He states that the 'mental reform achieved when Prometheus casts hate from his heart in Act I is not only a symbolic anticipation of the cosmic reform achieved by Demogorgon in dethroning Jupiter, but also a direct cause of it' (ibid. 109). Evil which in the drama was hitherto one of the two constitutive elements working under Necessity now turns into a mere 'deformity of the mind' (ibid.), which can be uprooted through a mental reform. Baker's remarks may seem to convey a compatibilistic position, especially in believing that (in the play) once the 'self-reform was complete, the rest happened by "Necessity"' (ibid. 112). But he goes further than this in reducing the significance of the compatibility between the natural and the ethical in believing that 'the stress on natural law, however fundamental in the life of man, tended to de-emphasize another law of which Shelley had become deeply though imperfectly conscious in the period between 1813 and 1815' (ibid. 41). Baker argues that by the time he was writing *Alastor*, Shelley began to 'formulate the doctrine of love which came gradually to supersede the doctrine of necessity in his thinking' (ibid. 52-53). And finally, in the *Revolt of Islam*, for Baker, Shelley's shift to the ethical is more complete, as he explicitly warns, according to Baker, that the 'furtherance of good cannot be entrusted to supernal powers, but is man's own task, and his first step must be self-reform' (ibid. 84).

Notopoulos likewise follows the same line of discussion, arguing that Shelley's doctrine of Necessity was soon supplanted by the cult of love and Platonism. He observes that the 'materialistic doctrine of Necessity, influenced by circumstances in Shelley's life favorable to its growth, found early and predominant expression. But soon the poet's heart triumphed over his head' (*Platonism of Shelley* 15). He further argues that Shelley's natural Platonism found in Necessity 'a traditional conception not satisfying to the poetic and philosophic mind' (ibid. 204), and thus he shifted from 'detached Necessity to a Power to which man's spirit is attuned' (ibid. 203). Platonic

Idealism, according to Notopoulos, was the philosophy that 'supplanted his earlier philosophy of Necessity and eighteenth-century philosophic materialism' (ibid. 268). *The Revolt of Islam,* and especially Shelley's remarks on Necessity in that poem (IX.239-43), mark 'the last appearance of Necessity in Shelley's philosophy,' and from now on it is replaced by 'Platonic Idealism' (ibid. 221).

However, this view has been challenged by other critics and rejected categorically. As early as 1918 Solomon Gingerich challenged the view that Shelley abandoned the doctrine of Necessity after *Queen Mab.* He observes that it is true that there was a change in Shelley's point of view, but it was not from Necessity to free will, but from materialism to immaterialism. On Necessity Gingerich points out that Shelley 'never changed his attitude fundamentally. This principle stood to the last in the background of his mind, exercising a shaping and controlling influence over his thought' ('Doctrine of Necessity' 453). Stuart Sperry in his paper 'Necessity and the Role of the Hero in *Prometheus Unbound*' demonstrates the thesis that Shelley practised the doctrine of Necessity for the whole of his life, and in his argument departs from Cameron, Notopoulos, and many others in their assumption regarding Shelley's abandonment of the doctrine after completing *Queen Mab*, or by the end of *The Revolt of Islam.* Thorslev also puts in question the theory which he thinks was started by Grabo and followed by Newman White and Carlos Baker and is known as the 'necessitarianism-to-Platonism thesis'.

It is perhaps enough to say that Shelley's first long serious poem, *Queen Mab*, and his last unfinished poem, *The Triumph of Life*, both reflect the poet's strong belief in the doctrine of Necessity. *The Triumph of Life* is in fact a celebration of the all-encompassing rule of Necessity over beings which follow or are chained to its triumphal Car. It is his conviction that '[e]very human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that

any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is'

('Necessity' 109).

Shelley, unlike Coleridge or Wordsworth, does not change his attitude on Necessity.

The doctrine of Necessity, indeed, constitutes one of the basic elements of his thought

system, and, as Carlos Baker points out, he always 'regarded some form of Necessity

as a strong and perhaps ineluctable force in human social organization' (142). Peter

Thorslev also observes that 'Shelley of all the Romantics, remained the most true to

necessitarianism, and defended it explicitly as a benevolent doctrine' (*Romantic*

Contraries 5-6).

In many of his poems Shelley gives a clear and conventional picture of Necessity that

leaves no doubt about his belief in the doctrine. The dominant image in *The Triumph*

of Life is the procession of life which comprises three elements: the charioteer, life as

the old figure within the Car, and people who are enchained and necessarily follow

the Car of Life. Necessity, Shelley says, is dormant in life itself, and those who live

are inevitably under the dominance of Necessity. The charioteer is destiny itself, who

drives the Car of Life with utmost speed. Significantly, despite his many eyes, he has

all of them bandaged. In other words, practically, he is blind. In *Hellas*, Shelley

depicts in similar details the whole procession of the Car of Life:

> The world's eyeless charioteer,
> Destiny, is hurrying by!
> What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
> Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
> What eagle-winged victory sits
> At her right hand? What shadows flits
> Before? What splendour rolls behind?
> Ruin and Renovation cry,
> 'Who but we?'
>
> (*Hellas* 711-19)

In these few lines Shelley enumerates the different tenets of Necessity. First, it is cold

and indifferent. For Necessity all are equal; it is 'remote' and 'inaccessible', yet just and

fair. This, however, does not make it a personal deity for Shelley; it is so only by nature. It cannot be other than this. He explains this equal dealing of Necessity and its impersonality in *Queen Mab*:

> No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge
> And favouritism, and worst desire of fame
> Thou knowest not: all that the wide world contains
> Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
> Regardst them all with an impartial eye,
> Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel,
> Because thou hast not human sense,
> Because thou art not human mind.
> (VI.212-19)

Second, Necessity is all-encompassing and overruling. It is omnipotent and omnipresent. If there is change, either of 'ruin' or 'renovation', it is necessitated and constrained. When Asia in *Prometheus Unbound* asks, 'When will the destined hour arrive?' (II.iv.128), that will see the freedom of Prometheus and the fall of Jupiter, the same images are revealed to her sight which are present in *The Triumph of Life*: the chariot and the charioteer:

> I see cars drawn by rainbow--wingèd steeds
> Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
> A wild-eyed charioteer, urging their flight.
> (*Prometheus Unbound* II.iv.130-32)

The 'rainbow-winged steeds' are the 'wonder-winged team' of *The Triumph of Life*. They 'sweep onward' and so does the Car of Life pass with 'solemn speed majestically on.' The 'wild-eyed charioteer' is the 'Janus-visaged shadow' with 'eyes banded'. The charioteer, like the 'Janus-visaged shadow' charioteer of the Car of Life, is the 'shadow of destiny'. From the parallel details of the two pictures, one readily assumes that the deformed shape of Life in the Car and Demogorgon are one, and that both stand for Necessity. It is destiny, therefore, that brings Jupiter down from his throne and sets Prometheus free.

Third, Necessity comprises the two aspects of existence: the 'shadows' and the 'splendour', the 'ruin' and 'renovation'. Shelley welds Good and Evil together, keeping them in constant struggle. Neither can annihilate the other, but they follow each other. The castles of the tyrants in the midst of 'renovation' are deserted but left untouched in *Prometheus Unbound*, because 'hate and death', as it is at the end of *Hellas*, must return. The two dominant images in *Revolt of Islam* are the eagle and the snake locked in an unceasing fight, moving in an eternal circle. Shelley even changes the roles of the conventional images of Good and Evil, making the eagle stand for Evil and the snake for Good, simply to say that each potentially exists in the very nature of the other.

Shelley, perhaps, has this double function of Necessity in mind when he speaks of the 'West Wind' as the absolute Power, the sole 'destroyer and preserver'. There are many similarities between the first stanza of the 'Ode to the West Wind' and the description of the multitude given in *The Triumph of Life*, and it can be assumed that the West Wind is the same Necessity. It is the charioteer that drives the 'Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, /Pestilence-stricken multitudes' ('Ode to the West Wind' 4-5), to their wintry grave, though here it is a preserver: there is a hope of renovation, whereas in *The Triumph of Life* it is a destroyer. Here, too, Shelley has the notion of the omniscience and omnipresence of Necessity in mind: 'Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere.'

The conventional distinctions between the thing and its opposite collapses. The preserver indeed is the destroyer and the act of destruction has the very element of preservation within itself. Shelley hints at this in the conference of Spirits in *Prometheus Unbound*, where the fifth Spirit describes the 'form of Love'. The form is never alone but ever followed by another presence, that of death and ruin:

> As over wide dominions
> I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
> That plant-crested Shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,
> Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
> His footsteps paved the world with light--but as I past 'twas fading,
> And hollow Ruin yawned behind....
>   (I.763-68)

The same picture is given in *The Triumph of Life*. In a visionary moment, Rousseau experiences the presence of two Powers, represented in the images of the deer and the wolf. However their tracks are interpreted, they remain evidently of two opposite natures and directions. The burst of the second wave after the first, moreover, speaks of their recurrent presence:

> Where the first wave had more than half erased
> The track of deer on desert Labrador;
> Whilst the empty wolf from which they fled amazed
> Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore
> Until the second bursts....
>   (406-410)

All Shelley's major characters, moreover, reflect the predominance of Necessity, Prometheus being no exception. *Prometheus Unbound* is usually considered as the demonstration of human will and the power of man in liberating himself and changing his destiny. However, Shelley expresses another view in that play. His presentation in that play makes a clear distinction between the hero as a necessary medium and the hero as the ultimate and sufficient cause for change. So, it would be incorrect to think that renovation in the play was only due to the internal change of Prometheus. As Stuart Sperry points out, the 'notion that Prometheus, through a process of deliberate self-inquiry and self-recognition, has acquired the power to transform himself is one that we may supply as readers but that the play itself never either fully dramatizes or illuminates' ('Necessity and the Role of the Hero' 246).

In many of Shelley's major poems, there is a chariot-like image on which the characters are carried passively (see chapter two 53-54). Asia speaks of her soul as 'an

enchanted boat' (*Prometheus Unbound* II.v.72). The Poet in *Alastor* makes his journey on a boat which 'speed[s] o'er the tranquil sea/ Like a torn cloud before the hurricane' (314-15). In *Adonais* also the poet in his journey is passively 'carried away': 'I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar' (492). And finally, in 'Marianne's Dream' the lady in her dream-vision

> Was borne towards the showering flame
> By the wild waves heaped tumultuously,
> And, on a little plank, the flow
> Of the whirlpools bore her to and fro.
> (88-91)

There are many possible sources and parallels for Shelley's doctrine of Necessity. Baker points out that Shelley picked up the doctrine of Necessity from Godwin, Hume, and Holbach (see *Shelley's Major Poetry* 29). Cameron also believes, 'the earliest influences on Shelley's philosophy came from Locke, Hume, Godwin, and Holbach' (*Shelley the Golden Years* 150). Therefore, in order to clarify Shelley's necessitarianism, we will examine, first, the doctrine as it is introduced by each of these philosophers, and, second, Kant's and the deconstructionists' understanding of the concept as two major sources of light on Shelley's conception of Necessity. However, it will be demonstrated in this paper that Shelley's conception of Necessity goes beyond that of Kant, not to speak of others, to find its similitude through Spinoza with that of Ibn Arabi.

III. Locke: Freedom, Volition, and Necessity

Locke initially defines the will as that '*power* which the mind has, thus to order the consideration of any *Idea*, or the forbearing to consider it; or to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest, and vice versa in any particular instance' (*An Essay* 236). Volition or willing, on the other hand, is 'the actual exercise of that power, by

directing any particular action, or its forbearance' (ibid.). Consequently voluntary action is that action which is thought or commanded by the mind, and involuntary action is that which is directed or performed without the thought of the mind.

However, Locke differentiates between freedom and volition. According to him, an action can be voluntary but it does not entail freedom. Voluntariness, as Vere Chappel points out, is only 'a necessary condition of freedom' ('Locke on Freedom of the Will' 103). Voluntary, therefore, in Locke's terminology is not '*opposed to Necessity; but to Involuntary*, For a Man may prefer what he can do, to what he cannot do; the State he is in, to its absence or change, though Necessity has made it in it self unalterable' (*An Essay* 239). Freedom or liberty, then, is the '*Idea* of a Power in any Agent to do or forbear any particular Action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either of them is preferr'd to the other' (ibid. 237). Freedom from the point of view of Locke, therefore, as Chappel argues, 'includes this liberty of indifference as well as the liberty of spontaneity: freedom means having a choice in addition to choosing' ('Locke on Freedom of the Will' 103). An agent can exercise his volition and still be under the power of Necessity because he cannot choose to will one thing in preference to another. The outcome, then, is that '*Liberty* cannot be, where there is no Thought, no Volition, no Will; but there may be Thought, there may be Will, there may be Volition, where there is no *Liberty*' (*An Essay* 238). Therefore, as Locke says,

> Liberty is not an Idea belonging to Volition, or preferring; but to the Person having the Power of doing, or forbearing to do, according as the Mind shall chuse or direct. Our *Idea* of Liberty reaches as far as that Power, and no farther. For where-ever restraint comes to check that Power, or compulsion takes away that Indifference of Ability on either side to act, or forbear acting, there *liberty*, and our Notion of it, presently ceases. (ibid.).

What Locke wants to conclude from these distinctions is that the question of 'Whether Man's Will is free or not?' is an improper and absurd question. He argues that 'it is as insignificant to ask, whether Man's *Will* be free, as to ask whether his Sleep be Swift, or his Virtue square' (ibid. 240). Liberty, therefore, has little or

nothing to do with the will. '*Liberty*,' he says, 'which is but a power, belongs only to Agents, and cannot be an attribute or modification of the *Will*, which is also but a Power' (ibid.). Therefore, to ask whether the will has freedom is equal to asking if one power has another power, which is absurd. As Locke says, 'the power to do one Action, is not operated on by the power of doing another Action' (ibid. 242).

Therefore, according to Locke it is not proper to attribute freedom to any power but we can only speak of a free or determined agent. It is a property of a rational being where he can act or forbear according to his thought and preference. As Locke says, '*that which has the power, or not the power to operate, is that alone, which is, or is not free*, and not the Power it self' (ibid. 243). The right question to ask, then, will be 'whether a Man be free' (ibid. 244) instead of whether the will is free.

Freedom, Locke observes, has to be defined in such terms: 'That so far as any one can, by the direction or choice of his Mind, preferring the existence of any Action, to the non-existence of that Action, and *vice versa*, make it to exist, or not exist, so far he is *free*' (ibid.). After all these preliminary definitions, Locke comes to the main question: Is man free to will? And he gives his not so straightforward answer: 'That *Willing*, or *Volition* being an Action, and Freedom consisting in a power of acting, or not acting, *a Man in respect of willing, or the Act of Volition, when any Action in his power is once proposed to his Thoughts, as presently to be done, cannot be free*' (ibid. 245). He further says:

> ... in respect of the act of *willing*, a Man in such a case is not free: Liberty consisting in a power to act, or not to act, which, in regard of Volition, a Man, upon such a proposal, has not. For it is unavoidably necessary to prefer the doing, or forbearance, of an Action in a Man's power, which is once so proposed to his thoughts; a Man must necessarily *will* the one, or the other of them, upon which preference, or volition, the action, or its forbearance, certainly follows, and is truly voluntary: But the act of volition, or preferring one of the two, being that which he cannot avoid, a Man in respect of that act of *willing*, is under a necessity, and so cannot be free.... (ibid. 245-46)

Therefore, although man can prefer one action to another, yet he is not free to will, or as Locke puts it, 'he cannot forbear willing: Liberty consisting in a power to act, or to forbear acting, and in that only' (ibid. 246). In other words, freedom consists of the dependence of the action on man's preference and not on his volition.[2] Thus, not only involuntary actions should be considered necessary from Locke's point of view, but, as Chappel points out, 'likewise necessary are those voluntary actions which an agent cannot avoid doing because of internal or external constraints which prevent him from performing any alternative action, including that of merely forbearing the action he does' ('Locke on Freedom of the Will' 104).

Necessity, however, does not diminish man's responsibility. Although he is determined in his will, nevertheless, he has to make his judgement on sound reasoning.[3] Locke bases this responsibility on man's innate power of suspending his judgement, and so, to use Chappel's words, 'keep his will from being determined to any action' (ibid. 102). Locke argues that man has 'a Power to suspend his determination: It was given him, that he might examine, and take care of his own Happiness, and look that he were not deceived' (*An Essay* 271).

And finally, from Locke's point of view, all actions, unlike what they seem, are not actions but passions, and man is more passive than active.[4] What determines the will in its action, Locke believes, is the uneasiness of desire (see ibid. 256). He defines desire as 'nothing but an *uneasiness* in the want of an absent good, in reference to any pain felt, ease is that absent good' (ibid. 251). Accordingly, Locke says, 'the *will* seldom orders any action, nor is there any voluntary action performed, without some desire accompanying it' (ibid. 256). Desire, in turn, according to Locke, is directed by happiness (see ibid. 258). Good and evil are also defined in these terms. Locke says: 'what has an aptness to produce pleasure in us, is that we call *Good*, and what is apt to produce Pain is us, we call *Evil*' (ibid. 259). Perfection, accordingly, is the state where desire is determined by Good: 'its as much *a perfection, that desire or the power of*

Preferring should be determined by Good, as that the power of Acting should be determined by the *Will*, and the certainer such determination is, the greater is the perfection' (ibid. 264).

Therefore, man is determined by his desires and his judgement to choose for his best. Locke says: 'every Man is put under a necessity by his constitution, as an intelligent Being, to be determined in *willing* by his own Thought and Judgment, what is best for him to do: else he would be under the determination of some other than himself, which is want of Liberty' (ibid.). And to this necessity nothing is an exception. 'God himself,' Locke says, 'cannot choose what is not good; the Freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best' (ibid. 265). He continues: 'God Almighty himself is under the necessity of being happy; and the more any intelligent Being is so, the nearer is its approach to infinite perfection and happiness' (ibid.).

IV. Hume: Causality and Necessity

Shelley, as it is generally assumed by critics, was directly influenced by Hume and indirectly by him through Godwin. Godwin himself was highly influenced by Hume's theories on Necessity, especially in parts IV-VIII of his *Enquiry*. Hume's concerns with the idea of Necessity are mainly related to his conception of causality and the necessary link between cause and effect.

For Hume Necessity is causally determined and is based on the constant conjunction of two objects. His straightforward definition of Necessity is based on the 'constant union and conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the mind from the one to the other' (*Treatise* 2: 160).[5] He believes that the 'customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression, from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion' (*An Enquiry* 62).

However, Hume believes that reason or understanding cannot link two objects as one being the cause and the other the effect. All that the mind can do is to feel the 'customary connexion in the thought or imagination between one object and its usual attendant' (ibid. 65). Thus, Necessity from Hume's point of view, first, is based on contiguity, and, second, is determined not by reason but by custom and imagination. It is only from the observation of the constant union of objects, Hume believes, that 'we are able to form this inference; and even after all, the inference is nothing but the effects of custom on the imagination' (*Treatise* 2: 155):

> ... in no single instance the ultimate connection of any objects is discoverable either by our senses or reason, and that we can never penetrate so far into the essence and construction of bodies, as to perceive the principle on which their mutual influence depends. It is their constant union alone with which we are acquainted; and it is from the constant union the necessity arises. If objects had not an uniform and regular conjunction with each other, we should never arrive at any idea of cause and effect; and even after all, the necessity which enters into that idea, is nothing but a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and infer the existence of one from that of the other. (ibid. 2: 149-50)

He concludes that the mind from this constant conjunction of objects '*forms* the idea of cause and effect, and by its influence *feels* the necessity' (ibid. 2: 156).

By will, on the other hand, Hume means 'nothing but the *internal impression we feel, and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind*' (ibid. 2: 148). According to Hume's definition, Necessity 'makes an essential part of causation; and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes all causes, and is the very same thing with chance' (ibid. 2: 157). He says:

> We may imagine we feel a liberty within ourselves, but a spectator can commonly infer our actions from our motives and character; and even where he cannot, he concludes in general that he might, were he perfectly acquainted with every circumstance of our situation and temper, and the most secret springs of our complexion and disposition. Now, this is the very essence of necessity, according to the foregoing doctrine. (ibid. 2: 159)

Hume, much like Locke, believes that the subject of will could only be predicated of a rational agent. All other beings inevitably are determined in their existence. Matter, he observes, 'in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause, that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could possibly have resulted from it' (*An Enquiry* 67). To put it in other words, the necessity of any action 'whether of matter or of mind, is not properly a quality in the agent, but in any thinking or intelligent being, who may consider the action, and consists in the determination of his thought to infer its existence from some preceding objects' (*Treatise* 2: 158). Thus, external objects in their operation are under Necessity, and 'in the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and mutual cohesion, there are not the least traces of indifference or liberty' (ibid. 2: 149).[6] The only question which remains, therefore, is that of whether man is free or not, to which Hume answers in the negative.

Having said that, what Hume understands by Necessity is that 'our actions have a constant union with our motives, tempers, and circumstances' (ibid. 2: 150). Beyond the 'constant *conjunction* of similar objects, and the consequent *inference* from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connexion' (*An Enquiry* 67). On the other hand, the two main components of Necessity, namely the constant union and the inference of the mind are affected by a uniformity in the actions and effects:

> There is a general course of nature in human actions, as well as in the operations of the sun and the climate. There are also characters peculiar to different nations and particular persons, as well as common to mankind. The knowledge of these characters is founded on the observation of an uniformity in the actions that flow from them; and this uniformity forms the very essence of necessity. (*Treatise* 2: 152)

The irregularities seemingly exist in nature or the indifference in man's action 'lies only in our judgment on account of our imperfect knowledge, not in the things themselves, which are in every case equally necessary, though, to appearance, not equally constant or certain' (ibid. 2: 153). In other words, the uncertainties of events

and their contrariety 'may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes' which lie hidden from man's view (*An Enquiry* 71).[7]

Necessity as it is defined by Hume, however, does not contradict religion or morality insofar as responsibility and man's moral and ethical duties are concerned. In fact, as Paul Russel puts it, Hume 'provides us with one of the great "classic" statements of the "compatibilist" position--the view that human freedom and moral responsibility are not threatened or undermined by determinism (and, indeed, that they require it)' (*Freedom and Moral Sentiment* 3). According to Hume, all laws of rewards and punishment are built on the doctrine of Necessity and the presupposition that 'these motives have a regular and uniform influence on the mind, and both produce the good and prevent the evil actions' (*An Enquiry* 80). However, it is necessary to know that the compatibilists believe that force and compulsion should not be confused with Necessity, and thus freedom with the absence of causation. The compatibilists challenge this view and observe that Necessity and freedom and moral responsibility are not contradictory. Man could be held responsible for an action for which he is considered to be the cause, otherwise responsibility will be meaningless, and the question of morality and free will will be absurd. As Russel points out, 'rewards and punishments secure valuable social benefits only because they motivate people to act differently than they would do in their absence. In other words, they *cause* people to alter or change their conduct in desirable ways' (*Freedom and Moral Sentiment* 4).

This brings us to Hume's distinction between two kinds of liberty: liberty of indifference and liberty of spontaneity. The first kind of liberty, he understands, denies the existence of Necessity and causes, while the second kind of liberty does not negate Necessity or causation, but lets man's will be the major factor in directing the course of action. Although Hume calls into question the former kind of liberty, he accepts the latter as the cause of responsible or morally free actions. Such actions are

caused by man's will, whereas determined actions are caused by external forces. Therefore, Hume believes that liberty is no more than 'a power of acting or not acting, according to the determination of the will' (*An Enquiry* 78). Liberty in this sense and meaning is 'essential to morality, and that no human actions, where it is wanting, are susceptible of any moral qualities, or can be the objects either of approbation or dislike' (ibid. 81). True liberty, then, is not opposed to Necessity but to external force or violence. Liberty, he argues, 'when opposed to necessity, not to constraint, is the same thing with chance; which is universally allowed to have no existence' (ibid. 79).

Necessity, taken in this sense, he observes, is not in opposition to morality or ethical values. Nor can it reduce man to dead matter or lift from his shoulder the responsibility for action. He says:

> Let no one, therefore, put an invidious construction on my words, by saying simply, that I assert the necessity of human actions, and place them on the same footing with the operations of senseless matter. I do not ascribe to the will that unintelligible necessity, which is supposed to lie in matter. But I ascribe to matter that intelligible quality, call it necessity or not, which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or must allow to belong to the will. I change, therefore, nothing in the received systems, with regard to the will, but only with regard to material objects. (*Treatise* 2: 160-61)

Necessity as such, in fact, he finds to be 'so essential to religion and morality, that without it there must ensue an absolute subversion of both, and that every other supposition is entirely destructive to all laws, both *divine* and *human*' (ibid. 2: 161). It is rather the doctrine of free will, according to him, that destroys the sense of responsibility for one's action by denying the necessary connections between cause and effect:

> ... according to the doctrine of liberty or chance, this connection is reduced to nothing, nor are men more accountable for those actions, which are designed and premeditated, than for such as are the most casual and accidental.... The action itself may be blameable; it may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: but the person is not responsible for it; and as it proceeded from nothing in him that is durable or constant, and leaves nothing of that nature behind it, it is impossible he can, upon its account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. (ibid. 2: 162)

Hume, however, observes that causation is conceived not by reason but through custom and habit. Therefore, it has no logical base. We think of a cause in terms of its effect not because it necessarily produces that certain effect but because of our tendency to think so. As Frank Evans comments, the 'necessity of causal connection is not in nature, but in the constitution of our intellects' ('Shelley, Godwin, Hume, and the Doctrine of Necessity' 639).

V. Godwin: Necessity and Moral Responsibility

Hazlitt, recounting the major events which dominated or produced the Spirit of the Age, writes: 'No work in our time gave such a blow to the philosophical mind of the country as the celebrated *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*. Tom Paine was considered for the time as a Tom Fool to him; Paley an old woman; Edmund Burke a flashy sophist. Truth, moral truth, it was supposed, had here taken up its abode; and these were the oracles of thought' (*Collected Works* 4: 201).

Godwin acted as a mediator between Hume and many of the Romantics, especially Shelley. Cameron believes that it was from Godwin that Shelley got his idea of Necessity (see *Shelley: The Golden Years* 151). Frank Evans, too, points out that Shelley's note to *Queen Mab*, 'Necessity! Thou Mother of the World', is generally thought to be very much influenced by William Godwin's two chapters on Necessity in his *Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (see 'Shelley, Godwin, Hume, and the Doctrine of Necessity' 632).

For Godwin, among the principles of the human mind, none is more important than 'that which affirms that all actions are necessary' (*Political Justice* 157). For him, 'were it not for the existence of general laws to which the events of the material

universe always conform, man could never have been either a reasoning or a moral being' (ibid. 162-163).

Godwin's conception of Necessity is to a great extent similar to Hume's conception purged of its sceptical undertone. For him, much as for Hume, our only perception of the material universe comes through the succession of events, and the 'uniform succession irresistibly forces upon the mind the idea of abstract connexion' (ibid. 158).

For Godwin like Hume Necessity is grounded on the principle of causality. In man's life, he argues, 'there is a chain of causes, generated in that eternity which preceded his birth, and going on in regular procession through the whole period of his existence, in consequence of which it was impossible for him to act in any instance other than he has acted' (ibid. 168). For Godwin Necessity is synonymous with passiveness. Man, he observes, 'is in reality a passive, and not an active being' (ibid. 170). He argues that

> ... in the emphatical and refined sense in which the word has sometimes been used, there is no such thing as action. Man is in no case strictly speaking the beginner of any event or series of events that takes place in the universe, but only the vehicle through which certain causes operate, which causes, if he were supposed not to exist, would cease to operate. (ibid. 168)

However, being passive does not, as it is commonly thought, diminish man's responsibility, or his ethical obligations. First of all, according to him, the more one becomes passive to the influence of truth, the clearer one's idea of truth will be. On the other hand, passiveness will never induce a spirit of 'neutrality or indifference' in the person. The 'more certain is the connexion between effects and causes, the more cheerfulness should I feel in yielding to painful and laborious employment' (ibid. 171). Second, Necessity does not entail the lack of morality or responsibility in man's action. On the contrary, freedom in its conventional meaning, namely actions

independent of causal imperatives, results in the kind of lack of moral responsibility which is often attributed to the doctrine of Necessity:

> Freedom of the will is absurdly represented as necessary to render the mind susceptible of moral principles; but in reality, so far as we act with liberty, so far as we are independent of motives, our conduct is as independent of morality as it is of reason, nor is it possible that we should deserve either praise or blame for a proceeding thus capricious and indisciplinable. (ibid. 167)

Necessity, in its Godwinian conception, therefore, works not in binding man or reducing him to insignificance, but in redefining the self in terms of received impressions. It includes, he writes, 'in it consequences of the highest moment, and leads to a bold and comprehensive view of man and society, which cannot possibly be entertained by him who has embraced the opposite opinion' (ibid. 157). Necessity, in other words, works through denying that the self exists as a full and independent entity responsible for its decisions and actions:

> The character of man is the result of a long series of impressions communicated to his mind, and modifying it in a certain manner, so as to enable us, from a number of these modifications and impressions being given, to predict his conduct. (ibid. 161)

All the concepts of happiness, misery and virtue will remain intact in the doctrine of Necessity. Necessity, in other words, will not be an excuse for wrongdoing as it will not make good and evil the same. Godwin rightly observes that, 'the doctrine of necessity will teach us to look upon punishment with no complacence, and at all times to prefer the most direct means of encountering error, which is the development of truth' (ibid. 172).

VI. Kant: Phenomenal Necessity and Noumenal Freedom

Kant not only believes in both Necessity and moral responsibility like the compatibilists, but also believes in the freedom of the human will. Like Locke and Hume he believes that volition could only be attributed to a rational being:

> *Will* is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and *freedom* would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes *determining* it, just as *natural necessity* is the property of the causality of all nonrational beings to be determined to activity by the influence of alien causes. (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 94)[8]

Kant believes that the will of every rational being must be free. He argues that, 'to every rational being having a will we must necessarily lend the idea of freedom also, under which alone he acts' (ibid. 95-96). It is supposed that any being endowed with reason should be the cause of his actions and moral decisions. Thinking of such a being as determined will be absurd, since he will be directed by his impulses and not his reason which is there to direct his action. He points out that

> Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences; consequently, as practical reason or as the will of a rational being it must be regarded of itself as free, that is, the will of such a being cannot be a will of his own except under the idea of freedom, and such a will must in a practical respect thus be attributed to every rational being. (ibid. 96)

However, Kant does not deny that man is under a natural necessity and in satisfying his desires he is under the compulsion of natural laws. This paradox of freedom and necessity is solved when one returns to Kant's familiar distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal. Under the former state man as a rational being cannot but be free, since he is not determined or affected by anything physical or natural. In the latter state, however, his will is totally determined by natural causes and he cannot think but in terms of necessity. Therefore, insofar as man is considered in his noumenal existence he is endowed with free will and liberty. However, in his

phenomenal existence he is under the necessity of natural law and is determined in his action. Kant says that man

> ... has two standpoints from which he can regard himself and cognize laws for the use of his powers and consequently for all his actions; *first*, insofar as he belongs to the world of sense, under laws of nature (heteronomy); *second*, as belonging to the intelligible world, under laws which, being independent of nature, are not empirical but grounded merely in reason. (ibid. 99)

The problem faced by other philosophers in accepting both necessity and freedom, Kant believes, arises from this non-distinction between the noumenal and the phenomenal. Of the apparent contradiction highlighted by philosophers insofar as freedom and necessity are concerned, Kant comments:

> ... the supposed contradiction they have discovered in it lies nowhere else than in this: in order to make the laws of nature hold with respect to human actions they must necessarily regard the human being as an appearance; and now when they are required to think of him, as an intelligence, as also a thing in itself they nevertheless continue to regard him as appearance here too; in that case the separation of his causality (i.e., of his will) from all the natural laws of the world of sense in one and the same subject would be a contradiction; but this would come to nothing if they were willing to reflect and to acknowledge, as is equitable, that things in themselves (though hidden) must lie behind appearances as their ground and that one cannot insist that the laws of their operation should be the same as those under which their appearances stand. (ibid. 105)[9]

Therefore, man as a rational being belongs to both worlds. He cannot accept the responsibility for actions based on or caused by desires or inclinations but he is the real cause of those actions which are not tinted by impulses and sensible imperatives. As Kant says, 'when we think of ourselves as free we transfer ourselves into the world of understanding as members of it and cognize autonomy of the will along with its consequence, morality; but if we think of ourselves as put under obligation we regard ourselves as belonging to the world of sense and yet at the same time to the world of understanding' (ibid. 100). The former is governed by the autonomy of the pure will and the latter by the heteronomy of nature. Thus, there is no contradiction in these two, and man, according to Kant

... soon becomes aware that both can take place at the same time, and indeed must do so. For, that a *thing in appearance* (belonging to the world of sense) is subject to certain laws from which *as a thing* or a being *in itself* it is independent contains not the least contradiction; that he must represent and think of himself in this twofold way, however, rests as regards the first on consciousness of himself as an object affected through the senses and as regards the second on consciousness of himself as an intelligence, that is, as independent of sensible impressions in the use of reason (hence as belonging to the world of understanding). (ibid. 103)

While man is considered in his noumenal ego, nothing can step over his freedom and sense of volition. When his proper self, in contradistinction to his human appearance, is considered none of the natural impulses and the world of sense can violate or disturb the autonomy of his will.

Kant believes that freedom is not only possible but even necessary. According to him we must assume such a causality in which the thing is not determined by another cause, but there should be an '*absolute spontaneity* of the cause, whereby a series of appearances, which proceeds in accordance with laws of nature, begins *of itself*. This is transcendental freedom, without which, even in the [ordinary] course of nature, the series of appearances on the side of the causes can never be complete' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 411). This transcendental idea of freedom, he believes, 'stands only for the absolute spontaneity of an action, as the proper ground of its imputability' (ibid. 412). Therefore, as Beck comments, from the point of view of Kant, 'one can ascribe this freedom to the transcendental ego because it, being in the intelligible world, is free from the causal determination of the world of nature' (*Kant: Selections* 242). In other words, as Kant argues, 'by the idea of freedom we detach ourselves from all empirical interest' (*Groundwork* 97). Kant, however, believes that such freedom cannot be explained through fatalistic and materialistic speculations of philosophy.

Kant argues that the main problem which is faced by speculative reason insofar as freedom or the will is concerned is 'whether we must admit a power of *spontaneously*

beginning a series of successive things or states' (*Critique of Pure Reason* 412). He believes that such a power does exist and can be proved. He concludes that 'since the power of spontaneously beginning a series in time is thereby proved (though not understood), it is now also permissible for us to admit within the course of the world different series as capable in their causality of beginning of themselves, and so to attribute to their substances a power of acting from freedom' (ibid. 413).

This spontaneity is the work of pure reason, which for Kant is the source of all *a priori* activities:

> ... a human being really finds in himself a capacity by which he distinguishes himself from all other things, even from himself insofar as he is affected by objects, and that is *reason*. This, as pure self-activity, is raised even above the *understanding* by this: that though the latter is also self-activity and does not, like sense, contain merely representations that arise when we are *affected* by things (and are thus passive), yet it can produce from its activity no other concepts than those which serve merely *to bring sensible representations under rules* and thereby to unite them in one consciousness, without which use of sensibility it would think nothing at all; but reason, on the contrary, shows in what we call "ideas" a spontaneity so pure that it thereby goes far beyond anything that sensibility can ever afford it, and proves its highest occupation in distinguishing the world of sense and the world of understanding from each other and thereby marking out limits for the understanding itself. (*Groundwork* 99)

The discussion of the issue of freedom in Kant's view, however, cannot be separated from morality and what he calls the moral actions, which is mainly discussed in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Indeed the major theme of the treatise is that the only free actions are those which are moral, and that action is moral which is, as Beck explains, 'done in the belief that, and because of the belief that, it is one's duty' (*Kant: Selections* 238). The sense of duty from Kant's point of view, however, has the meaning of being non-determined by any sensibility or physical impulse, in other words, being related to the world of noumena or intelligence. As Kant puts it, 'it is not *because the law interests* us that it has validity for us (for that is heteronomy and dependence of practical reason upon sensibility, namely upon a feeling lying at its basis, in which case it could never be morally lawgiving); instead, the law interests

because it is valid for us as human beings, since it arose from our will as intelligence and so from our proper self' (*Groundwork* 106).

According to this definition, human will should be free, and in case of being determined there will be no place for morality, because in that case, to use Beck's words, 'the will would be determined by something foreign to it... and action would not be autonomous but only a reaction to causes' (*Kant: Selections* 242). Kant calls the principle according to which we decide on our action an imperative, and divides the imperatives into two kinds: hypothetical and categorical or moral. The former imperative does not come from pure reason but, as Beck comments, from 'practical reason in its empirical function' (ibid. 239). Such imperatives rise from the necessity of acting according to the law or other motives which determine man's behaviour. While these kinds of imperatives are conditioned by human needs and desires, the latter forms of imperatives are unconditional and directed by neither human desires nor physical or moral needs. Moral or categorical imperatives, in other words, are those which come from pure reason and are associated with no desire or motive except the sense of fulfilling one's duty. The categorical imperatives, in short, are only possible, according to Kant, if man considers himself as a part of the intelligible world and his actions are 'in conformity with the autonomy of the will' (*Groundwork* 100).

Morality and freedom, therefore, from Kant's point of view, unlike Locke's and Hume's, are correlative principles, and, therefore, cannot be defined by each other. He argues that saying 'we must be free because we are morally obligated' is tautological. In other words, 'a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same' (ibid. 95). Freedom and the 'will's own lawgiving are both autonomy and hence reciprocal concepts, and for this very reason one cannot be used to explain the other or to furnish a ground for it' (ibid. 97). Therefore, to ascertain the freedom of the will there should be a non-moral approach to the argument.

Kant's conception of free will is the best evidence of man's dignity and value. From the point of view of Kant, man spontaneously obeys the laws which he makes, and obeys no rules which are made by others. Nor is he the slave of his fears and desires. Freedom in its noumenal existence, however, cannot be explained or elaborated on. It can be proved but never understood, and in Kant's words, 'reason would overstep all its bounds if it took it upon itself to *explain how* pure reason can be practical, which would be exactly the same task as to explain *how freedom is possible*' (ibid. 104). This ineffability is consequent upon Kant's conception of the noumena as inexplicable or incomprehensible:

> ... we can explain nothing but what we can reduce to laws the object of which can be given in some possible experience. Freedom, however, is a mere idea, the objective reality of which can in no way be presented in accordance with laws of nature and so too cannot be presented in any possible experience.... (ibid. 105).

Evidently that which follows the laws of nature can be defined, and therefore, freedom as a noumenal idea cannot be defined, for, according to Kant, 'where determination by laws of nature ceases, there all *explanation* ceases as well, and nothing is left but *defence*, that is, to repel the objections of those who pretend to have seen deeper into the essence of things and therefore boldly declare that freedom is impossible' (ibid.). Nor can it be the subject of speculative philosophy which is mainly concerned with the laws of nature and appearances.[10]

VII. Deconstruction and Ethical Reading

Admittedly, it would be a sweeping generalisation to say that the deconstructionists' conception of freedom and Necessity is based on Kant's theory of free will and natural Necessity. Nevertheless, there is a basic similarity between the concepts of the two doctrines. Terry Eagleton draws the similarity between Kantianism and

Deconstruction saying that the 'Kantian "giving of the law to oneself" becomes just another instance of the self-referential signifier, so that the law sits in august judgment on that of which it is part' ('Deconstruction and Human Rights' 128). He further says: 'Deconstruction inherits from Kant the notion of a self-grounding moral law that must be unconditionally obeyed' (ibid. 129).

Miller in his comments on the ethics of reading frequently discusses the freedom and Necessity of reading or the reader. He gives an outline not far from Kant's discussion of the subject especially in his *Groundwork*. The main difference is that Kant's natural Necessity is replaced with a linguistic Necessity and transcendental freedom is explained as the ethical responsibility of the reader. He argues that the ethics of reading is 'subject to a categorical imperative which is linguistic rather than transcendent or a matter of subjective will' (*Victorian Subjects* 255).

Miller divides the process of reading, or, to put it in other words, the responsibility of the reader into the epistemological and the ethical. In the epistemological the reader is completely determined in his reading by the words or the linguistic signs of the text. He has no freedom whatsoever to step beyond the words and he has no interaction with the text. The reader, in this stage and in this reading, is no more than an 'intermediary, as a midwife or catalyst' (ibid. 237). Reading as such, he argues, would be 'initially and perhaps primarily a matter of getting the meaning of what is read right, that is, a cognitive or epistemological matter, not an ethical matter having to do with conduct and responsibility' (*Versions of Pygmalion* 14). What this reader does, is to uncover the meaning which always existed in the text. He 'brings the meaning to birth again as illumination and insight in their minds, making the interaction take place without himself entering into it or altering it' (*Victorian Subjects* 237). In short, the reader would be a 'revealer, not a creator' (ibid.).

This is the conventional view of reading which is dominated by Necessity and the dominance of words over reading. However, Miller as a deconstructionist thinks there is an inevitable 'Parting Hour' to this epistemological reading of the text when reading deconstructs the 'continuity of the self and the organic continuity of narrative from beginning to middle to end' (ibid. 250). In other words, the unity of the self and continuity of time, two principles which conventionally have dominated philosophy and poetry are put in question. This second kind of reading is an ethical and evaluative one.

In the ethical reading the reader enters the text not as mediator but as creator, and he is not dominated by the words but he dominates the text by giving his own interpretation. In other words, an ethical reading must be free in the sense that the reader must be 'free to do it or not to do it, therefore taking responsibility for it' (*Versions of Pygmalion* 15). Miller, however, makes a clear distinction between this freedom in interpretation and readings based on the reader's response or one marked by absolute freedom in giving whatever meaning the reader likes giving to the words. He argues that the ethics of reading is in fact determined by the words and their power over the mind of the reader. He argues that the ethics of reading is the 'moral necessity to submit in one way or another, whatever one says, to the truth of this linguistic imperative' (*Victorian Subjects* 255).

In Miller's views, both kinds of reading are necessary. He makes the epistemological reading precede the ethical reading, however, only to deconstruct his remarks by saying that by the time the epistemological reading takes place, the ethical has already been achieved:

> Both sorts of reading are necessitated by the words of the texts they treat. This means
> that reading is always an epistemological necessity before it is a matter of ethical
> choice or evaluation.... Epistemology must take precedence over ethics in reading. One
> cannot make ethical judgments, perform ethical actions, such as teaching a poem,

without first subjecting oneself to the words on the page, but once that has happened,
the ethical operation will already necessarily have taken place. (ibid.)

Therefore, in the ethical reading the reader faces two responsibilities. First, he has to be responsive to the epistemological or cognitive element of the text. In such a reading, as Miller says, the reader has to do with the imperatives and things which he must do and cannot do otherwise. 'If the response,' he comments, 'is not one of necessity, grounded in some "must," if it is a freedom to do what one likes, then it is not ethical' (*Ethics of Reading* 4). On the other hand, the ethical reading is not only a response but also an act. The reader himself has to be 'a source of political or cognitive acts, not subordinated to them' (ibid. 5).

However, Miller differentiates between the epistemological reading and the first part or obligation of the ethical reading. He believes that the ethical "must" or the first obligation cannot 'be accounted for by the social and historical forces that impinge upon it. In fact the ethical moment contests these forces or is subversive of them. The ethical moment... is genuinely productive and inaugural in its effects on history, though in ways that are by no means reassuring or predictably benign' (ibid. 8-9).

One can conclude of Miller's discussion that the epistemological reading has to be concerned with the words as signs with fixed conventional meaning. It has to do with literal meaning or dead metaphors. Whereas the ethical reading disrupts the established meaning to unravel the infinite layers of metaphorical meaning within the words. And this brings him close to Shelley as we will see later. However, any ethical reading, besides being free, has to be directed by an obligation, an imperative which the reader cannot ignore. This is an inherent contradiction in the deconstructionist notion of ethical reading, as Miller himself points to this contradiction which has remained unresolved since Kant, arguing that an 'ethical act must be both free and at the same time a response to a categorical imperative' (*Versions of Pygmalion* 17).

The freedom that Miller attributes to ethical reading, however, is more similar to that of Hume than of Kant. In fact it has nothing to do with the latter's moral obligation or categorical imperatives. Miller assumes that the ethical reading primarily is an epistemological one in the sense that the reading is dominated by the words and not the free will or interpretation of the reader. All that the ethical reading can achieve is to evaluate, appreciate, or pass judgement on the power of the words. It is indeed an act of preference rather than a Kantian act of creativity, law giving and authority. Thus, Miller's theory of epistemological and ethical reading presents a kind of Humean compatibilism rather than Kantian simultaneous freedom and Necessity, or the coexistence of hypothetical and categorical imperatives.

The most important point, however, which has to be discussed here is the relationship between the self and its liberty or determination. The deconstructionists in their philosophy deconstruct the self, and it becomes not an independent entity but the outcome of certain differences and relationships. It becomes very doubtful if the self in this sense can be the subject of either Necessity or freedom. The 'fundamental' principle of deconstruction, as Miller defines it, is 'mobility within language or from one language to another' (*Theory now and then* 334). Deconstruction, consequently, both as literary criticism and as a philosophy bases its system on the removal or denial of the self and selfhood. Miller argues that Deconstruction has 'challenged the assumption that a literary work can be accounted for by a reference to the originating selfhood of the writer' (ibid. 335). It has also put in question the presumption of continuity in time by questioning 'the assumption that literary history, or history as such, is a series of definable "periods" that develop from one to another according to some paradigm of organic growth' (ibid.). And finally, Deconstruction, by making meaning a dynamic and on-going process has challenged the assumption that a 'good work should have or does have a single, determinable, organically unified meaning' (ibid.).

From the point of view of the deconstructionists the self is neither non-existing nor existing in the sense of being originary and constitutive. In other words, although they do not deny the 'existence' of consciousness or the subject, they deny, nonetheless, its originality or constitutiveness. Subjectivity, as Miller assumes, is rather a 'constantly displaced function in an immensely complex web of signs,' and it is only by those signs that the subject is taken as a 'knowing and responsible center of consciousness' (ibid. viii). But, nevertheless, in order to judge the subject we first should presuppose some kind of continuity and permanence in its being. As Paul Ricoeur says, the 'threat that change represents for identity is not really dissipated unless we can indicate, on the basis of similitude, a principle of permanence in time, an *invariable structure*' ('Self and Ipse' 105). However, these two principles, continuity and permanence, are non-existent in the deconstructionists' philosophy. In Humean philosophy they do exist at least through imagination, but in deconstructionist theory even that possibility does not exist.

This lack of identity and selfhood makes the issue of freedom of the self untenable. Without a sense of identity and selfhood, how can we maintain the freedom or the Necessity of man? On what ground could ethical responsibility be based? As Tzvetan Todorov observes, it will be totally absurd to speak of 'human rights with one hand and deconstruct the idea of humanity with the other' (*Literature and Its Theorists* 190). From a deconstructionist perspective the text is internally contradictory. As no text is an exception to this rule, there is no reason, as Todorov points out, 'to prefer one sort over another, or to prefer one value over another' (ibid. 184), and thus the very basis of liberty as the power to choose or prefer is undermined. In fact, looked at from this point of view, 'any value-oriented behaviour' would be redundant or even absurd. Thus, although an ethics of a kind, a political ethics, for example, can be generated from the theories based on Deconstruction, especially in its concern, as Terry Eagleton writes, 'with the otherness and partial opacity of human subjects, or in

the project of emancipating the signifier from the enthralment to violently stabilized meaning' ('Deconstruction and Human Rights' 130), the ethical, in the way it is presented by the deconstructionists has 'nothing to do with human decision; it is that which, like language, we cannot help feeling the force of, a set of groundless edicts in the face of which the subject would seem entirely passive' (ibid. 122). Eagleton concludes that '"Ethical" deconstruction, then, delivers us a neo-Kantianism shorn of both subject and value' (ibid. 123).

VIII. Spinoza and Shelley and Pantheistic Necessity

Shelley's doctrine of Necessity has a remarkable similarity with Spinoza's. Although in drawing attention to the possible sources of Shelley's doctrine of Necessity students of Shelley often mention Hume, Godwin, and Holbach as the most likely candidates, I believe that there are more similarities between Spinoza and Shelley. It is not hard to discover the ground of this similarity in their conception of the oneness of life and existence, their views on creation, and above all in the impact of Spinoza on Shelley to whom he refers as early as 1811[11] and whose *Ethics* in the last years of his life he began to translate (Goodheir viii). In a letter dated January 1813 Shelley wrote to Hookham and asked for Spinoza's works (see *Letters* 1: 347-48). Trelawny puts Spinoza among the three writers most read by Shelley. In his recollections of Shelley he speaks of the 'routine of habits' of the Poet's life who, according to him, 'was up at six or seven, reading Plato, Sophocles, or Spinoza' (*Recollections of Shelley and Byron* 94). Notopoulos argues that 'Spinoza was a favourite of Shelley, and from time to time he busied himself with translating him' (*Platonism of Shelley* 114). He further points out that Shelley was 'occupied at various intervals from 1813 to 1821 in translating Spinoza' (ibid. 391). Cameron observes that 'the earliest writing to influence Shelley's religious thinking was that of Spinoza,' and believes that 'Shelley's interest in Spinoza was lifelong, and he worked, off and on, for some years on a

translation of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*' (*The Young Shelley* 274). David Lee Clark also argues that Shelley was familiar with Spinoza and had read his books and traces many of his key ideas back to the philosopher (see *Shelley's Prose* especially 4, 6, and 8).

We can appreciate the correspondence between the ideas even more by knowing first in what way Shelley considers the human will. What is certain is that Shelley denies that man is the master of his will or, at least, he is not the sole and efficient cause of his decisions. In 'Necessity! Thou Mother of the World' he says that the 'word "liberty" as applied to the mind is analogous to the word "chance" as applied to matter' (109), and dismissing both of these he attributes the notion of will and free decision to man's ignorance of 'the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequences' (ibid. 109). He believes that none of man's actions or that of any other being could pass unforeseen or undetermined by a Power from which nothing escapes. All, including man, work out of a strict Necessity and according to a predetermined scheme:

> No atom of this turbulence fulfils
> A vague and unnecessitated task,
> Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
> Even the minutest molecule of light,
> That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow
> Fulfils its destined, though invisible work,
> The universal Spirit guides....
> (*Queen Mab* VI.171-77)

In 'A Refutation of Deism' Shelley holds that freedom in action is equal to ignorance of the true causes that give rise to certain effects, among which, are our decisions and actions. He reiterates, perhaps, Holbach's stance in dividing the universe into matter and motion (see *System of Nature* 26). Holbach believed that 'all the motion excited in this nature, follows constant and necessary law' (ibid. 78). Shelley, too, says that the 'motions of the universe are subjected to the rigid necessity of inevitable laws.' These laws, he observes, are the 'unknown causes of the known effects perceivable in the

Universe,' and our knowledge is limited or defined by these effects ('Refutation of Deism' 132).

But we can see the root of what has been said here more clearly in Spinoza's theories on Necessity and the human will. Spinoza believes that we only think that we are free in our will and decisions because we are ignorant of the true causes of things and actions. He says:

> Men are deceived in thinking themselves free, a belief that consists only in this, that they are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. Therefore the idea of their freedom is simply the ignorance of the cause of their actions. As to their saying that human actions depend on the will, these are mere words without any corresponding idea. For none of them knows what the will is and how it moves the body.... (*Ethics* 86)[12]

In another proposition he puts it clearly and decisively that 'in the mind there is no absolute, or free will. The mind is determined to this or that volition by a cause, which is likewise determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so *ad infinitum*' (ibid. 95).

Spinoza, generally, thinks of will as no more than 'appetites' or 'desires' that arise from our nature. They are not decided upon deliberately but are natural responses of human nature to internal and external calls. Will, then, is the same physical desires considered in their relation to the human mind. To explain this further we should note, however, that Spinoza believes that God is invested with infinite attributes. Two of these attributes which are known to the mind are Thought and Extension. Thought as an attribute is infinite and eternal and gathers in itself all thoughts and modes of thinking. Extension, on the other hand, includes all particular things and modes of the body. The two are the same insofar as they express the one and the same substance, albeit, now under one attribute and then under another (see *Ethics* 106). From this he concludes that 'mental decisions are nothing more than the appetites themselves,

varying therefore according to the varying disposition of the body' (ibid.). Knowing that appetites are physical desires, mental decisions are then the same physical desires considered under another attribute, that is, Thought.

Will to Spinoza, therefore, is not a deliberate 'desire' to seek something and reject another but only the power to affirm or negate an idea. Man's will can only be responsible or effective in deciding whether an idea is false or correct (see *Ethics* 96). But in this, too, the power of affirmation and negation is inherited in the ideas which constitute the essence of the mind. From this Spinoza proceeds to pronounce that 'will and intellect are one and the same thing' (ibid.). Therefore, by will we mean no other than the intellect; that is, understanding is the only volition which the mind has. By the will, Spinoza says, 'I mean the faculty of affirming and denying and not desire. I mean... the faculty whereby the mind affirms or denies what is false, not the desire whereby the mind seeks things or shuns them' (ibid.).

Shelley, too, thinks of will as motives which are directed and determined by our physical needs and as such can be considered as equivalent to Spinoza's 'appetite' or desires. Likewise, he believes that will and motive are two levels or dimensions of the same being: the mental and the physical. He comments that 'motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe' ('Necessity' 109).

Shelley has the Spinozistic conception of will as the power of affirmation and negation and not the desire of the mind, at least when he expresses his views on 'belief' and 'disbelief'. In 'A Letter to Lord Ellenborough' he writes, 'belief and disbelief are utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition. They are the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas which compose any proposition' (74) which, naturally, are inherited in the ideas themselves. At the conclusion of his debate he reiterates Spinoza's denial of will as a means of seeking or

rejecting things, saying, 'no man is accountable for his belief, because no man is capable of directing it' (ibid.). To Shelley, as well as to Spinoza, belief, then, follows the same Necessity as all other things. Shelley further confirms that 'we cannot believe just what we like, but only what we think to be true' ('Address to the Irish People' 44).[13]

Both Shelley and Spinoza think of the human mind as a mode of thinking. As its being depends on the substance and the attribute of Thought it cannot be free in its decision. Spinoza defines the mind as a 'definite and determinate mode of thinking,' and therefore, 'it cannot be the free cause of its actions: that is, it cannot possess an absolute faculty of willing and non-willing. It must be determined to will this or that by a cause, which likewise is determined by another cause' (*Ethics* 95).

For Necessity, from the point of view of Shelley and Spinoza, even God is not an exception. He, too, works out of Necessity and is not free in his decisions. To Shelley the idea of a God 'whose will *could* change the order of the universe' (*Letters* 1: 215) is inconceivable. Even if we admit the existence of God, Shelley says, then 'he is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable Necessity' ('Necessity' 112). Spinoza not only denies any will to God, but even goes further to deny the supposition of any end to his action. He first says, 'from the necessity of the divine Nature there must follow infinite things in infinite ways (*modis*), (that is, everything that can come within the scope of infinite intellect)' (*Ethics* 43). On the other hand, created things could not emerge from God in any other way, nor could God possibly create them in whatever form he liked (Cf. ibid. 54). This is true of their order, too (see ibid. 56). From all this Spinoza concludes that 'God does not act from freedom of will' (ibid. 53).[14] Regarding the absence of an end or any pre-set objectives in the creation of God, he says, 'just as he does not exist for an end, so he does not act for an end' (ibid. 153). He denies, therefore, the existence of final causes and that man could be the centre of creation

and that every thing is created to his end. 'Nature,' he argues, 'has no fixed goal and that all final causes are but figments of the human imagination' (ibid. 59).

God's will, on the other hand, like man's will, is not separate from his intellect. In fact, from Spinoza's point of view, they are one and the same thing. The distinction is not ontological but epistemological and related to man's understanding of the divine attributes. The 'nature of God's will,' Spinoza writes, 'is distinguished from his intellect only in relation to our reason, that is, in themselves God's will and God's intellect are really one and the same. They are distinguished only in relation to the thoughts we form concerning God's intellect' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 31; see also ibid. 35).[15]

The description which Spinoza gives here of God is compatible with Shelley's understanding of Necessity or the ultimate Reality. In his conception 'neither intellect nor will pertain to the nature of God' (*Ethics* 44). He is without passion and devoid of any feeling of pleasure or pain. He is not tainted by love or hate towards anybody[16] and acts completely out of the necessity of his own Nature. God, Spinoza argues, is 'without passive emotions, and he is not affected with any emotion of pleasure or pain' (ibid. 210). Shelley, too, ascribes to Necessity this lack of emotion and indifference. Power, to him, 'dwells apart in tranquillity,/ Remote, serene, and inaccessible' ('Mont Blanc' 96-97). In its relationship with beings it is affected with no hate or love towards them: 'No love, no hate thou cherishest':

> ...all that the wide world contains
> Are but thy passive instruments, and thou
> regardst them all with an impartial eye,
> Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel...
> (*Queen Mab* VI.214-17)

But this, however, has not to be taken as representing God as a lifeless, unfeeling power, nor Necessity as a body of strict, inflexible mechanical rules. In fact, the

difference between the materialistic conception of Necessity and that of Spinoza and Shelley lies in this point: there is no love or hate in God, not because he is a machine or because he is Nature itself (Nature which is regarded as incapable of feeling), but because there is nothing other than God. Beside God there is nothing that could be the subject of God's love or hate. If there is any subject of love it is himself, and this is what Spinoza means by stressing that 'God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love' *(Ethics* 218). But his conception of the love of God for himself is not apart from his love for other beings. It follows that 'God, in so far as he loves himself, loves mankind' (ibid. 219). Nor can man be without love for God. In fact man's supreme virtue, Spinoza thinks, consists in his love of God. He emphasises that the 'man who is necessarily the most perfect and who participates in the greatest blessedness is the one who loves above all else the intellectual knowledge of God, the most perfect being, and takes the greatest pleasure in that knowledge. Our greatest good, then, and our blessedness come back to this: the knowledge and love of God' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 29). But, again, this love is not a love of a contingent existent for a supernatural being. Man's love for God also becomes the love of God for himself not insofar as he is an infinite substance, but in that he is affected by the human mind and essence. Spinoza explains this complicated love-relationship: 'the mind's intellectual love towards God is the love of God wherewith God loves himself not insofar as he is infinite, but can be explicated through the essence of the human mind considered under a form of eternity. That is, the mind's intellectual love towards God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves himself' (*Ethics* 219).

Blessedness, moreover, Spinoza believes, consists in 'love towards God' (*Letters* 153). Love of God, however, derives from or is caused by the knowledge of God: 'the love of God arises from the knowledge of God' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 30). Consequently, the more we know God, the more we will love him. Spinoza, on the other hand, believes that knowing God consists in knowing things, so, the more knowledge we have of things the more we will know God. The 'more we know natural

things,' he explains, 'the greater and more perfect is the knowledge of God we acquire' (ibid. 28). From all these relations one can conclude that knowing God and beings and love for God and things should not be separate from each other.

If we accept that existence is one, and man like every other thing follows one scheme of divine Necessity, how then could evil and its place in the world be justified? Here, too, the impact of Spinoza on Shelley is evident. While ontologically they deny the existence of evil in existence, they retain its relative presence in the actual world and are thus more justified in their advocacy for a continuous struggle for human perfection.

For Spinoza, there is no evil in the world as there is no imperfection in the work of Nature or anything bad in itself. Everything is necessitated by the divine Nature. Things,' he observes, 'have necessarily followed from the Nature of God and have been determined to exist and to act in a definite way from the necessity of God's Nature' (*Ethics* 54). The Nature of God, on the other hand, is one of absolute perfection. It is infinite, eternal, and includes all the adequate ideas in itself. Consequently, what follows from the divine Nature is perfect, too. Things, Spinoza believes, 'have been brought into being by God with supreme perfection, since they have necessarily followed from a most perfect Nature' (ibid.).[17] Therefore, all things are perfect and good in themselves. Perfection and imperfection become attributes of things when they become the subject of comparison, that is, when their essence is compared to the essence of another thing. In one of his letters Spinoza writes, 'we know that whatever is, when considered in itself without regard to anything else, possesses a perfection co-extensive in every case with the thing's essence, for essence is the same as perfection' (*Letters* 133). By dismissing bad and evil from the work of Nature Spinoza consequently, dispenses with good as well. He thinks abstractions like bad or good are not anything positive in beings. Good and bad retain their place in his system insofar as they are considered as indicators of comparative states of existence.

They become only 'modes of thinking, or notions which we form comparing things with one another' (*Ethics* 153). Ethical values, thus, in Spinoza's system, become relative and dynamic. It is of no avail, according to him, to seek good or avoid bad or evil. What man should do is to seek 'the greater of two goods and the lesser of two evils' (ibid. 191). In this light we can understand Spinoza's emphasis on the concept of 'transition' and movement in his ethical system. He decisively states that pain, our only conception, indeed, of bad or evil, does not consist in imperfection itself, since to him, perfection and imperfection are non-existing, but in the 'transition to a state of less perfection' (ibid. 142). Likewise, pleasure consists not in perfection itself but in the transition to greater perfection.

Good and Evil, therefore, remain relative in man's consideration of what is beneficial and what is harmful to his person, and in this they are totally relative, changing from person to person. In fact, for Spinoza good and evil only become two descriptions for emotions of pleasure and pain. By good he understands 'every kind of pleasure and furthermore whatever is conducive thereto, and especially whatever satisfies a longing of any sort,' and by bad 'every kind of pain, and especially that which frustrates a longing' (ibid. 126). He concludes: 'we call the object of our desire good, and consequently the object of our aversion bad.' Therefore there is no absolute good or evil; there are as many states of good and evil as there are men, since 'it is according to his emotion that everyone judges or deems what is good, bad, better, worse, best or worst' (ibid. 127). He further discusses the nature of these normative abstractions such as good and bad and order and disorder by returning the root of all of these judgements to man's folly in considering himself the end of creation and that everything is created for him. Consequently, man, according to the effect of things on him and the extent of their benefit or harm to his person, classifies them and labels them with different epithets (see ibid. 61). Spinoza analyses the effect of order and disorder on the mind as an example of these abstractions. Those who are unaware of the true nature of things, he says, are 'firmly convinced that there is order in things'

(ibid. 60). The root of their mistake lies in the effect of the things thus arranged in being easier for the mind to picture or remember (see ibid. 61). He concludes that the effect is only related to our imagination and has nothing to do with Nature or the place of things in Nature. In other words there is no such order or disorder in existence and these at best are only 'figments of the human imagination.'

Shelley, too, sees that there is nothing evil in Nature: nothing is good or bad in itself. Although George Santanaya is correct in underlining the similarity between Shelley and Spinoza, stating that 'if Shelley had had time to read Spinoza'--which actually he had--'he would have found himself largely in sympathy [with him]', he is nonetheless wrong in suggesting that he would have learned from the latter that 'nothing is evil in itself, and that what is evil in itself is not due to any accident in creation, nor to groundless malice in man' ('Shelley' 170-71). Shelley already denies the existentiality of the dichotomy of Good and Evil. It is we who according to our mode of thinking term this as good and that as bad. He explains: 'we are taught by the doctrine of Necessity that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our peculiar mode of being' ('Necessity' 112). He also makes his judgement of things on the basis of the pleasure and pain they instigate in the mind. Nothing is good or bad insofar as it is considered apart from either of these two emotions. In 'A Refutation of Deism', after considering the natural phenomena which now and then afflict man in his life, he states that 'all this is abstractedly neither good nor evil, because good and evil are words employed to designate that peculiar state of our own perceptions resulting from the encounter of any object calculated to produce pleasure or pain. Exclude the idea of relation, and the words "good" and "evil" are deprived of import' (134). His definition of good and evil, on the other hand, is clearly Spinozistic. In 'A Treatise on Morals' he argues, 'we know that we are susceptible of receiving painful or pleasurable impressions of greater or less intensity and duration. That is called good which produces pleasure; that is called evil which produces pain' (187). Shelley further follows Spinoza's example of order

and disorder to propound the relativistic nature of these abstractions. He observes that 'order and disorder are no more than modifications of our own perceptions of the relations which subsist between ourselves and external objects' ('Refutation of Deism' 134). He relates these terms to the concepts of pleasure and pain--the only emotions beside desire which Spinoza believes to exist--and their impact on our body: 'order and disorder are expressions denoting our perceptions of what is injurious or beneficial to ourselves' (ibid.). He, too, thinks that the root of all these abstract norms returns to man in considering himself the centre of existence and its end. He points out that 'it requires, indeed, a mind considerably tinctured with science and enlarged by cultivation to contemplate itself, not as the centre and model of the Universe, but as one of the infinitely various multitude of beings of which it is actually composed' (ibid. 135).

Evil, however, has its place in man's existence. Shelley thinks its root lies in the 'self' and Spinoza thinks it exists in passive emotions and in inadequate ideas. It is very evident that, in some points at least, Spinoza's 'passive emotions' come very close to Shelley's conception of the 'self'. Both of these evils work in separating man from other men and driving him to a fragmentary outlook and disintegration. Spinoza thinks that man's virtue is to 'love himself ' and to try to 'preserve his own being' (*Ethics* 164). 'No virtue,' he argues, 'can be conceived as prior to this one, namely, the conatus to preserve oneself' (ibid. 166). But this self-preservation, it should be noted, is far from any connotation of self-love or selfhood in its negative sense. Inasmuch as man is acting according to his Nature he is in agreement with other minds and other men. In this case all minds and bodies will act as 'one mind and one body' (ibid. 164). From Spinoza's point of view only men living according to the precepts of reason and their own nature will be capable of the utmost disinterestedness and 'seek nothing for themselves that they would not desire for the rest of mankind; and so are just, faithful and honourable' (ibid. 164). We see that Spinoza begins with the love of the self and

self-preservation but moves towards love for others and disinterestedness in thought and action.

Spinoza bases his further views on good and evil in *The Ethics* on the principle of agreement and disagreement in nature: 'in so far as a thing is in agreement with our nature, to that extent it is necessarily good' (169). Evil, then, one would consequently conclude, lies in those things which separate man from others. What stands between man and his agreement with others, Spinoza believes, are the passive emotions: 'In so far as men are subject to passive emotions, to that extent they cannot be said to agree in nature' (ibid. 170). 'Men,' he elaborates, 'can differ in nature in so far as they are assailed by emotions that are passive, and to that extent one and the same man, too, is variable and inconstant' (ibid.). Consequently, he traces the root of all evil and discord back to these passive emotions. 'In so far as men,' he concludes, 'are assailed by emotions that are passive, they can be contrary to one another' (ibid.).

But what are the passive emotions? To answer this, first, we have to know Spinoza's definition of emotion itself. He defines emotion as the 'idea of an affection of the body' (ibid. 204). The affection of the body, on the other hand, is the effect of external causes as well as internal drives on the body. The mind, Spinoza asserts, has no knowledge of either its body or the external things unless through these affections (see ibid. 83).

The mind, generally speaking, cannot have a clear idea and adequate knowledge of the affections of its body (see ibid. 81-84). Consequently, it has only a confused knowledge of itself, its body, and external things, and this is inasmuch as it 'perceives things from the common order of nature; that is, whenever it is determined externally' (ibid. 84) or in Shelley's words it is assailed by the 'everlasting universe of things' ('Mont Blanc' 1). In this case the mind will remain passive and determined from outside. Spinoza comments that 'we are passive in so far as we are a part of Nature

which cannot be conceived independently of other parts' (*Ethics* 156). This Spinoza calls the first kind of knowledge or imagination which is marked by passive emotions and is the 'only cause of falsity' (ibid. 91). The mind, however, can be determined internally where it 'proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things' (ibid. 90).[18] In other words, it can know things either by their causes or their essence. This is the third kind of knowledge according to Spinoza which he calls 'intuitive knowledge' and of which he says that the 'highest virtue of the mind is to know God, that is, to understand things by the third kind of knowledge' (ibid. 215).

If we overlook the difference in words and language, which were always inefficient media for both Spinoza and Shelley, we will see that Spinoza's conception of 'intuitive knowledge' is very close to Shelley's 'imagination'. Shelley often speaks of the distinction between intellect and imagination which correspond respectively to the first and third kinds of knowledge. The differentiation he makes between the two is most evident in 'Mont Blanc' where he discusses the relationship and interchange between the mind and the universe.

The mind, in the first kind of knowledge, is invaded by the vast stream of the 'everlasting universe of things' ('Mont Blanc' 1). The activity of the mind in terms of adding or attributing anything is reduced to the minimum, and in contrast to the 'rapid waves' of the external world, the effect of the mind is that of a 'feeble brook' while its sound is lost in the leaping of the waterfalls and the contending winds and the sound of the vast river of things which 'ceaselessly bursts and raves' (ibid. 11). The mind, thus, is overwhelmed and directed in its activity by the external world. While man is so determined externally, the mind in its interaction with the world passively

> ...renders and receives fast influencings,
> Holding an unremitting interchange

> With the clear universe of things around....
> ('Mont Blanc' 38-40)

The mind resumes its activity, the third kind of knowledge in Spinoza's division, only when it returns to the 'cave of the witch poesy', or imagination. Here it works on the influx of sense perception to find the true essence of things and their causes. It begins

> Seeking among the shadows that pass by,
> Ghost of all things that are, some shades of thee,
> Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
> From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!
> ('Mont Blanc' 45-48)

The mind in this quest is now determined not externally but internally. It comes to the knowledge of things intuitively and through the work of imagination.

It should be emphasised, however, that here Shelley is not speaking of an active intellect but an active imagination. Throughout his poems Shelley hints at the fact that knowledge, or intuitive knowledge in Spinoza's terms, lies in passiveness: it is the result of unaccounted for visitations 'arising unforeseen and departing unbidden' ('Defence of Poetry' 504). But it is given in return to a willed passiveness, or to a voluntary abandonment of external search.[19] Thus, imagination for Shelley is active in the sense that it resists external 'influencings' and exercise its authority as a source of emanation which overfloods the external and recreates the objects.

In the fourth paragraph, Shelley pictures Good and Evil side by side, again, both reflected in the invasion of the external world and the outflow and emanation of the mind. Evil is reflected in the passiveness of the mind and its immersion in the rapid flow of the 'universe of things'. The 'glaciers' from the point of view of Shelley represent the presence of Evil in Nature. In his letter to Peacock, describing the scenery of his visit to 'Chamouni' where the idea of the poem was conceived, alluding to Peacock's conception of Ahriman and his supremacy over the world, he writes,

'these deadly glaciers at once the proofs & the symbols of his reign' (*Letters* 1: 499).

Having this image of Evil in mind he says:

> The glaciers creep
> Like snakes that watch their pray, from their far fountains,
> Slow rolling on....
> ('Mont Blanc' 100-102)

The image of 'glaciers' and 'snakes' besides the verbs 'creep' and 'rolling on' depict the presence of Evil dormant in the invasion and the encroachment of the external world on the passive mind. While things creep and roll on the mind, the mind will remain passive and susceptible to their influencings. Evil renders the world a 'city of death', yet

> ...not a city, but a flood of ruin
> Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
> Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
> Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
> Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
> From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
> The limits of the dead and living world,
> Never to be reclaimed.
> ('Mont Blanc' 107-114)

Thus, man in the path of this stormy invasion is not immune from the subsequent Evil. To the extent that the external world rushes forward, the internal world of the mind recedes backward. The activity of the outer world is due to the passiveness of the inner world of the mind:

> The race
> Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
> Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
> And their place is not known....
> ('Mont Blanc' 117-120)

Nothing can stop Evil while the mind is determined externally. The recession of Evil from the world comes in the wake of the emancipation of the mind from the fetters of the external world and its further activity. If we take the image of the cave as

representing the human mind, a common image in Shelley's writing, the predominance of evil comes to an end when the caves and chasms begin to overflow with the 'rushing torrent' that 'from those secret chasms in tumult welling/ Meet in the vale' ('Mont Blanc' 122-23).[20]

The devastating glaciers and the 'perpetual stream' take shape and order in the Vale and instead of ruin and fear they change into 'one majestic River' which becomes the life and 'blood of distant lands'. Instead of the random and chaotic invasion of the 'everlasting universe of things' and the sense of separation and fragmentation between the mind and the external world, it becomes the 'one majestic River' that

> Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
> Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.
>
> ('Mont Blanc' 125-26)

One thing that both Spinoza and Shelley constantly deny is the validity of attributing Evil to human Nature. There is nothing bad or evil in itself, and especially in man who is capable of comprehending God. Spinoza connects man's Nature to the Nature of God, saying, 'he who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his emotions loves God, and the more so the more he understands himself and his emotions' (*Ethics* 210). Thinking of man as a part of God's Nature, clearly man cannot be evil in Nature. We have, then, to trace the root of evil somewhere else, that is in things external to man and not within him. Spinoza explicitly states that 'nothing evil can befall a man except from external causes' (ibid. 196).

Shelley is no less persistent in removing any trace of evil from human nature. He denies that there is anything evil in man's nature that can drive him to evil and corruption. 'I think,' Shelley says, 'those people then are silly, and cannot see one inch beyond their noses, who say that human Nature is deprived' ('Address to the Irish People' 52). Taking the word 'self' in its positive meaning representing the nature of

man, he writes in his letter to Mary Godwin on 28 October 1814, 'all real knowledge may be comprised in the maxim γνῶθι σεαυτον (know thyself) with infinitely more justice than in its narrow & common application' (*Letters* 1: 414). In her note on Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* Mary herself writes: 'The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was, that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled' (*Works* 2: 269). Although her claim that 'Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none' has to be taken with caution, she is nevertheless right in the following statement:

> That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all, even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity. A victim full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. (ibid.)

Then, what is evil in the nature of man? Shelley answers: only a baseless apology for the exploiter and the oppressor to further suppress human kind under this pretext:

> Man's evil nature, that apology
> Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up
> For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood
> Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
> (*Queen Mab* IV.76-79)

In his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 2 January 1812 Shelley speaks of his agreement with Southey as regards the purity of human nature and that the origin of vice and evil should be found rather in political institutions. He writes, 'Southey is no believer in original sin: he thinks that which appears to be a taint of our nature is in effect the result of unnatural political institutions--there we agree--he thinks the prejudices of education and the sinister influence of political institutions adequate to account for all the Specimens of vice which have fallen within his observation' (*Letters* 1: 216).

Shelley attributes evil, like Spinoza, to external forces and causes; not to man as man but man as king, priest, and statesman:

> From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
> Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,
> Whose grandeur his debasement.
> *(Queen Mab* IV.80-82)

Conceptions such as the idea of Original Sin are totally rejected by Shelley. He echoes Holbach in his belief that 'there cannot well exist a wilder or a stranger system of morals, than that of the theologians, who attribute all moral evil to an original sin; and all moral good to the pardon of it' (*System of Nature* 360). He also agrees with him that evil lurks in education rather than in human Nature. Whatever evil befalls man, he further assumes, is rooted in superstition and above all in the false teaching of religion:

> Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man
> Inherits vice and misery, when force
> And falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe,
> Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good.
> *(Queen Mab* IV.117-120)

His reason for denying this false allegation of the corruption of human nature is based more on a conceived analogy that it is quite unnatural that the 'Spirit of Nature' which has 'formed this world so beautiful,' and apportioned joy and happiness to all beings, and 'filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust/ With spirit, thought, and love' should have

> ...on Man alone,
> Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
> Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
> Blasted with withering curses; placed afar
> The meteor--happiness, that shuns his grasp,
> But serving on the frightful gulf to glare,
> Rent wide beneath his footsteps?
> *(Queen Mab* IV.97-103)

Once ignorance is uprooted and the impression of external causes is held at a minimum, Evil will vanish, since it is not a positive entity and has no existence of its own. Shelley makes a distinction, therefore, between Evil as an ontological entity hidden either in or out of human nature, and evil caused by certain social or doctrinal conditions. While denying the existence of the former, he strongly believes in the existence of the latter and wages a continuous war not against Evil but the causes of evil:

> Let the axe
> Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall;
> And where its venomed exhalations spread
> Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay
> Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones
> Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast,
> A garden shall arise, in loveliness
> Surpassing fabled Eden.
> (*Queen Mab* IV.82-89)

To return to our subject--the mind while it is determined externally remains passive and will be affected by passive emotions. The one thing to do is to curb or control these emotions.

Emotions, however, cannot be controlled by reason or intellect. The mind has to combat them with a weapon of the same nature, that is, with other emotions. An emotion, Spinoza believes, 'cannot be checked or destroyed except by a contrary emotion which is stronger than the emotion which is to be checked' (*Ethics* 158).[21] He further states that a 'passive emotion ceases to be a passive emotion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it' (ibid. 204).

Shelley has this notion of activity and adequacy of ideas in mind when he thinks of virtue as operating only in minds which are active: 'when a human being is the active instrument of generating or diffusing happiness, the principle through which it is most effectually instrumental to that purpose is called virtue' ('Treatise on Moral' 187). Like

Spinoza, Shelley, thinks of evil as that agent of disagreement and discord which stands between man and others. For him this evil agent is nothing other than the self in its conventional sense, and virtue, therefore, consists in liberating the mind from the dominance of the self. In his letter to Hogg on 1 January 1811 he says, 'I am sick to Death at the name of *self* (*Letters* 1: 34). He states that the 'essence of virtue is disinterestedness' ('Association of Philanthropists' 66), and in his letter to Elizabeth Hitchener on 2 January 1812 he writes, '[b]earing in mind that disinterestedness is the essence of virtuous motive, any dogmas militating with this principle are to be rejected' (1: 216-17). In his 'Defence of Poetry' he attributes the misfortune and misery of man despite the advancement he has made in science and 'mechanical art' to the 'self' which he thinks of as the 'Mammon of the world' (503). Love, according to Shelley, is effective only because it works through disinterestedness. 'Love,' he says, 'possesses so extraordinary a power over the human heart, only because disinterestedness is united with the Natural propensities... according to the elementary principles of mind man is capable of desiring and pursuing good for its own sake' ('Treatise on Morals' 189). This is what both Spinoza and Shelley call virtue or blessedness.[22]

In practice, Necessity has the same consequences in the two systems of Shelley and Spinoza. Far from the general belief of turning man into an ineffective instrument in the hand of destiny, Necessity works by curbing the excessive emotion and in moving man to freedom and nobility in manner and character. The first thing it does is to remove all emotions of hatred and contempt. Shelley believes that a 'Necessitarian is inconsequent to his own principles, if he indulges in hatred or contempt' ('Necessity' 111). The reason is that such a person, looking 'with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes' (ibid.), is aware of the chain of causes and effects that leads to the emergence of a particular thing or action.

Necessity becomes the basis of Shelley's diagnosis of evil, for whom consequently the root lies not in man's inborn tendency or will to do evil but in the chain of causes and circumstances that determine his actions and thought. *Frankenstein* is a good example of what Shelley intends by the treatment of evil through its causes and not its apparent agent or effects. In his Review of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1817) he writes, 'nor are the crimes and malevolence of the single Being, though indeed withering and tremendous, the offspring of any unaccountable propensity to evil, but flow irresistibly from certain causes fully adequate to their production. They are children, as it were, of Necessity and Human Nature' (307).

Shelley, thus, makes a distinction between man and his conduct, and finds that although the latter appears unacceptable and contemptible at times, the former, considered solely as a being, nevertheless, is outwith praise or blame.

Spinoza, like Shelley, liberates man from blame for his actions. For him 'since no one does any thing except according to the predetermined order of nature, that is, according to God's eternal guidance and decree, it follows that no one chooses any manner of living for himself, nor does anything, except by the special calling of God, who has chosen him before others for this work, or for this manner of living' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 25). Spinoza divides beings into those which appear to man as free and those which are not. A free being for him is that which, regardless of any cause or influence, has to be considered in itself. A constrained thing, on the other hand, is that which is perceived in its relation with other things (as its direct or indirect causes: see *Ethics* 132, 131). Having said that he argues that 'love and hatred towards a thing that we think of as free must both be greater, other conditions being equal, than towards a thing subject to necessity' (ibid. 131-32). On the other hand he says that there is nothing free in itself and with the exception of God all are constrained in their being and action (see ibid. 44). Therefore, in a necessitarian system like Spinoza's there is no place for praise or blame since there is nothing free

that could be counted as the only cause of what it is or what it does. Necessity, on the other hand, diminishes the passive emotions and adds to the activity of the mind (Shelley's imagination or Spinoza's intuitive knowledge). He comments that '[i]n so far as the mind understands all things as governed by necessity, to that extent it has greater power over emotions, i.e. it is less passive in respect of them' (ibid. 205).

Spinoza even excludes man from all notions of sin or evil. Believers in sin, he argues, 'think man himself, and not God, is the cause of his sins and evil. But... this cannot be, unless we are compelled to maintain that man is also a cause of himself' (*Spinoza Reader* 56) which to him is quite absurd.

However, this does not mean that all men under Necessity will be equal, nor that the wicked will be the same as the righteous. It is true that all actions arise from a chain of inevitable causes, and no man can act against the determination of Necessity, and, therefore, none could be blamed for what he does or what he is; yet, despite all this all men will not necessarily enjoy the same state of perfection. Man's virtue will remain proportionate to his knowledge of things, the degree of his control of passive emotions, and the extent of the activity of his mind. Thus, though Spinoza and Shelley deny any exterior reward to man's action, they still think of reward as virtue itself. In fact, they retain the conception of reward for action but imply that it resides in the action itself rather than its outcome. Spinoza writes: 'I do not bring in the notion of God as judge, and so my evaluation of actions turns on the quality of the actions, not on the potency of the doer, and the reward that follows from the action does so by the same necessity as it follows from the Nature of a triangle' (*Letters* 152). Finally, he concludes that the 'highest reward of the divine law is the law itself, namely, to know God and to love him from true freedom and with a whole and constant heart' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 30).

Therefore, in this system, despite the Necessity that compels men in their thought and action we still have differentiation in the degree of perfection and consequently different states of felicity that people may attain. Spinoza says, 'I deny that... all men ought to be blessed; for men may be excusable, but nevertheless be without blessedness, and afflicted in many ways' (*Letters* 347). He further elaborates on this:

> ... it is indeed true that the wicked express God's will in their own way, but they are not for that reason at all comparable with the good; for the more perfection a thing has, the more it participates in Deity, and the more it expresses God's perfection... Indeed, the wicked, not knowing God, are but an instrument in the hands of the Master, serving unconsciously and being used up in that service, whereas the good serve consciously, and in serving become more perfect. (ibid. 135)

As early as 1809, Shelley expresses a compatible conception of reward and punishment. In a footnote to a line in his poem 'A Dialogue', based on the necessity and the inevitability of all action, he denies any consequences exterior to the action itself:

> What thinkest thou will wait thee? A Spirit of Love
> That will hail thy blest advent to mansions above.
> (25-26)

In a footnote to the first line he says:

> The author begs to be understood by this expression neither to mean the Creator of the Universe, nor the Christian Deity.--When this little poem was written the line stood thus: "What waits for the good?" but he has altered it on transcription, because however his feelings may love to linger on a future state of Happiness, neither justice, reason, nor passion can reconcile to his belief that the crimes of this life, equally necessary and inevitable as its virtues, should be punished in another. (*Poems of Shelley* 164)

Then he adds four lines from his poem *Queen Mab*:

> Earth in itself
> Contains at once the evil & the cure
> And all sufficing Nature can chastize
> Those who transgress her law.
> (ibid.)

The idea is not far removed from Swedenborg who, too, thinks of reward as the action itself. What he understands by the future life is the reflection of man's gaining in this life. In other words, it is man who is the maker of his heaven or hell.[23] Shelley likewise believes that 'the Nature of a narrow and malevolent spirit is so essentially incompatible with happiness as to render it inaccessible even to the influencings of the benignant God. All that his own perverse propensities will permit him to receive, that God abundantly pours forth upon him' ('On Christianity' 204).

Having this conception of reward and retribution in mind, Shelley through the madman in *Julian and Maddalo* says:

> Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
> The work of their own hearts and that must be
> Our chastisement or recompense....
>   (482-84)

Another corollary is that man's disapproval of Evil is not decreased in the least by Necessity. Shelley believes that 'the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice' ('Necessity' 111). In his letter to John Williams on 6 March 1813 he says, '[i]n justice to the good, I, whilst I pity the bad I find, I am still obliged to disapprove' (*Letters* 1: 358). In line with Necessity, man, even, can work to accelerate the movement towards perfection or delay it. He writes in another letter: 'It is possible to festinate or retard the progress of human perfectibility' (ibid. 1: 276). Thus in a Necessitarian system man's responsibility for his destiny, and the well-being of others is increased and not diminished.

Paradoxically, thus, Necessity ends in man's sense of emancipation from coercive powers and despotism. Shelley's early poem 'The Voyage' has the theme that no-one who is a believer in Necessity would submit to tyranny and superstition :

> Who that had seen the soul of Nature work--
> Blind, changeless and eternal in her paths--
> Would shut his eyes and ears, quaking before
> The bubble of a Bigot's blasphemy?
>   (108-111)

In a footnote to the first two lines which according to Cameron are Shelley's first reference to Necessity (see *Esdaile Notebook* 234), the poet thinks of the doctrine as not only the cause of candour and generosity in man's character but also the way to freedom. He says:

> It is remarkable that few are more experimentally convinced of the doctrine of necessity than old sailors, who have seen much and various service. The peculiarly engaging and frank generosity of seafaring men probably is an effect of this cause. Those employed in small and ill equipped trading vessels seem to possess this generosity in a purer degree than those of a King's ship. The habits of subjection and coercion imbued into the latter may suffice to explain the cause of the difference. (*Esdaile Notebook* 101)

Spinoza enumerates the ethical and social vantage points of Necessity, above all, in teaching the 'manner in which citizens should be governed and led; namely, not so as to be slaves, but so as to do freely what is best' (*Ethics* 100).

The ultimate destiny of man and beings that comes about through Necessity is one of prosperity and well-being. It is on the basis of this prediction that Shelley expresses his optimism and speaks of the time when evil which is nothing to him but the 'self' will fall and selfishness will be replaced by love for others and disinterestedness in motives and actions. This point had become one of the main themes of his poetry even as early as 1809. In his poem 'I will kneel at thine altar' he says:

> But the Avenger arises, the throne
> Of selfishness totters, its groan
> Shakes the nations.--It falls; Love seizes the sway,
> The sceptre it bears unresisted away.
>   (33-36)

He reiterates the same conception later in *Queen Mab*, which has the fall of the self and the rise of love and virtue as its dominant theme:

> Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
> The fairest feelings of the opening heart,
> Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil
> Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love....
> (V.16-19)

Despite his occasional despair at the dominance of Evil in the world, Shelley, nevertheless, expresses his optimism regarding the course of human development and the approaching happiness of human beings. In fact, the picture which he gives of the continuous struggle of Good and Evil, and his advocacy of Reform and even Revolution are clear signs of the possibility of the enhancement and development in the state of Good in the world. In the preface to *The Revolt of Islam* he writes, 'mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change' (*Poems and Prose* 55). Selfhood as the main cause of Evil is nothing positive or permanent. He optimistically announces that

> ...hoary-headed selfishness has felt
> Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
> A brighter morn awaits the human day,
> When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
> Shall be a commerce of good words and works....
> (*Queen Mab* V.249-53)

Man's salvation will come, according to Shelley, when he becomes conscious of his passiveness in the hand of Necessity. He will, then, remove the self from him and consequently will know who is the real cause of his thought and action:

> Man, like these passive things,
> Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
> Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
> Which time is fast maturing,
> Will swiftly, surely come;
> And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest,
> Will be without a flaw
> Marring its perfect symmetry.
> (*Queen Mab* III.233-40)

From the point of view of Spinoza, apocalypse is the time when man can check his passive emotions--the determination of the mind externally or the perception of things as they are presented in the their common natural order--and when he achieves the utmost activity of the mind. It is the time when men return to their Nature. Such a time, according to Spinoza, will be marked by harmony and the absence of any discord. Shelley refers precisely to this concept of harmony and of solidarity in the apocalyptic era when in his letter he addresses Lord Ellenborough:

> The time is rapidly approaching, I hope, that you, my Lord, may live to behold its arrival, when the Mahometan, the Jew, the Christian, the Deist, and the Atheist will live together in one community, equally sharing the benefits which arise from its association, and united in the bonds of charity and brotherly love. (80)

The ultimate defeat of tyranny and falsehood and the triumph of love and justice are not unlinked to Shelley's conception of Good and Evil, the former being essential and enduring while the latter is accidental and has no essence. In his early poem 'Falsehood and Vice' he envisages Falsehood, which for Shelley certainly stands for religion and superstition, speaking to Vice, which is the embodiment of political tyranny, after it has imprisoned and injured the innocent Truth:

> I dread that blood!--No more--this day
> Is ours, though her eternal ray
> Must shine upon our grave.
> (30-32)

It is on the basis of this view that Shelley predicts the approach of that 'consummating hour', the big social and political upheaval that will inevitably and necessarily happen one day. In his poem 'The Crisis' he foresees the egalitarian society which will be governed by love and virtue:

> ... the consummating hour
> Dreadfully, sweetly, swiftly is arriving
> When light from Darkness, peace from desolation,
> Bursts unresisted,--

> Then mid the gloom of doubt and fear and anguish
> The votaries of virtue may raise their eyes to Heaven,
> And confident watch till the renovating day-star
> Gild the horizon.
>   (13-20)

In *Queen Mab* Shelley later reiterates this theme of renovation caused by the 'consummating hour' when man necessarily will be 'without flaw' (III.239) and his time will be of 'endless peace' (III.235). In an earlier poem, 'To Liberty', he also predicts that:

> The pyramids shall fall...
> And monarchs! so shall ye,
> Thrones shall rust in the hall
> Of forgotten royalty,
> Whilst Virtue, Truth and Peace shall arise
> And a Paradise on Earth
> From your fall shall date its birth,
> And human life shall seem
> Like a short and happy dream
> Ere we wake in the daybeam of the skies.
>   (41-50)

Based on this trend of development he can predict with certainty the future fall of Evil represented in the oppressive and deluding agents of society, above all, in tyrants and priests. He reassures the reader:

> Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
> Or the priests of the bloody faith;
> They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
> Whose waves they have tainted with death:
> It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
> Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
> And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
> Like wrecks, in the surge of eternity.
>   (*Rosalind and Helen* 894-901)

Shelley describes the apocalypse, however, not as a return to one's own nature, as Spinoza does, but as coming out of one's accustomed nature. He believes that the 'great secret of morals is Love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own'

('Defence of Poetry' 487). He often associates with this time the change in Nature and natural tendencies. He speaks of beasts leaving aside their savagery, kings feeling no superiority, and bane and nightshades having no poisonous effect. One dominant picture expressing this apocalyptic view is the biblical image of the reconciliation of the prey and predator:

> The lion now forgets to thirst the blood:
> There might you see him sporting in the sun
> Beside the dreadless kid....
> (*Queen Mab* VIII.124-26)[24]

Another corollary to Necessity is the refutation of fortune and causally unexplained phenomena such as miracles. Spinoza denies the existence of any unaccountable accidents like fortune. All that helps man in preserving himself is directed by God either through internal or external causes. If man is the sufficient cause of his self preservation he is aware then of the aid of God through internal causes. Sometimes, however, he is dependent in his self-preservation on external causes, of which he could be unaware (see *Theological-Political Treatise* 25). On the basis of this dichotomy, Spinoza gives his definition of fortune as 'God's guidance, insofar as it directs human affairs through external and unforeseen causes' (ibid.). On miracles he expresses a similar view: 'nothing happens in nature which does not follow from its laws, that its laws extend to all things conceived by the divine intellect itself, and finally, that nature maintains a fixed and immutable order--it clearly follows that the term "miracle" cannot be understood except in relation to men's opinions, and means nothing but a work whose natural cause we cannot explain by the example of another customary thing' (ibid. 36).

Shelley's denial of miracles is well known too. In many of his poems and prose Essays, especially in the 'A Refutation of Deism', his notes on *Queen Mab*, and 'A Refutation of the Christian Religion' he discredits the idea. Generally he thinks the

logic behind the belief in miracles is that 'nobody but God can do what I do' ('Fragment on Miracles' 143) which is absurd. Miracles, he thinks, like all other phenomena, 'prove no more than the existence of causes precisely adequate to their production' ('Refutation of Christian Religion' 142). On what appear as events with no Natural links or phenomenal causes, he further observes: 'it is a strange presumption to attribute them to the agency of the omnipotent God- unless in as much as every event is' (ibid.).

IX. Holbach and Mechanical Necessity

On 3 June 1812 after reading Holbach, Shelley wrote to Godwin that it was a 'work of uncommon powers' (*Letters* 1: 303), and he repeats the same judgement with some qualifications in his letter to Godwin on the 29th of the same month (see ibid. 1: 316). As Baker observes, Shelley derives his doctrine of Necessity from Godwin, and one of the two books which deeply influenced Godwin's thought was 'the *Système de la Nature* of the scandalously eminent French atheist, materialist, and necessitarian, Baron Holbach' (*Shelley's Major Poetry* 33). Holbach, according to Cameron, was influential in developing the idea of Necessity in Shelley, as he was 'the only materialist who had deeply influenced him' (*Shelley the Golden Years* 156). He also observes that Shelley supported Holbach's 'analysis of the origin of religion' (ibid. 62), and agreed with him on the nature of the mind (see ibid. 151).

Although Holbach's *System of Nature* was read by Shelley and had a certain impact on him, its effect was not long lasting, for materialism could not be in line with Shelley's immaterialism.[25] Therefore, Shelley's conception of Necessity while he was under the influence of Holbach should be differentiated from his conception while he was influenced by Hume and Spinoza. Necessity in materialism is mechanical and significantly different from the pantheistic conception of Necessity expounded by

Spinoza and Shelley. Moreover, systems based on materialism are reductionist whereas Shelley's and Spinoza's are unitive. There are nevertheless certain similarities between the two systems.

Necessity in man's action, Holbach believes, arises from his drive to self-preservation. He thinks man 'is not a free agent, in any one instant of his life; he is necessarily, guided in each step by those advantages, whether real or fictitious, that he attaches to the objects by which his passion are roused' (*System of Nature* 343).

Necessity, on the other hand, is the 'constant and infallible connection of causes, with their effects,' says Holbach (ibid. 89). And because 'cause always produces effect' (ibid. 88) and 'there can be no effect without cause' then 'every thing we see is necessary; that it cannot be otherwise than it is; that all the beings we behold, as well as those which escape our sight, act by certain and invariable laws' (ibid. 90).

The points of divergence between the two systems, however, are more conspicuous. In Holbach there is no place for that dominating unity which we see in Spinoza or Shelley. He thinks of the universe as a 'vast assemblage of every thing that exists' (ibid. 26). He bases his system of Necessity on this mechanistic view of Nature: the 'whole offers to our contemplation nothing but an immense, an uninterrupted succession of causes and effects' (ibid.). Man in this huge construction is compelled and insignificant. He is 'the work of Nature.--He exists in Nature.--He is submitted to her laws.--He cannot deliver himself from them.--He cannot step beyond them even in thought. It is in vain his mind would spring forward beyond the visible world: an imperious necessity ever compels his return- for a being formed by Nature, who is circumscribed by her laws, there exists nothing beyond the great whole of which he experiences the influence' (ibid. 9-10). Necessity, in this understanding, is the bonds and fetters of man's imprisonment in Nature.

For Holbach the two levels of the moral and physical, unlike Spinoza who thought of them both as two dimensions of one being, God or Nature, are both physical: 'the distinction which has been so often made between the *physical* and the *moral* man is evidently an abuse of terms. Man is a being purely physical: the moral man is nothing more than this physical being considered under a certain point of view, that is to say, with relation to some of his modes of action, arising out of his particular organisation' (ibid. 11). Man, then, is under this strict physical Necessity. Holbach further argues that 'all the systems, all the affections, all the opinions, whether true or false, which man forms to himself, are to be attributed to his physical power; are to be ascribed to his material senses' (ibid. 317).

Consequently, physical calamities and moral evil become one and the same thing: 'Nature follows general and necessary laws in all her operations; physical calamity and moral evil are not to be ascribed to her want of kindness, but to the necessity of things. Physical calamity is the derangement produced in man's organs, by physical causes which he sees act: moral evil is the derangement produced in him by physical causes, of which the action, is to him secret' (ibid. 419).

Shelley's conception of Necessity is not of this kind but is live and organic. Necessity rules the world as a Soul rules a Body or a Spirit the Universe. For Spinoza the rules of Nature are the rules and decrees of God: 'the universal laws of nature, according to which all things happen and are determined are nothing but the eternal decrees of God, which always involve eternal truth and necessity. Therefore, whether we say that all things happen according to the laws of nature, or whether we say that they are ordered according to the decree and guidance of God, we say the same thing' (*Theological-Political Treatise* 25).

X. General Assessment

In the doctrines of Necessity which have hitherto been studied we understand that they are either based on the principle of causality or on pantheistic relations between a substance and its modes. Therefore, the doctrine of Necessity in its basis rests on the assumption that there is an undeniable relationship between two entities or one entity and its modes. There is no deviation from this rigid pattern of relationship, and there is always some form of dogmatism. As Thorslev points out, necessitarianism 'must have as its first assumption the hypothesis that particular events are not unique, but rather can be generalized and therefore predicted' (*Romantic Contraries* 4). The typical example of this causal rigidity is given by Godwin:

> He who affirms that all actions are necessary, means, that, if we form a just and complete view of all the circumstances in which a living or intelligent being is placed, we shall find that he could not in any moment of his existence have acted otherwise than he has acted.... This view of things [the doctrine of necessity] presents us with an idea of the universe as connected and cemented in all its parts, nothing in the boundless progress of thing being capable of happening otherwise than it has actually happened. In the life of every human being there is a chain of causes, generated in that eternity which preceded his birth, and going on in regular procession through the whole period of his existence, in consequence of which it was impossible for him to act in any instance otherwise than he has acted. (*Political Justice* 158)

This rigid pattern of unalterable causal relationship, however, is deeply in conflict with Shelley's metaphoric perception of the world and his theory of relationships. This conflict can always be seen in Shelley's major poetry. As Stuart Sperry observes, there is a 'notable contrast within *Queen Mab* between the optimism the poem publicly espouses about the inevitable course of human progress and the darker sense of personal fatality that covertly emerges from its major episode' (*Shelley's Major Poetry* 17). Although Shelley himself says that 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' ('Necessity' 109), nonetheless he is no less a believer in human will and effort in directing the course of events and man's destination. Still neither of his ideas are outside the wide circle of Necessity. Thus paradoxically both Shelleyan Necessity and freedom are versions of 'Necessity' as he understands it.

Shelley believed in two kinds of Necessity: imaginative Necessity and intellectual or natural Necessity. In other words, he understands Necessity from two perspectives: the imaginative or the metaphoric perspective, and the causal and literal perspective. If natural Necessity is defined by the fixed relationships between cause and effect, imaginative or metaphorical Necessity does not accept any of these rigid relationships between sign and meaning, or between a metaphor and its infinite layers of meaning. Although the two necessities bear the same title, they are different in many respects. In imaginative Necessity there is no telos and no definite end in view, and therefore no predictability, whereas in natural necessity there is telos, end, and predictability. It would be a great mistake, therefore, to confuse the two and in a sweeping generalization speak of Shelley's necessitarianism. It is no less a mistake to put Shelley's 'pantheism' in question, as Santanaya does, on the ground that the poet 'did not subordinate morally the individual to the cosmos' ('Shelley' 176). He adds that Shelley

> did not surrender the authority of moral ideals in the face of physical necessity, which is properly the essence of pantheism. He did the exact opposite; so much so that the chief characteristic of his philosophy is its Promethean spirit. He maintained that the basis of moral authority was internal, diffused among all individuals; that it was the natural love of the beautiful and the good wherever it might spring, and however fate might oppose it. (ibid.)

Finally, it is a mistake to speak of Shelley's many thematic gaps or contradictions in his plays, such as the one in *Prometheus Unbound* alluded to by Tilottama Rajan. She observes that in the play the 'movement of history toward the far goal of time is seen

in linear and eschatological terms, but the historical process is also imaged as a cyclic one in which the infirm hand of Eternity may allow Jove to return again' ('Reading Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*' 196). The two necessities are so widely apart from each other that if we call the former Necessity a predictable future, there is no word to describe the latter other than absolute freedom.

It is by now clear that Shelley's original conception of the world is a metaphoric one which is perceived by and through imagination. The work of imagination as he understands it is absolutely necessary and the poet as a typical man has no power over it. In other words, imagination for Shelley is necessary, and has nothing to do with the human will. It is active only in the sense that it has the power to see things in their metaphoric state, namely it can perceive the unfolding of the infinite levels of the meaning of the metaphor, rather than the sense of wilful activity or productivity. Creation as a literary production is the very contrary: the end of imagination, namely, the end of the imaginative, necessary, activity, and in Shelley's own terms, the 'faded coal' of that activity:

> Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it: for the mind in creation is as a fading coal which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness: this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. ('Defence of Poetry' 503-4)

The 'inconstant wind' is the Hymn's awful shadow of the unseen Power of imagination which visits the world with an 'inconstant wing'. They are the uncontrolled visitations of imagination 'arising unforeseen and departing unbidden' (ibid. 504). Their 'birth and recurrence,' likewise, 'has no necessary connexion with consciousness or will' (ibid. 506). From the point of view of Shelley, therefore, we are 'not the masters of our own imaginations' ('On Christianity' 202).

Creation or action in its conventional sense, thus, according to Shelley, begins only after necessary imagination has faded. But that does not mean that we are on the threshold of abandoning Necessity and entering the domain of volition or wilful activity. Shelley never thought that man in any one of his activities is either free or the sufficient cause of his action. Therefore, what we can infer is that Shelley believes that we leave one form of Necessity for its other form. However, this does not make them of the same kind, and their difference is no less than the difference between imagination and reason as he understood them.

By leaving the world of metaphor we enter the domain of literality, in the sense of leaving the unity of sign and meaning and the endless unfolding of meaning to come to the one-sided relationship between the sign and its unique, static, and external meaning. In the former the mind has no command over the unfolding of the metaphor, whereas in the latter the relation between sign and meaning is determined by the law of causality. In other words, in imaginative Necessity, the self is dissolved in the circularity of sign and meaning, while in natural necessity it is determined by the linear movement between the sign and its one fixed meaning. In both cases there is no place for liberty and will in their conventional meaning.

The two states described in *The Triumph of Life* are evidence of these two kinds of Necessity. If the following of the many and the multitude of the Car of Life could be defined as an act of Necessity of law and Nature, the distance which the 'sacred few' take from it is an example of imaginative Necessity which acts in restoring the metaphoric perspective of man. The two groups, thus, represent two kinds of perception: one is literal and the other, metaphoric.

Shelley's understanding of natural and imaginative necessities, or Necessity and freedom, corresponds to his theories on literal and metaphoric perceptions. Necessity in the first sense of the word, he believes, is based on causality, but in the kind of

metaphoric world of which he thinks, there is no place for causal relationships, and, therefore, no room for such Necessity. In moving to the next Necessity these relationships are not discarded but replaced by interacting relationships. However, this is not freedom in the conventional sense of volition or free will. We can give it the title freedom because these relationships follow no law, and also have no telos or certain ends, for the meaning generated by these relationships is endless. In other words, the remarkable bearing of Necessity in its natural form is predictability, whereas in a system based on the metaphoric unfolding of meaning no prediction can be made or observed. In short, there is no linear movement or direction to say where the movement will lead or end.

Necessity in both its forms, in the Shelleyan system, works in a rather different way from its conventional counterpart systems. In its conventional form Necessity is caused by the predominance of one supernatural or Natural power over being which makes it act and move in a certain, predetermined way. We can call this ontological Necessity, where there is one supernatural Power rules over beings (fatalism or theological determinism), or Nature determines its components (materialistic or mechanical necessity), or one Being rules over certain measures as modes and modifications within itself (pantheistic necessity), or conscious or preconscious forces determine one's behaviour (psychological necessity). In this dichotomy of determining forces and determined beings or modes, there is always a presence and ontological entity or entities.

From the point of view of Shelley, however, ontological existence is beyond freedom and Necessity. A being beyond perception cannot then be subjected to predicates like freedom or necessity or any other predication. These conceptions are valid only where perception is possible, and perception is a linguistic affair. Therefore, Shelley's Necessity is a linguistic Necessity, that is, it has to do with the sign and its meaning. On the basis of the relationship of the sign and its meaning, the conceptions of

freedom and necessity are explicated. Once meaning is understood as fixed, one-sided, static, and, in a word, literal, then there is no escape from Necessity in its natural form. Necessity in this sense is the very linear movement which extends from the sign to its external meaning, and this line is fixed and predetermined by different factors: social, cultural, political, and many others. However, if the meaning is considered as changing, dynamic, multi-dimensional, and, in short, metaphoric, then it is nothing other than metaphoric Necessity or freedom. Freedom resides in not being restricted to one level of meaning or to linear direction.

Through this distinction Shelley argues that Necessity is a consequence of the literal perception of life and existence, while freedom is a corollary to a metaphoric, imaginative understanding of the world. This distinction converges to some extent with Kant's understanding of Necessity as residing in following the desires and the natural laws, while freedom resides in detaching one's self from one's desires and inclinations.

The metaphoric perception, however, is not constant. Shelley makes this known in representing the freedom of the 'sacred few' as only a return after experiencing the heavy chains of life, that is, it is an evanescent outlook which shifts and changes, where the barrier between the subject and object is always on the verge of appearing and disappearing. Abstracting oneself from life is only an occurrence of a moment when man is given the vision to see life not from a specific standpoint but from a shifting perspective. Therefore, from the point of view of Shelley, the two forms of necessity are interchangeable and are constantly replaced by each other. However, their replacement is not a complete circle, for there is always an improvement in the state of man's metaphoric perception. And in this, Shelley distances himself from the modernists, in his strong belief in teleology and the telos. In this regard Shelley believes in destiny, not in the sense, to use Thorslev words, of a 'universe to some extent teleologically arranged' (*Romantic Contraries* 26), but in the sense of a

constant replacement of the two kinds of Necessity and the improvement which takes place process. He believes that man has a destiny which he is moving towards, and this telos is the fulfilment of his metaphoric perception. Man, he argues, is moving in a spiral motion towards the achievement of this perception. Critics are right in speaking of Shelley's perfectibility. Whatever they mean by this term, what I understand by it is, first, there is a trend of positive change in each cycle, and, second, there is no possible completion but only perfection.

Shelley's conception of metaphoric relationships modifies his understanding of both Necessity and freedom. On the one hand, there is always the risk that each of these relations changes into a fetish and the meaning becomes reified. And this is where imaginative changes into natural Necessity. Moreover, the notion of relationship leaves no place for total freedom, as every being is determined and defined in its relationship with others. This gives meaning, then, to common destiny and a sense of shared responsibility. Shelley accepts Necessity, then, in that sense, to use Thorslev's words, 'of shared purpose and mission, of security and fellowship--with other men, with the organic world around him, and sometimes even with the stars' (ibid. 16). On the other hand, there is no pure fatalism either, as there is no rule which can determine these relationships. Nor are there any finite shapes or forms for them. There is no preordination and there is much place for chance, growth, and possibility.

Another point which distinguishes Shelley from other propounders of the doctrine of Necessity is his acceptance of Evil as a necessary component of life. Although Mary Shelley in her notes on *Prometheus Unbound* argues that 'Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none,' this could hardly be Shelley's own point of view, and to use Sperry's words, her attitude is no more than 'a misleading oversimplification' ('Necessity and the Role of the Hero' 246).

Having said that, it should be noted that, besides the conventional or pantheistic understanding of Good and Evil, Shelley has his own interpretation of these two concepts. Usually Good and Evil have an existential significance in the philosophy of his predecessors. In dualistic systems there is a sort of manicheism, in the sense that both Good and Evil exist, and both are necessary. In monistic or pantheistic systems, on the other hand, Evil is usually reduced to non-existence, while Good is the only existent. Good in such systems represents existence in its state of unity. Evil, in contrast, is diversity and separation, which ontologically is non-existent. It has only an illusory existence in the mind.

Shelley, however, believes that both Good and Evil exist as two linguistic 'entities'. Otherwise, ontological being is outwith Evil and Good. The difference between the two is determined by the kind of perception man holds. In other words, Good 'is' the metaphoric and imaginative perception, and Evil is the literal understanding of the world. Good is the state where things are considered in relation to each other, and their meaning is dynamic and endless, whereas evil is the state when the relations are replaced by ontological independent beings, and the infinite levels of meaning are reduced to one fixed and static meaning. This is why he attributes evil mainly to the self, because it is through the reification of the self that other things are reified and given an independent existence.[26]

Shelley also believes that 'it is our will/ That thus enchains us to permitted ill' (*Julian and Maddalo* 170-171). To be enchained is to lose the liberty of perceiving the multitudinous forms of meaning, and be bound to one reified significance, and most importantly to the fetish of the self. The word 'enchain' is, thus, of special significance to Shelley. His major characters are all chained in one way or another to the evil of the self. Prometheus is enchained by what he raised himself and is unable to free himself until he develops that view which makes him see all as one and thus wishes no being any harm. Cythna is enchained in the cave of her imprisonment in the self. The cave

shatters as soon as she feels the tie between herself and others, including the Nautilus and the Eagle. Laon is chained in the tower and would have perished there were it not for the benevolent old man (who can be a projection of himself relieved of the strains of selfhood). In 'Ode to the West Wind' the poet himself is chained to a 'heavy weight of hours' which is the heavy burden of the shackles of the self. And finally the 'great, the wise, the unforgotten', are chained to the Car of Life while they see life as dominated by multiplicity and diversity caused by the self.

Having said that, we have to know also that from the point of view of Shelley the self is non-existent. It is an illusory concept that divides man from others and makes him fall from the unity of relations. Beings other than man have no self, and, therefore, they are one with Nature, and know no evil. Even man, in infancy and during childhood, has no strong conception of the self, and can feel to some extent this unity of being. In his 'Ode to the West Wind' Shelley attributes this chain of Evil to the growth of the self, saying:

> If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
> If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
> A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
> The impulse of thy strength, only less free
> Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
> I were as in my boyhood, and could be
> The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
> As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
> Scarce seemed a vision, I would ne'er have striven
> As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
>
> ('Ode to the West Wind' 43-52)

Shelley, and this is another difference from the conventional Necessity, does not offer a golden static age when Good overcomes Evil and man is liberated from all the evils of the self. No matter how hard the mind tries to attain adequate ideas and liberate itself from passive emotions, and no matter to what extent we can disengage our being from the 'self' and selfhood and entertain love for others and disinterestedness in

action, Evil, from both Shelley's and Spinoza's points of view, will remain an inevitable part of our practical life.

Spinoza, who thinks of Evil as hidden in the passive emotions and in the invasion of the mind by external causes, that is, 'whenever it is determined externally' (*Ethics* 84), observes at the end of the fourth part of his *Ethics* that 'human power is very limited and is infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes, and so we do not have absolute power to adapt to our purpose things external to us' (ibid. 200). On another occasion he argues that 'it is clear that we are in many respects at the mercy of external causes and are tossed about like the waves of the sea when driven by contrary winds, unsure of the outcome and of our fate' (ibid. 140). He further states that the 'force whereby a man persists in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes' (ibid. 156). He finally concludes that 'man is necessarily always subject to passive emotions, and that he follows the common order of Nature, and obeys it, and accommodates himself to it as far as the nature of things demands' (ibid. 157).

It is, likewise, with Shelley who thinks it is extremely difficult to get rid of selfhood and self-love. 'Self,' he writes to Leigh Hunt on 15 August 1819, is 'that burr that will stick to one' (*Letters* 2: 109). At the end of *Prometheus Unbound* we see that the castles of the tyrants remain untouched and Demogorgon gives his precepts as the instruments to use against the possible return of Evil. The circle of the fight of Good and Evil, the Eagle and the Snake, is never-ending.

To sum up. Shelley did not believe that Evil is a part of the structure of the world. Life as it is and in its metaphoric mode has no evil, since evil, in Shelley's assumption, arises from withholding the continuous generation of meaning from metaphors and turning them into dead metaphors. In the original state of life there is no Evil, and evil is a subsequent result of developing a literal perception. It should be

said, however, that there is no possibility of pure metaphoric perception, as the act of perception itself turns the metaphors into iconic objects, and the metaphor once generated becomes familiar and loses its novelty and dynamism. Thus, among the three kinds of evil which are usually classified by the theologians, Shelley did not believe in metaphysical evil (the imperfection of the world compared to the absolute perfection of its creator), nor natural evil (imperfection caused by natural or physical causes), but only in moral evil, or the evil perpetrated by man's thought and action.

XI. Ibn Arabi: Phenomenal Necessity and Archetypal Freedom

Having established the parallel between Shelley and Spinoza, it is easier now to see the extent to which the same conception of Necessity is present in the system of Ibn Arabi. Although there exists only a meagre amount of scholarship on the affinity between Ibn Arabi's doctrine of 'Oneness of Being' and Spinoza's pantheistic system of philosophy, there is strong evidence which suggests the link or at least the similarity. Their pantheistic systems are extremely similar, especially regarding the oneness of being and the relation between the essence or substance and its modes or attributes. Besides, both were Spanish born or of Spanish origin, and both were interested in or have connections with the thought and philosophy of Muslim Spain.

Ibn Arabi, like Spinoza and Shelley, is a strict believer in Necessity. In fact, Necessity for him is the highest knowledge that man can attain. He believes that among the knowers 'there are none higher or more intuitive' than those who 'have grasped the mystery of the divine premeasurement' (*Fusus* 64). He displays his high regard for those who possess this knowledge of predestination by stating that 'should you meet one who possesses such knowledge you may have complete confidence in him, for he is a rare gem among the elite of the folk' (ibid. 69).

Ibn Arabi thinks that one system of Necessity is predominant over all existence. Man, as well as other beings, acts according to predetermined laws and has no will of his own. He argues that 'none proceeds by itself but by another,' and 'according to a [certain] determination' (ibid. 130). He further states that 'we are on the same Straight Path our Lord is on, our forelocks being in His grasp, nor is it possible that we should be separated from Him' (ibid. 195). In *Futuhat* he explains that God

> determined the course of all things which they cannot escape from.... Everyone of these groups is distinctly and knowingly determined by God. Nothing can be added to or detracted from them. Nor can one be changed into another. Nor created thing can acquire or labour for a place unless it is created for it. Even the very desire happens in accordance with determination. None breaks away from the course which is chalked out for it, and nothing travels except in its own groove.... Similarly, every existing thing has a path peculiar to it which cannot be trodden by any other thing spiritually or physically.... None can tread along a path except the one who treads along it. (*Futuhat* 3: 53)[27]

Necessity in Ibn Arabi's system, however, like Spinoza's and Shelley's, is neither mechanical nor imposed from outside. It is internal and has to be understood in the light of his doctrine of the 'oneness of being'. Necessity, he explains, arises from the very essence of beings. Paradoxically, man obeys the laws of Necessity which he himself mandates. To use his words: 'it is known that we are determined only through ourselves [as essences]; indeed, it is we who determine ourselves through ourselves... it is not the Reality that has done with them what is claimed, and they see that what was done with them came from themselves, for His knowledge of them is according to what they are themselves [in their eternal essences]' (*Fusus* 93). He further says that the 'contingent beings receive from the Reality only as they themselves in their [essential] states dictate.' Man, he concludes, is 'affected in accordance with what is in himself. Thus also, only he bestows good on himself and only he evil, being his own benefactor and chastiser. Therefore, let him not blame any but himself, nor praise any but himself' (ibid. 115). In this sense it is man who determines himself and not God, for only that happens to him which 'his own state demands and necessitates' (ibid. 116).

Man, thus, according to Ibn Arabi, is determined but still self-determined and constrained in his action from within, not from any thing outside him. He observes: 'There is nothing in any one from God [as other], and there is nothing in any one but what comes from his own self, however various the form' (ibid. 69). He further says, 'though the Reality be the Determiner, it is for Him only to pour existence upon you, while you remain the determinant and the determined. Therefore praise none other than yourself and blame none other than yourself' (ibid. 94).

Necessity, Ibn Arabi believes, is all-encompassing and nothing escapes its rule. 'Its truth,' he says, 'holds sway over both the Absolute and the contingent, and nothing is more perfect, powerful, and mighty by reasons of the totality of its dominion, whether direct or indirect' (ibid. 166). God, even, acts according to His Nature and 'He wills only that which is' (ibid. 94). He also acts according to his knowledge, and in this case according to what he receives and knows from beings themselves. He determines the destiny of all things, yet he does this only according to his knowledge of them which is conferred to Him through their essence. In Ibn Arabi's words, Reality 'will bestow on them only that which their latent essences contribute to Him' (ibid. 64).

In his interpretation of the verse 'Had He wished He would have guided you all' (*Quran* vi.149), which is conventionally cited as denoting the Absolute will of God and His freedom in action, Ibn Arabi gives his unorthodox exposition holding the conditionality of the sentence as hinting at an impossible situation, that is, 'it conveys the denial of a suggestion regarding the impossible' (*Fusus* 94). In other words, God cannot change man's destiny or guide all, for 'He wills only that which is' (ibid.).

So far it has been demonstrated that Spinoza and Shelley thought of will as being equal to intellect. Ibn Arabi establishes the same parallel between God's will and His knowledge. He further considers Necessity as an interrelationship between God and

beings. Beings are determined by God's will which is dependent on His knowledge. His knowledge, in turn, is dependent on what is known to Him, which are the beings themselves. He says that 'His Will is self-dependent and is an [essential] attribution dependent on His Knowledge, which is [in turn] dependent on the object of His Knowledge, which is you and your essential status. Knowledge has no effect on the object of knowledge, while what is known has an effect on knowledge, bestowing on it of itself what it is' (ibid.). His knowledge, therefore, is dependent on what is known, that is, on beings themselves.

From what is said it becomes evident that Ibn Arabi believes beings to be both free and determined; they are free in their original states as archetypes, and determined as phenomenal objects. In their phenomenal existence they are preordained and have no will of their own. However, as archetypes God's knowledge is dependent on what they confer to Him, and thus they are free and self-determined. He says:

> Decree [*qada*] is God's determination of things, which is limited to what He knows of them, in them, since His knowledge of things is dependent on what that which may be known gives to Him from what they are [eternally] in themselves [essentially]. (ibid. 165)

He extends this dichotomous distinction further to differentiate between Will and Law. Although the latter seems to be breachable and in following it man feels as if he is free and can decide for himself, the former follows a strict necessity and is inviolable. Nothing can act against the will of God, and all are constrained in its fulfilment. He says, 'every ruling carried into effect in the world today is the decision of God, since it is only God's decisions that have any effect, in reality, even if it seems to go against the outer established ruling called the Law. That is because everything that happens in the Cosmos is according to the ruling of the divine Will and not [necessarily] in accordance with rulings of established Law, even though its very establishment derives from the divine Will' (ibid. 204).

Thus, there is no necessity in the enactment of the Law. But, it is not the case with the Will. Ibn Arabi further stresses the fact that, 'indeed, nothing occurs or fails to occur in existence without the divine Will' (ibid.).

This argument leads to another form of distinction which concerns the direct and indirect command. The former he calls the *al-amr al-Takwini* or the 'existential command' and the latter *al-amr al-Taklifi* or a command through prophets. The direct command includes a necessity in its fulfilment, while the indirect command has no such necessity. 'In the context of the command of the divine Will,' he says, 'no one can ever oppose God in anything He does. That may happen only in the case of the indirect command' (ibid.). It is on this basis that Ibn Arabi differentiates between the act and its agent: 'In truth, the Will is concerned only to create the act itself and is not concerned with the agent'(ibid.).

On the basis of this distinction Ibn Arabi develops one of the important principles of his ethical system. Insofar as the Will is concerned there is no evil in existence. Moreover, no-one is to be blamed for what he does or thinks. All actions and thoughts are decreed and directed by God. Man has no role or interference here. Ethical judgements emerge when we are concerned not with the Will but the Law. Ibn Arabi explains that the fulfilment of the Will in certain cases 'may be seen as disobeying God's command, while in others it is regarded as conforming to His command, eliciting praise or blame, as the case may be' (ibid.). He further distinguishes between man and his act, and says that man is 'not blameworthy in himself, but only because of the act that proceeds from him' (ibid. 209). The act, however, he thinks in all its kinds proceeds from God, and, it therefore cannot be bad or evil in itself, but only when considered from the point of view of the Law: 'Although there is no act [in truth] but God's, some are considered worthy of blame, while others are praised. To pronounce

blame for one's own purpose is itself blameworthy in God's sight, since only that which the Law blames is truly blameworthy' (ibid.).

It is on the comprehensiveness of the Will and its precedence over Law that Ibn Arabi founds his belief in the final happiness of all. He says: 'If then the matter is as we have said, then all creatures come eventually to felicity, of whatever kind it may be' (ibid. 204). Coming to the final happiness, he believes, 'is inevitable, so that the attainment of Mercy and separation from Wrath is also inevitable. The Mercy governs everything that encounters it, according as each thing's state dictates' (ibid. 205).

Thus, in Ibn Arabi's system there is no place for abstractions such as good and bad, or praise and blame insofar as the divine will is concerned. All things are necessitated by God Who is the Absolute Existence: it is 'He Who bestows on all He has created, so that it is neither more nor less than it should be' (ibid. 107). Once we know that all beings are thus constrained, there will be no place for evil or hatred: 'All is pleasing since the individual being itself does not act, but its Lord in it' (ibid. 106). Good and Evil, as was the case with Spinoza and Shelley, are concepts which are understood from the relative pain or pleasure derived from things. Man should know that 'good and evil come to him only from himself. By good I mean what is in consonance with his aim, in harmony with his Nature and disposition, and by evil what is contrary to his aim and in conflict with his Nature and disposition' (ibid. 144).

Things in themselves, however, are neither good nor bad: Reality 'embraces all [attributes] without reference to their praiseworthiness or blameworthiness, all being either the one or the other' (ibid. 92). In the light of his theory of the oneness of existence there is no place for imperfection, perfection being existence itself. We love, he says, 'only the good in everything, which is [in reality] everything that is' (ibid. 279).

Necessity for Ibn Arabi is a way to optimism and contentment. He points out that all actions are 'pleasing because every doer or maker is pleased with what he does or makes, and bestows on his action or work all that is necessary' (ibid. 106). Like Spinoza who thinks that while we consider things to be free in their action and to be the only cause of themselves, they could be blameworthy or otherwise; but our feelings towards those which are constrained in their action and are considered in their relation to other causes are weaker, Ibn Arabi also believes that since 'it is He Who bestows on all' (ibid. 107), then all actions and all things are pleasing and perfect in themselves.

Man's nature contains no evil, as Ibn Arabi thinks that the nature of man is not separate from that of God. 'Man's consciousness of himself,' he says, 'is indeed God's consciousness of him' (ibid. 184). He, too, links the knowledge of God to the knowledge of man, saying that God 'suggests that knowledge of Him is inferred in knowledge of ourselves' (ibid. 54). 'If we witness Him', he further says, 'we witness ourselves, and when He sees us He looks on Himself' (ibid. 55).

Ibn Arabi, however, retains the place of evil and thinks it is present not in the things themselves but in the pain or pleasure that they awaken in us. He comments: 'It is not the thing itself that is to be detested, but only that which issues from it' (ibid. 278), that is, their effect on ourselves. He meditates the reason why we are averse to certain things or actions, and denying the possibility of any evil in beings, he explains that 'such an aversion may be a question of custom, Natural antipathy, law, deficiency, or something else' (ibid.).

Ibn Arabi, like Shelley, thinks that evil lies in man's ego, and he is veiled from knowing the truth because of his self (see 'Khutbat *al-Futuhat*' 148).[28] Ontologically, he assumes, man has the highest rank among beings. Because of his ego, however, man's position is reversed to that of the lowest in the chain of beings. The self, then, is

considered as the agent of will and power. Like Swedenborg he attributes the reversal of man's position to the same element of self:

> The reason that the animals of the earth and the fowls of the air are born with all this knowledge and man is not, though he is more excellent than they, is as follows. Animals live in conformity with the law of their existence, and have not been able to pervert what they derive from the spiritual world, because they are unable to think for themselves. It is otherwise with man, who possesses from the spiritual world the power of reflection; for he has perverted that power by a life contrary to order, which his reason has favoured. He must therefore be born in a state of absolute ignorance and afterwards be led back by Divine means into conformity with the order of heaven. (*Heaven and Hell* 46)

As for man's destiny and his ultimate reality Ibn Arabi, like Shelley, expresses a similar optimism on the final joy and happiness of mankind: 'all creatures come eventually to felicity, of whatever kind it may be. This is explained by the fact that the Mercy embraces all things' (ibid. 204); 'Everything designated by the Mercy is fortunate; there is, however nothing that is not so designated' (ibid. 225). In fact, 'the divine Wrath, like error, is an accidental [nonessential], all things stemming ultimately from the Mercy, which embraces all things and which has precedence' (ibid. 130).

Ibn Arabi agrees with those who believe that knowing one's self truly will lead to love of others and disinterestedness in action. A person who knows himself, as Spinoza states, will know his true nature which is essentially shared by others. He will stop, then, seeing himself separate from others. At the same time he will abstain from doing what is opposite to his nature, which is that of others, too. Ibn Arabi, too, thinks that knowledge of self will bring man to unity with others: 'when thou knowest thyself, thine egoism is taken away' (*Treatise on Unity* 6). The reason is that he will know that the 'self' is not the ego but is everything, and all things are nothing but God for 'in reality the thing is God and God is named a thing' (ibid. 3).

One interesting theory which Ibn Arabi proposes results from his extending the conception of Necessity to even the domain of religion and worship. As usual, he takes the orthodox theological terminology and interprets it according to his theories. He interprets the verse 'Your Lord has decreed that you serve only Him' (*Quran* xvii: 23) as meaning that God has already determined all forms of worship and that all religious and devotional creeds are only different ways for worshipping God. He says that the one who is aware of this necessity in devotional creeds knows that 'the distinction and multiplicity [of forms] are merely like parts of sensible form or the powers of a spiritual image' (*Fusus* 78). He concludes: 'Indeed, in every object of worship it is [in truth] God Who is worshipped' (ibid. 78).

Necessity, thus, leads to love for others and toleration of other creeds. Ibn Arabi thinks that man endowed with such knowledge 'excuses all creatures regarding what they manifest, even though they themselves make no excuse, knowing as he does that all he undergoes is from himself' (ibid. 144). Ibn Arabi attributes the prophets' restraint in dealing with their opponents to this fact. They are aware, he says, of the 'unity of the One Who acts and that which is acted upon' (ibid. 158). He believes that each had this perception in mind that the opponent 'had in no way deviated from his reality as it was in its state of essential latency and non-existence. The opponent was therefore manifest in existence just as he was in his state of latency and non-existence. In no way was he transgressing the limits of his [essential] reality, nor had he failed to fulfil his [eternal appointed] role. Calling his behaviour 'opposition' is merely of accidental import, seen thus only because of the veil that obscures the eyes of men' (ibid. 159).

Ibn Arabi's view on punishment and the divine retribution is to a great extent similar to Shelley's apocalypse. Like Shelley, he thinks of Evil as being rooted in the self which stands between man and unity. So he thinks of the final punishment of the wrongdoers as in effect removing 'naught but the veil that hides them from God' (ibid.

185). Punishment, therefore, is directed to the self. In other words, it is nothing but the fall of the self and its annihilation. [A similar view is expressed by Swedenborg who believes that Heaven to the Angels is 'to be withheld from their selfhood' (*Heaven and Hell* 72)]. Ibn Arabi speaks more directly of the punishment of the wrongdoers as the time when God 'purges them of their [separatist] selves' (*Fusus* 131). God, he believes, draws them to Hell which is nothing other than the 'distance they imagined [to be between them and the Reality]' (ibid.), (Ibn Arabi here plays on the etymological meaning of the word *Jahannam* or hell in Arabic which means distance and separation).

Having said that, Ibn Arabi supplies his unconventional exposition of the divine retribution. In his argument he mainly refers to the word *adhab* or pain which etymologically means 'sweetness'. Punishment, he believes, despite its associated pain in separating man from what he hitherto has been accustomed to and his disillusionment with the fetish of the self, ends in the joy of the realisation of unity and the oneness of existence. On the punishment which the wrongdoers will undergo he says that it is 'something they would delight in when they experienced it, even though it caused them pain by separating them from what was [previously] familiar to them' (*Fusus* 133). Thus, in a necessitarian system like that of Ibn Arabi, man's final destiny and ultimate state cannot be other than joy and happiness: 'since it is He [their Lord] who drives them to this abode, they [in truth] attain nearness [to Him], all distance and notion of Hell ceasing for them. Thus they attain [in reality] the blessing of nearness [to Him]... thus, they do not walk [on their Path] by themselves, but under compulsion till they reach [their] nearness [to Him]' (ibid. 131).

To sum up. Necessity is the inevitable result of Ibn Arabi's theory of 'oneness of being'. In a system where all existence is one, freedom and will are out of the question. In such a doctrine where man as an individual entity and a separate being is non-existent, we cannot say whether he is free or constrained in his action. The whole

of existence follows the rule of Necessity and nothing is excepted, not even God. He observes, however, that man is necessitated by none other than himself, and, thus, is free only to be determined by himself. Ibn Arabi resolves this paradox by stating that man is free in his archetypal form but determined in his phenomenal existence, an idea which bears a significant similarity to that of Kant and his categorical and hypothetical imperatives.

Shelley expresses a similar distinction. Therefore, it would be a mistake to speak of Shelley's acceptance or rejection of the doctrine of Necessity. Shelley did not abandon the doctrine of Necessity at any stage of his poetic life for that of Intellectual Beauty or Love, but nor did he sustain the one and the same doctrine throughout his life. He was a believer in Necessity for all of his life. But it should be noted that, although he could have begun thinking of Necessity under the influence of Holbach, Hume, Godwin, and even Spinoza, he did not stop at that. He developed another version of the doctrine, that is the metaphorical or imaginative Necessity, whose difference from the literal or hypothetical Necessity, when closely examined, is no less than the difference between freedom and Necessity in conventional terminology.

Notes to Chapter Five

[1]In a letter to Thomas Poole on 16 March 1801 Coleridge writes: 'If I do not greatly delude myself, I have not only completely extricated the notions of Time, and Space; but have overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels-- especially, the doctrine of Necessity' (*Selected Letters* 87). This statement of Coleridge in rejection of the doctrine of Necessity, however, has to be qualified. Apparently what he rejects is Necessity on the plane of the noumena, and insofar as the phenomenal is concerned he is nevertheless a believer in necessitarianism. Coleridge himself writes:

> I still find myself dissatisfied with the argument against Freedom derived from the influence of motives, *Vorstellungen*, etc.,... All that we want to prove is the possibility of Free Will, or, what is really the same, a Will. Now this Kant had unanswerably proved by showing the distinction between *phenomena* and *noumena*, and by demonstrating that Time and Space are relevant to the former only... and irrelevant to the latter, to which class the Will must belong. (quoted Lovejoy *Essays in the History of Ideas* 267)

Lovejoy in his comment on the above passage observes:

> The "Will" here is--or belongs to--the noumenal ego; the empirical ego which acts in time is not- -or has not--a Will, precisely because, as Coleridge holds, in full agreement with Kant, it is in no concrete choice or act ever free, but completely predetermined. It follows from this that Coleridge cannot be said ever to have abandoned the form of necessitarianism which he held in his Hartleian period; for that related solely to nature and to man's temporal existence. Coleridge merely supplemented this determinism with respect to the *homo phenomenon* by finding (as he thought) another kind of freedom in another kind of world. (*Essays in the History of Ideas* 267)

[2]Liberty, Locke believes, 'consists in a Power to do, or not to do; to do, or forbear doing as we *will*. This cannot be deny'd. But this seeming to comprehend only the actions of a Man consecutive to volition, it is farther enquired, whether he be at liberty to *will*, or not? and to this it has been answered, that in most cases a Man is not at Liberty to forbear the act of volition; he must exert an act of his *will*, whereby the action proposed, is made to exist, or not to exist' (*An Essay* 270).

[3]Locke observes that man in his action may bring punishment unto himself, for 'though his will be always determined by that, which is judg'd good by his Understanding, yet it excuses him not: Because, by a too hasty choice of his own making, he has imposed on himself wrong measures of good and evil; which however false and fallacious, have the same influence on all his future conduct, as if they were true and right' (*An essay* 270-71).

[4]Locke argues that 'we have *Ideas* but of two sorts of *Action*, viz. *Motion* and *Thinking*. These, in truth, though called and counted *Actions*, yet, if nearly considered, will not be found to be always perfectly so. For, if I mistake not, there are instances of both kinds, which, upon due consideration, will be found rather *Passions* than *Actions*, and consequently so far the effects barely of passive Powers in those subjects, which yet on their account are thought *Agents*. For in these instances, the substance that hath motion, or thought, receives the impression whereby it is put into that *Action* purely from without, and so acts merely by the capacity it has to receive such an impression from some external Agent; and such a *Power* is not properly an *Active Power*, but a mere passive capacity in the subject' (*An Essay* 285).

[5]In the *Enquiry* Hume also states: 'Necessity may be defined two ways, conformably to the two definitions of cause, of which it makes an essential part. It consists either in the constant conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the understanding from one object to another' (*An Enquiry* 79).

[6]Hume states that every 'object is determined by an absolute fate to a certain degree and direction of its motion, and can no more depart from that precise line in which it moves, than it can convert itself into an angel, or spirit, or any superior substance. The actions, therefore, of matter, are to be regarded as

instances of necessary actions; and whatever is, in this respect, on the same footing with matter, must be acknowledged to be necessary' (*Treatise* 2: 149).

[7]Hume observes that the 'connexion between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes' (*An Enquiry* 71).

[8]Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. In *Practical Philosophy*. Trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In other references it will be cited as *Groundwork*.

[9]In his *Critique of Practical Reason* (A 170) Kant writes: 'If we would attribute freedom to a being whose existence is determined in time, we cannot except him from the law of necessity as to all events in his existence, and consequently as to his actions also; for that would be to hand him over to blind chance.... It follows that if this were the mode in which we had also to conceive the existence of these things in themselves, freedom would have to be rejected as a vain and impossible conception.' (quoted Lovejoy 264)

[10]Kant argues that 'it is quite beyond the capacity of any human reason to explain *how* pure reason, without other incentives that might be taken from elsewhere, can be of itself practical, that is, how the mere *principle of the universal validity of all its maxims as laws* (which would admittedly be the form of a pure practical reason), without any matter (object) of the will in which one could take some interest in advance, can of itself furnish an incentive and produce an interest that would be called purely *moral*; it is impossible for us to explain, in other words, *how pure reason can be practical*, and all the pains and labor of seeking an explanation of it are lost' (*Groundwork* 107)

[11]See Shelley's letter to Thomas J. Hogg on 12 January 1811 (*Letters* 1: 44).

[12]See also *Ethics* 57.

[13]See also 'A Refutation of Deism' 126, and 'I will Beget a Son' 105.

[14]See also *Ethics* 54.

[15]*Theological-Political Treatise*. In *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and other Works*. Ed. and Trans. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). All other references to the *Treatise* are to this edition unless stated otherwise.

[16] See *Ethics* 210.

[17]See also *Ethics* 59 and 153.

[18]See also *Ethics* 214.

[19]Shelley illucidates this point in the hymn. After his futile search he demonstrates the passiveness of the experience: 'Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;/ I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!' Nevertheless he immediately states in an active tone: 'I vowed that I would dedicate my powers/ To thee and thine'.

[20]Shelley puts the traditional Platonic image of the cave which is associated with illusions and false knowledge on its head by giving the image the role of imagination, considering it as the place of true and intuitive knowledge. This was hinted to me most kindly by Professor Drummond Bone, the vice principal of the University of Glasgow, while we were discussing Shelley's 'Mont Blanc'. This reinforces the idea held by Wasserman of the 'cave of Poesy, in the sense of the place of making, shaping, and formulating' (*Subtler Language* 221-22).

[21]See also *Ethics* 161.

[22]Swedenborg shares with Spinoza and Shelley the conception of evil as arising from the self and self-love. Essentially he thinks there is no Evil in the world: 'all things in the universe have reference to good and truth' (*Heaven and Hell* 6). Good for him is simply equal to existence and Evil is non-existence. He says, 'regarded in itself evil, and sin too, is nothing else than being parted from good' (*Arcana Caelestia* 7: 24). He further explains this in *Heaven and Hell*:

> There is only one Fountain of life... from this one Fountain of life ... nothing proceeds but Divine Good and Divine Truth, and that these affect every one according to his reception of them; those who receive them in faith and life find heaven in them; but those who reject or stifle the Divine Good and Truth turn them into hell, because they turn good into evil, truth into falsity and thus life into death. (6)

He thinks, however, that evil lies in the self which bars man from receiving the good and truth. He agrees with Shelley that 'evil stems from self-love and love of the world' (*Arcana Caelestia* 7: 24). He further observes: 'for anyone to come to know what evil is, and sin is, let him merely try to see what self-love and love of the world are' (ibid. 7: 24). He speaks of his visionary experience that 'all who are in heaven are withheld from their selfhood and enjoy love and wisdom so far as they are withheld from it by the Lord' (ibid. 7: 70). Elsewhere he says, 'it is evident that it is not so difficult as many believe to enter the way of heaven. The only difficulty consists in being able to resist the love of self and the world, and in preventing them from becoming predominant, for they are the source of all evils' (*Heaven and Hell* 177). He develops this idea:

> Another reason, and indeed in heaven the chief one, why angels are capable of receiving such exalted wisdom, is that they are free from self-love; for so far as any one is without self-love he is able to grow wise in Divine things. Self-love closes the inner mind against the Lord and heaven and opens the outer mind and turns it towards self; and therefore all those in whom self-love rules are in thick darkness as to heavenly things, however enlightened they may be as to worldly things. (ibid. 122)

Of the evil of the self he further says that 'so far as man loves himself and the world and regards himself and the world in all he does, he alienates himself from the Divine Being, and banishes himself from heaven' (ibid. 178). For him the 'infernal fire is the love of self and the world' (ibid. 201). He continues 'Of all spirits those are the worst who have given themselves up to evils originating from the love of self' (ibid. 325).

The Good, on the other hand, lies in love for others, what he calls love for neighbours, and disinterestedness in action: 'the loves of self and the world are destructive of the joys of heaven, and consequently totally opposed to heavenly loves, which are anxious to share what they possess with others' (ibid. 201). He further speaks of those who are 'raised to heaven' as having 'loved goodness and truth for their own sake ' while 'those who live in the love of self and the world are not capable of receiving these gifts' (ibid. 10). Disinterestedness sometimes becomes the only criterion for judging the Good: 'Good done for the sake of the self they do not call good, because it is done from self; but good done for the sake of good, they call good from the Divine Source' (ibid. 6).

Shelley, too, thinks blessedness does not consist in supernatural reward, but in virtue itself. Blessedness to him is the love which can remove the 'self' and make man love 'virtue for Virtue's own loveliness, desiring the happiness of others *not* from the obligation of fearing Hell or desiring Heaven, but for pure simple unsophisticated Virtue' (*Letters* 1: 173). Virtue, for Spinoza, is its own reward, too. 'Blessedness,' he says, 'is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself' (*Ethics* 223).

[23]Swedenborg argues that 'it has to be recognised that all the good whatever that a person has thought and done from earliest childhood through to the very end of his life remains; and the same applies to all evil, so much so that not even the least trace of it completely perishes. All that good and evil is written in his book of life, that is, in each of his memories, and in his true self, that is, in his character and

disposition. From that good and evil he has formed a life for himself and, so to speak, a soul, the essential nature of which remains unchanged after death' (*Arcana Caelestia* 3: 73).

He reiterates the same idea in *Heaven and Hell*:

> It can in no case be said that heaven is outside any one, but that it is within him; for every angel participates in the heaven which is around him by virtue of the heaven which is within him. This plainly shows how much he is deceived who believes that to go to heaven is only to be raised among the angels, whatever the nature of his inner life may be, and thus that heaven may be conferred on any one by unconditional mercy; for the truth is that if heaven be not within a person, nothing of the heaven around him can enter into or be received by him.... In a word, if those who live wickedly come into heaven they gasp for breath there and writhe about like fishes taken out of the water into the air; or like animals in ether in the receiver of an air-pump with the air exhausted. Hence it is evident that heaven is not outside a man but within him. (23)

He also explains that

> Spirits who go from this world into the other life desire nothing more earnestly than to be admitted into heaven. Almost all seek to enter, because they suppose that heaven consists merely in being admitted and received there. Because of this desire, they are led to some society of the lowest heaven; but when those who are immersed in the love of self and the world approach the threshold of that heaven, they begin to be so destressed and inwardly tormented that they feel hell in themselves down headlong thence, and find no rest until they are in hell among others like themselves. (ibid. 201).

[24]Shelley refers to the same idea in other places as in *Queen Mab*:

> To see a babe before his mother's door,
> Sharing his morning's meal
> With the green and golden basilisk
> That comes to lick his feet.
> (VIII.84-87)

In the fragmentary prose piece 'The Assassins' when he speaks of the Eden of Belthzatanaimen he pictures a snake playing harmlessly with the dreadless children: '...the snake...came to the little children's feet. The girl sang to it, and it leaped into her bosom, and she crossed her fair hands over it, as if to cherish it there. Then the boy answered with a song , and it glided from beneath her hands and crept towards him' (154).

[25]See, for example, his Essay 'On Life': 'This materialism is a seducing system to young and superficial minds. It allows its disciples to talk and dispenses them from thinking. But I was discontented with such a view of things as it afforded' (173).

[26]Swedenborg, too, believes that Evil does not exist and Existence is good and like a stream covers all that comes in its way. He speaks of the evil that befalls the Angels, saying: 'The angels added that the Lord does not cause their changes of state, because the Lord as the Sun is always pouring forth upon them a stream of heat and light or love and wisdom; but that the cause is in themselves, because they love their selfhood, which continually leads them astray' (*Heaven and Hell* 71).

[27]These citations are translated and quoted by S. A. Q. Husaini, *The Pantheistic Monism of Ibn Al-Arabi* 212-213.

[28]Ibn Arabi, 'Khutbat *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya*,' ed. O. Yahya, *Al-Mashriq* (1970): 127-195. In Arabic.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Romantic literature, like any other literature, has its philosophical context. This background, in general, is based on an interactive, dynamic, pantheistic and necessitarian world view, in which imagination is the main perceptive medium that can make and interpret symbols. The main deterrent to such a perception is the reification of dynamic images and their conversion into fetishes and literal objects with a one-sided meaning.

In his theory of metaphor Shelley gives emphasis besides pantheism and imagination to two other Romantic principles, namely the concepts of relationship and a world-in-making (Chapter 1 53-57). In consequence, unlike Romantics such as Coleridge or Wordsworth, he never falls into dualism; as is shown in the third chapter (192-200), he posits imagination as the highest faculty, never considering it as second to reason; and he never abandons the doctrine of Necessity (Chapter 5 308-13).

Shelley's system of thought, as discussed in the second chapter of this work (92-110), is non-dualistic, and throughout his work he never fails to exploit the opportunity to obliterate the barriers that seem to exist between the subject and the object, the mind and the world, and the natural and the supernatural. For him the difference between these dichotomies is grammatical or nominal and not ontological or essential. He believes or would like to believe that all refined systems of philosophy are based on a tendency to unity of existence and oneness of Life: different minds are only different modifications of the one Mind; thoughts are essentially one and differ only in their vividness--they are different functions and not divisions; things are thoughts which become objects of other thoughts.

In Shelley's thought there is a place both for transcendence and immanence (see, for example, his views reflected in 'Mont Blanc' and discussed in Chapter 2 136-58).

Being, he observes, is one essential entity beyond description or perception. Perception, on the other hand, is possible only in the context of discourse. What is perceived then is not the ontological being, and the transcendent, but a form of discourse which in itself is relational and insubstantial (Chapter 2 97-99, and 104-8). Thus, perceived phenomena are insubstantial signs, denoting not a transcendent meaning outside discourse, but the discourse itself. In short, there is one ontological entity which is epistemologically diversified. Forms or things resulting from this diversification ontologically do not exist; they are signs or expositions-within-discourse of the ontological. As a corollary, and as is shown in the third chapter (226-30), although in Shelley's system there is a place for transcendence, there is no ontological transcendent meaning. Perception as a cognitive process is epistemological, and in this process there is no stage to denote a transcendent truth or an ontological signified. He places the truth not outside but inside the text.

Shelley is not only non-dualistic, but also non-reductive in the sense of being neither an idealist nor a materialist (Chapter 2 95). The mind, he observes, cannot be the originator of the world; nor could it be wholly dominated by matter, as it has that essence which is distinct from the material in its tendency to transcend temporality and annihilation. Nor is he a sceptic; although he doubts the comprehensiveness of reason, he has a full trust in imagination as both creator and revealer. And finally, although he believes that the phenomenal world is metaphoric and relational, not essential or substantial, he nevertheless argues for the existence of an ontological, incomprehensible and imperceptible being (Chapter 2 102-4).

The logic which approves the simultaneous existence of the contraries and answers yes and no without distinction is one substantiated by imagination which is based on the principle of 'both ... and' rather than 'either/ or', or 'neither/ nor'. It is neither reductive nor 'negatory', but is based on a shift of perspective (Chapter 3 192-200). Shelley, in this sense, is neither an empiricist nor a transcendental idealist; he does not

accept separation nor believe in unity through dialectics. He believes in the existence of one reality which could be looked at from two perspectives: as it exists or as it is perceived, as a transcendent ontological presence or as an expression and a metaphor with no existential identity (Chapter 2 102-4, and 136-38). In the former, there is no place for attributions, relations, or signs, and, therefore, it is incomprehensible. The latter is Being put into a sign system and expressed as certain relationships. It is, in other words, a linguistic expression of the transcendent Being.

In a system based on the oneness of life which conceives of existence as a metaphoric reality where each phenomenon manifests its endless levels of meaning with no telos or ultimate meaning in prospect, and where, therefore, perception is thought of as an ongoing process, Necessity becomes inevitable (Chapter 5 336-65). Shelley, thus, never abandoned his belief in Necessity. Besides the conventional understanding of the concept, he believes in imaginative Necessity which is the plane of the free work of the imagination (Chapter 5 368-78). The former is defined by the fixed relationships between cause and effect; the latter, however, does not follow the rigid relationships conventionally thought to exist between sign and meaning. The work of imagination Shelley understands to be absolutely necessary (ibid. 370 ff.). Imaginative creativity in the form of unfolding the different layers of meaning works spontaneously and without the interference of the will. This, however, does not oppose Necessity to freedom in Shelley's thought; such Necessity, in fact, is nothing other than real freedom as, unlike conventional Necessity, man is not determined by any external power, but only by himself.

Imagination for Shelley, as is discussed in the third chapter (192-230), is the only means for perceiving the unity of the world. More than a faculty of perception, it is a world where the material and the spiritual exist as two aspects of one entity. Imagination, Shelley believes, can admit no difference between thought and thing or the external and the internal, and therefore the Romantic dialectic, or the conventional

Romantic conception of imagination as the intermediary link between opposites, is inconceivable. It is not a link between the limited and the absolute but the power to see the limited absolute. On the other hand, in its perception imagination is neither associative nor selective, and consequently the world it conceives is neither dualistic nor synthetic. Imagination is perception which neither creates nor represents in the conventional meaning of the terms, but is a power of sign making and sign interpretation: the power to see things as signs within discourse. It destroys meanwhile what appears as ontological and reified (Chapter 3 226-30). It is the way out of literality and a return to a metaphoric understanding of existence. Imagination, therefore, acts as a power of both sign-making and iconoclasm. It perceives on the one hand things as metaphor, and on the other strips the veil of literality from the latter when it is apparently turned into dead metaphor. It reads the relations between or within things, and in this sense it is anti-ontological and in opposition to any kind of reification and objectification. However, it should be noted that it destroys the ontological within the text and not within existence (ibid. 227).

Shelley's non-dualism, his understanding of imagination and Necessity, and in general his thought system are based on his theory of metaphor (Chapter 1 53 ff., Chapter 3 192 ff., and Chapter 5 368 ff.). Metaphor, he assumes, is not referential; it is only itself and thus does not permit any split between sign and referent. It presents a real fusion where sign and signified are unified.

Metaphor becomes the very basis for Shelley's other theory, namely perception as interpretation (Chapter 1 56-57, and Chapter 3 230-33). Because of its endless levels of meaning, metaphor calls for symbolic interpretation rather than description or allegorical deciphering. It has no ultimate meaning; it constitutes, rather, a process of interpretation looking for the as yet undiscovered patterns of relationships and uncovered levels of meaning. Thus for Shelley there are no finished and fixed phenomena as the relations which make these phenomena are always in generation

and a state of discovery; they have not to be deciphered or uncovered but to be looked for in their development and transformation.

In short, Shelley's conception of being is a text ontologically devoid of real existence, in which there is no division between thought and object, and one thought and another. The text is constituted by signs, and the signs are metaphors with no one original or ultimate meaning. The perception of such a world is no more than a linguistic--in its wider connotation--affair.

The disrupting agent in this imaginative or metaphoric perception, as is shown in the fourth chapter, is the turning of symbol into literal fact and the confining of the endless levels of meaning into one fixed and static significance. What he rejects (as for example in *Prometheus Unbound*) as false consciousness is putting these dynamic relationships into set patterns. Thus the effect which disrupts this imaginative perception also returns to metaphor. Although Shelley never looked for a transcendent truth, a truth beyond words and outside the linguistic or sign system, he still differentiates between words as metaphors and words as literal facts. Metaphor follows a circular pattern of word-meaning relationship in the sense that meaning is not external to the word. It does not necessitate an extended linear movement marked by a 'from' and a 'to' (Chapter 2 139-40). The literal, on the other hand, is linear. Metaphor has no existence in itself but is relational. Metaphor, for Shelley, therefore, represents a world of unity, continuous change and transformation, and functions or relationships with no being. The source of false consciousness, Shelley assumes, is not only rooted in taking these signs as ontological beings, but also in restricting being to insubstantial relations or differences (Chapter 2 95-96, and Chapter 4 257-59). Shelley does not reify within discourse, but neither does he confine existence to discourse or being to insubstantial relationships, nor build his system on nothingness. Where meaning is concerned, there is no idol or reified object; in short, there is no

thing. But where being is discussed, there is no void, though there are also no signs to be reified or put into discourse.

As is discussed in the fourth chapter, the replacement of the unity of the metaphor, Shelley believes, by the dualism of the literal is inevitable (see also Chapter 1 57-59). The new relations of metaphor once discovered turn into fixed objects, and language which is originally metaphoric changes into signs for literal facts. What was an expression and a sign within a sign system turns into a hypostasis. Metaphor becomes a dead metaphor, and the one Life gives place to a life of diversity and separation. Shelley finds the way out of this literality in the defamiliarisation of life in an attempt to gain the lost metaphoric perception (Chapter 3 200-215).

The circle of metaphor and dead metaphor, however, is not a closed vicious circle as there is a gain in each circle manifested in the development of the metaphorical outlook and reflected in the objective of having a better reading of the text (Chapter 2 155-58). Although Shelley does not set an ontological or ultimate meaning outside discourse, he believes that discourse, or rather, man's view of the linguistic system could be changed for the better. It is on this ground that he bases his prediction of an apocalyptic change (Chapter 5 360-64). The progress which he finds in the course of history tends to the direction of seeing things as insubstantial, multidimensional metaphors, rather than ontological, one-sided literal objects.

In all of these thought principles, Shelley maintains his individuality by keeping a distance from all the philosophical views then in existence, especially those that had the most effect, directly or indirectly, on him: Plato, Hume, Godwin, Spinoza, and Kant (see for example Chapter 1 53-59; Chapter 2 92-110, 136-58; Chapter 3 192-200; Chapter 4 257-59; Chapter 5 368-78). He reveals, however, a surprisingly close similarity to Ibn Arabi, especially the Hispano-Arabic theosophist's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*, or 'Oneness of being', his views on imagination, both as a world and

a perception, his theory of the renewal of creation, and the relational system which he believes to preside over existence.

APPENDIX

Appendix

Ibn Arabi was born on 28 July (or possibly 7 August) 1165 in Murcia in south-eastern Spain, which was ruled then by the Almoravids. His original name was Abu Abdullah Muhyiddin Ibn al-Arabi, but in order to distinguish him from the Andalusian judge and jurist, Abu Bakr Ibn al-Arabi (d. 1148), he became known as Ibn Arabi in the East. After the defeat of Ibn Mardanish and the capture of Murcia by the Almohads in 1172, to avoid the growing political troubles the family of the seven-year Ibn Arabi moved to Seville. In Seville he began his formal education by learning traditional subjects such as Quran, grammar, law, literary studies, and physical sciences with the famous teachers of his time. Even then his fame as a gifted and spiritually inspired child captured much of Andalusia and North Africa. One of the people who showed great interest in seeing him was the aged and well-known Aristotelian philosopher Ibn Rushd (Averroes), then advanced in years. Ibn Arabi speaks of his meeting with the philosopher which was arranged by his father when he was fifteen years old, or, according to him, a beardless youth. The philosopher was very much amazed by his extraordinarily talent, seeing that he had grasped intuitively what the philosopher had learned through long years of speculation. At the end of the meeting Ibn Rushd commented: 'We have proved the possibility of the existence of such knowledge, but never have encountered any one who has experienced it. Thanks to God that I live at a time when there is one who has this experience and can open the locks [of the doors of secrets]. Glory be to God that He gave me the gift to meet him' (*Futuhat* 1: 154).

Besides traditional learning Ibn Arabi showed great passion for learning aspects of supernatural and esoteric knowledge through direct experience. He established friendships with well known sufis, frequenting their circles, and when he was twenty he formally entered the path by sincerely observing all the rites of the tradition. He spent his time fasting, praying and meditating. (In his *Futuhat* he supplies the date

1184 for this). Two of his spiritual teachers, unusually for that time, were women: Shams of Marchena (ibid. 1: 35), and Fatima of Cordova (ibid. 2: 348). His learning and practice soon made him a spiritual authority in the mystic way.

Ibn Arabi lived in Seville until he was thirty. He confined his travels to other cities of Spain. It was in 1194 that he left his native country for the first time and started his series of travels to North Africa. He went to Tlemcen where he saw the prophet in a vision, and then to Tunis where he met Abd al-Aziz Mahdawi (d. 1224), to whom he dedicated the Epistle of *Futuhat*, completed some parts of his *Insha al-Dawaer* ('Construction of the Circles') in his house in Tunis some eight years later in 1201 (ibid. 1: 98-99), and addressed his book *Ruh al-Quds* ('The Spirit of Holiness') which he wrote in Mecca to him. In the same year he met also Abu Madyan, the great sufi master of Bugia, and had the opportunity to study Ibn Qisyi's master work *Khal' al-Na'layn* ('The Doffing of the Sandals') and wrote an extensive commentary on that book. After a few months he returned to Seville and made a pilgrimage to a shrine at Rota. The following year, 1195, he once again travelled to North Africa, this time to Fez. In 1196 he returned to Seville where he was sought by many disciples and followers of sufism. After a year he travelled once again to Fez where he spent most of his time in meditation and conversation with sufi masters. During his stay in Fez he wrote *Kitab al-Isra* ('Book of the Night Journey') in 1197-98. In 1199 he returned to Andalusia where he encountered besides his friends a growing number of his disciples, and while he was staying in Almeria he wrote *Mawaqi al-Nujum* ('Positions of the Stars') (ibid. 1: 334). It was in this year also that he attended the funeral of the philosopher Averroes who had died in Morocco and whose body was brought to Cordova for burial (ibid. 1: 153). In 1201 he married in Seville Mariam b. Abdun, a learned noblewoman, who became a source of inspiration and influence in further directing his attention and interest to sufism. (Claude Addas, however, believes that Ibn Arabi did not contract marriage until he was in Mecca in 1202). In 1201 he left Seville for pilgrimage to Mecca, never to return to Spain.

In a vision Ibn Arabi was instructed to start his long journey to the East. He first went to Fez, and from there to Egypt, staying for a while in Alexandria and Cairo. In the same year he left the Arab West for the East. In 1202 he was in Jerusalem praying in al-Aqsa mosque and from there, on foot, he made his journey to Mecca where he was received with much respect and honour. He was guest to the learned family, Abu Shuja Zahir bin Rustam and his sister Fakhr al-Nisa. Under the influence of the daughter of the Sheikh, Ibn Arabi wrote his well-known and original collection of secular odes, *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* or *The Interpreter of Desires*, which was much criticised by the theologians and which he thought to be capable of mystical interpretation. It was in Mecca that he had the visionary experience of the 'eternal youth' which left a tremendous impact on him and on his imaginative philosophy. On one occasion while he was circumabulating the House of God, he speaks of meeting

> the youth steadfast in devotion who is both speaker and silent, neither alive nor dead, both complex and simple, encompassing and encompassed. When I saw him circumabulating the House, the living circumabulating the dead, I grasped what he was and his significance and realized that the circumabulation of the House is like the prayer over the dead.... Then God showed me the spiritual degree of the youth, that he was far beyond all considerations of space and time. When I had realized this ... [I] said to him, "O bearer of tidings, look and see how I seek your company and desire your friendship." Then he indicated to me by hint and sign that he was created to speak only by signs.... I begged him to reveal his secrets to me. He said, "Behold the details of my structure and the order of my formation and you will find the answer to your question set forth in me, for I am not one who speaks or is spoken to, my knowledge being only of myself and my essence being naught other than my name. I am knowledge, the known and the knower. (*Futuhat* 1: 47-48)[1]

In Mecca Ibn Arabi started his great work which is nothing less than a huge encyclopaedia of sufism, *Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah* ('Meccan Revelations'). It is a book which comprises only revealed divine knowledge and which, Ibn Arabi says, the author had no will or authority in writing. Besides these works, during his two-year stay in Mecca he composed the treatises *Mishkat al-Anwar*, *Hilyat al-Abdal*, and *Ruh al-Quds* (1203) and *Taj al-Rasail* (1204). In the same year he left Mecca to start his

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[1]Quoted in R. W. J. Austin, *Sufis of Andalusia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 37.

series of journeys once again. He first went to Jerusalem where he composed four treatises: *Kitab al-Jalala*, *Kitab al-Azal*, *Kitab al-Alif*, and *Kitab al-Hu*. He then left for Baghdad, and thence to Mosul where he stayed for a year. The outcome was his esoteric book on the mysteries of purity and prayer, *Al-Tanazzulat al-Mausilliyya* ('The Mausilian Revelations'). In 1205 he travelled to Konya where he composed *Risalat al-Anwar*, *Kitab al-Azama*, and *Kitab al-Amr al-Muhkam*. In the same year he returned to Jerusalem through Damascus and wrote *Kitab al-Iqd*, *Kitab al-Nuqaba*, and *Kitab al-Muqni*. In Hebron in the following year he wrote *Kitab al-Yaqin*. In 1207 Ibn Arabi went to Cairo to be met with an increased opposition and even hostility from the religious authorities. Together with the intolerance of the scholars the anger of the people made his stay there impossible and he certainly would have been in danger had it not been for the intercession of one of his influential friends in Tunis, Abu al-Hasan of Bugia who wrote a letter to the ruler of Egypt, Al-Malik al-Adil, recommending Ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi left Egypt and once again returned to Mecca where both the people and the scholars showed more tolerance and understanding of his ideas. After a year he left Mecca and started his journey through different cities arriving at Konya in 1210 where he was received very well by the people and Kay Kaus, the ruler of that city. The real influence of the teaching of Ibn Arabi indeed started spreading through the friendship and influence of his best known disciple there, Sadr al-Din Qunawi, and had an impact on the great sufi masters of Persia, Jalal al-Din Rumi, Qutb al-Din Shirazi and Fakhr al-Din Iraqi, and later on Abd al-Karim Jili. In 1212 Ibn Arabi returned to Baghdad where he met Umar al-Suhrawardi, the famous author of *Awarif al-Marif* ('The Knowers of Sciences'). The latter described Ibn Arabi as 'an ocean of divine truths'. In 1213 he visited Aleppo and in 1214 he went to Mecca where he wrote his commentary on *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* entitled *Dhakhair al-Alaq*. In 1215 he once again went to Asia Minor and remained there for four or five years teaching his disciples. In 1218 in Malatya he wrote *Istilahat al-Sufiyya*. In 1220 or 1221 he went to Aleppo, and in 1223 he ended his long series of journeys by settling in Damascus where he stayed until his death on 16 November

1240. During this time he wrote *Fusus al-Hikam* ('The Bezels of Wisdom') (1229), which is considered as the summary of his theosophy, finished writing his compendium on sufism, *Futuhat* (1231) which he had started in Mecca, and composed his *Diwan* or collection of mystical poems (1237).

There are three important aspects which should be considered in studying Ibn Arabi's life and works. First, in his writing he did not follow the conventional way of either philosophers or theologians. He did not speculate upon nor restrict himself to dogma and established truth. His works, in other words, are based on his direct and unmediated experience. Many of his books and treatises were the result of inspiration or came to him in a vision. Two of his most important works which established his indisputable authority in sufism, *Futuhat al-Makkiyya* and *Fusus al-Hikam*, were given to him in this way. In the introduction to *Fihrist al-Muallafat* he writes: 'In what I have written I have never had a set purpose, as other writers. Flashes of divine inspiration used to come upon me and almost overwhelm me, so that I could only put them from my mind by committing to paper what they revealed to me. If my works evince any kind of composition, that form was unintentional. Some works I wrote at the command of God, sent to me in sleep or through mystical revelation.'[2] In *Fusus* he also states:

> I saw the Apostle of God in a visitation granted to me during the latter part of the month of Muharram in the year 627, in the city of Damascus. He had in his hand a book and he said to me, "This is the book of the Bezels of Wisdom; take it and bring it to men that they might be benefit from it." ... I therefore carried out the wish, made pure my intention and devoted my purpose to the publishing of this book, even as the Apostle had laid down, without any addition or subtraction.... [I]n all my hand may write, in all my tongue may utter, and in all my heart may conceal, He might favor me with His deposition and spiritual inspiration for my mind and His protective support, that I may be a transmitter and not a composer.... I have not set forth here anything except that was set before me, nor have I written in this book aught but what was revealed to me. (*Fusus* 46)

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[2]Quoted in Stephen Hirtenstein, *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi: A Commemorative Volume* (Longmead: Element, 1993), 5-6.

It is because of this that his writing is highly symbolic and extremely elliptic and concise. He does not follow one argument at a time nor express his major themes in one place but introduces them at different places throughout his works. He does this intentionally and is aware of the difficulty which is faced by his reader and by translators and interpreters of his works.

Second, although many of Ibn Arabi's masters were affiliated to Malikism which was the *madhhab* or legal school in Andalusia, he allied himself neither to this nor to any other legal school. Unlike his jurist contemporaries, he believed in *ijtihad* or personal interpretation of religion and believed that the door for interpretation would never be closed. In *Futuhat* he says: 'The Law has affirmed the validity of the status of anyone who makes a personal effort at interpretation for himself and for those who follow him. But in our days the jurists have condemned this effort, claiming it encourages people to make a mockery of religion. For them to say this is the height of ignorance' (*Futuhat* 1: 392).[3] He further argues that 'God has made the divergence in legal questions a mercy for His servants and a broadening of what He has prescribed they should do to testify to their adoration. But in the case of those who follow the jurists of our time, these jurists have prohibited and restricted what the sacred Law had broadened in their favour' (ibid.). Therefore, in any interpretation of the works of Ibn Arabi it should be noted that he brings together different approaches to existence and the religious experience and does not restrict himself to any single interpretation.

Third, even an inspired author such as Ibn Arabi cannot be studied out of his social, religious, and intellectual contexts. At the time when Ibn Arabi lived two major trends of sufism were followed in Muslim Spain. They were the schools of Almeria and the that which was associated with Maghreb sufism. According to Asin Palacios, however, the school of Almeria was the continuation of an earlier school, the

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[3]This and the following quotations are cited in Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn Arabi* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 47, 46.

Massarian school, which was founded by Ibn Massara and which was marked by Neoplatonism and pseudo-Empedoclianism. The main founders of the Almeria school were Ibn al-Arif of Almeria, his master Ibn Barrajan of Seville, and Ibn Qisyi of the Algarve. The other school was founded by Abu Yaza, Ibn Hirzihim, and Abu Madyan of Seville. All of these masters, no doubt, had a certain impact on Ibn Arabi and the formation of his doctrines. The greatest influence was that of Ibn al-Arif whose book *Mahasin al-Majalis* was commended by Ibn Arabi. He also studied Ibn Barrajan's work *Kitab al-Hikma*, and Ibn Qisyi's *Khal al-Nalayn* with the author's son in Tunis in 1194.

More details on the life and works of Ibn Arabi may be found in the following works:

Addas, Claude. *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn 'Arabi.* Trans. Peter Kingsley. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993.

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