THE MILLENIAL VISION IN SHELLEY'S POETRY

(A STUDY OF MOTIF AND SYNTAX)

by

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ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this study to explore a group of Shelley's poems to the extent that they illustrate his treatment of a specific biblical tradition--the vision of the millenium, which plays a major role in Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, The Masque of Anarchy, Hellas, and the Odes to Liberty, and Naples. For all these works the problem of the salvation of the social order is central. This motif is also a consideration, although not central, in Epipsychidion, Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, Julian and Maddalo and The Witch of Atlas.

In exploring Shelley's use of the millenial motif, our object is to call attention to the specific reflections of a biblical, particularly an Old Testament, perspective on history, of Old Testament symbolism, imagery, precepts, and even syntactical constructions in the poetic expression of this faith. It is at the same time, however, necessary to point out in his works the running thread of doctrinal criticism which Shelley juxtaposes against his biblical borrowings in order to expose the weaknesses, abuses, and untruth he sees in various

aspects of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. In his critique Shelley assumes both vatic tone and prophetic stance, reflecting and going beyond his religious legacy much in the manner of the Hebrew prophets. His words, like theirs, carry the energy, zeal and sheer intensity which mark the vatic style. His authoritative, confident, vatic voice, dedicated to a single driving purpose, originates in part in a syntax of recurrent repetition and parallelism, a biblical syntax.

A major objective of this study is to examine the way in which several characteristic syntactical patterns of Shelley's millenial voice support his thematic intentions, not only as contributions to his vatic timbre, but as basic components of poetic structure. Shelley's early poetic visions of the millenium are built upon a major dichotomy--a contrast between the negative world of present social reality and the potential millenial earth. Various efforts in definition, principally in terms of asyndetic syntactical patterns, delineate the bi-polar structure of his works. Through repetition selected, highly charged, recurrent key words become symbols of the forward direction toward the millenium in which, according to Shelley's historical formulations, the world must move. An abundance of copulative forms and a fondness for accumulations of metaphor contribute

further to his basic distinction between the actual and the potential.

Although certain key words, images, and syntactical patterns recur in all of Shelley's poetry on the millenial theme, we recognize a shift in his treatment of this motif in later works. As he moves away from the biblical heart of his vision, the syntax of his poetry expresses his divided sentiments. The syntactical rhythm of advance, typical of the earlier works, gives way to an alternation of advance and retreat, which mirrors the conflict in the poet's mind between his hopes for a millenial future and his despair at the meager possibilities of its fruition. A distinctive conditional syntax of questioning and doubt corrodes the earlier spirited forward march, reveals the wavering of his faith, and becomes a basic element in the poetic structure of these later works.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In Natural Supernaturalism Milton H. Abrams charges that criticism has been insufficiently aware of "theological concepts, images, and plot patterns"[1] as a major literary source for the English Romantics. He suggests the Bible (particularly in its exposition by "radical Protestant visionaries")[2] as the origin of many recurrent motifs of the period and finds in the poetry of Wordsworth and his English contemporaries a reflection of "not only the language and rhythms but also the design, the imagery, and many of the central moral values of the Bible, as well as of Milton, the great poet of Biblical history and prophecy."[3] Within the Shelley canon a substantial group of poems, including Prometheus Unbound (which Abrams discusses in connection with his thesis), clearly confirms and supports his contention.

It is the purpose of this study to explore these poems to the extent that they illustrate Shelley's treatment of a specific biblical tradition--the vision of the millenium, which plays a major role in Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound, The Masque of Anarchy,

Hellas, and the Odes to Liberty, and Naples. For all of these works the problem of the salvation of the social order is central. In selecting the poems which properly belong to this study, we exclude those of Shelley's works (such as Alastor and Adonais) which are concerned, in large measure, with a contrast between earthly life and a heavenly or ideal other world, and include only those longer works which focus upon the conflict between earthly life as it is and earthly life as it might become. Most of Shelley's poetry tends to treat one or the other of these sets of contraries. When his concern is directed toward man's potential for a paradisal existence upon earth, however, the millenial vision plays a significant role in his poetry. This motif is also a consideration, although not central, in Epipsychidion, Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, Julian and Maddalo and The Witch of Atlas. Because concepts, imagery, and phrasing associated with Shelley's vision of the millenium in all of these works are variously combined and interwoven, an examination of the role of this vision contributes both to interpretations of individual peoms and to clarification of thematic and rhetorical similarities and differences among them.

Frederick Pottle in "The Case of Shelley" discusses Shelley's belief in a universal spiritual power:

> ...He believed that this spirit works within the world as a soul contending with obstruction... He looked forward to that far-off day when the plastic stress of this power shall have mastered the last resistance and have become all in all, when outward nature which now suffers with man, shll have been redeemed with him. This is the faith of the prophet, the faith held by the authors of Isaiah and Revelation...[4]

In exploring Shelley's use of the millenial motif, our object is to call attention to the specific reflections of a biblical, particularly an Old Testament, perspective on history, of Old Testament symbolism, imagery, precepts, and even syntactical constructions in the poetic expression of this faith. It is at the same time, however, necessary to point out in his works the running thread of doctrinal criticism which Shelley juxtaposes against his biblical borrowings in order to expose the weaknesses, abuses, and untruth he sees in various aspects of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Throughout his poetry of salvation through the social order, we may, in fact, trace a continuing dialectic between those aspects of Hebrew-Christian tradition inimical to the poet's values and those traditions (i.e., the millenial vision) which he wishes to incorporate into his poetry.

In his critique Shelley assumes both vatic tone and prophetic stance, reflecting and going beyond his religious legacy. His attitude is, in fact, similar to the outlook of the old Testament prophets, who, according to the biblical scholar Gerhard von Rad, displayed a combination of simultaneous involvement with both the old saving traditions

of the Hebrews and the "new historical action [which] was to surpass and therefore, to a certain extent, to supersede the old."[5] In his biblical inheritance, Shelley resembles these prophets. He, also, draws from an earlier tradition while he moves beyond it.

His words, like theirs, carry the energy, zeal and sheer intensity which mark the vatic style. In Queen Mab, Shelley's earliest expression of the vision of the millenium, we find, for instance, a tone of sustained urgency and excitement--a dramatic voice, reminiscent of the sermon-like prose of William Godwin's Political Justice, a significant influence on Shelley and a major source for Queen Mab. For the biblical prophets, Godwin, and Shelley (when he is expressing his millenial purpose), form must serve a didactic objective; it must persuade the reader of the truth of the prophetic vision. Extended metaphors, and short scenarios contribute to the enthusiasm of Godwin's inquiry, and his prose, like Shelley's poetry, is shaped by repetitions, exclamations, rousing exhortations, and an insistent parallel syntax, such as we find in the following address to the masses:

> You are not brutes: you are not stones
> You keep away existence in a miserable
> neglect of your most valuable privileges:
> but you are capable of exquisite delights;
> you are formed to glow with benevolence,
> to expatiate in the fields of knowledge,
> to thrill with disinterested transport, to
> enlarge your thoughts...
>
> (P.J.III.VII.241)[6]

Shelley's authoritative, confident, vatic voice, dedicated to a single driving purpose, originates, in part, from a syntax (such as we find in Godwin and the Prophets) of recurrent repetition and parallelism. What has been recognized in his imagery ("His visual images do not coalesce into scenes, they congregate and form up")[7] is also implicit in his syntax. Anaphora, repetition of words and phrases, and parallel constructions underscore his prophetic tone.

A major objective of this study is to examine the way in which several characteristic syntactical patterns of Shelley's millenial voice support his thematic intentions, not only as contributions to his vatic timbre, but as basic components of poetic structure. Shelley's early poetic visions of the millenium are built upon a major dichotomy--a contrast between the negative world of present social reality and the potential millenial earth. Various efforts at definition, principally in terms of asyndetic syntactical patterns, support his distinction between what is and what might be, delineating the bi-polar structure of his works. Through repetition selected, highly charged, recurrent key words become symbols of the forward direction toward the millenium in which, according to Shelley's historical formulations, the world must move. An abundance of copulative forms and a fondness for accumulations of mataphor contribute further to his basic distinction between the actual and the potential. Although certain key words, images, and

syntactical patterns recur in all of Shelley's poetry on the millenial theme, we recognize a shift in his treatment of this motif in later works. As he moves away from the biblical heart of his vision, the syntax of his poetry expresses his divided sentiments. The syntactical rhythm of advance, typical of the earlier works, gives way to an alternation of advance and retreat, which mirrors the conflict in the poet's mind between his hopes for a millenial future and his despair at the meager possibilities of its fruition. A distinctive conditional syntax of questioning and doubt corrodes the earlier spirited forward march, reveals the wavering of his faith, and becomes a basic element in the poetic structure of these later works.

In the background of his millenial vision is the Bible, which Shelley himself placed first in his list of an essential library, compiled for his cousin Medwin.[8] His close friend Hunt contended that Shelley knew more of the Bible than any of the "priests" connected with the "Quarterly Review."[9] That Hunt was probably right is confirmed by Mary Shelley's record of the many evenings Shelley spent reading the Bible aloud to her.[10] From his own close reading of the Bible, augmented by various concepts central to the Puritan tradition and transmitted through Godwin, Shelley first developed his vision of the millenium in Queen Mab. Criticism has long directed attention to the influence of Rousseau and the French philosophes on the

thinking of Shelley and Godwin, but has been little concerned with Godwin's (or Shelley's) connections with Puritan beliefs. As we have already suggested, Shelley, particulary in his earlier work, adopts Godwin's assumed role of moralist-teacher, his tone of one who is conveying holy writ to those who may yet be saved, and his design to pinpoint the moral errors which bar the way to virtue for the individual as well as the group. (In a letter of June 5, 1811 to Elizabeth Hitchener, Shelley declared that "...all poetical beauty ought to be subordinate to the inculcated moral--that metaphysical language ought to be a pleasing vehicle for useful and momentous instructions.")[11]

In both their fervor and the moral objectives of their writings, Godwin and Shelley resemble those Puritan thinkers who dedicated their talents to furthering the Kingdom of Christ. Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam are most obviously dedicated to reform in a manner not distant from the attitude of the early Puritans who, according to Michael Fixler in Milton and the Kingdom of God, considered Christians to be obligated to work toward the subduing of Antichrist. They saw England's future "in terms of prophetic history":

> The theme appealed simultaneously to their sense of personal and national calling and to the promise of a holy, perfected community built by God's favor with their help. What obstacles were in their way did not seem insuperable.[12]

F.E.L. Priestley, in the introduction to his edition of Godwin's Political Justice, points out the strong influence of the English Rational Dissenters (the progeny of Puritan thought) on Godwin's principles. Beginning with Godwin's unwillingness to "reject every idea of a spiritual power external to the system of the universe,"[13] Priestley traces Godwin's central attachment to the tradition of the Dissenters and his departures from the traditions of the French materialists. Religion in the Dissent tradition is "a sanction, not a rejection of the rights of human nature,"[14] and Godwin, who secularizes his terms and is concerned as Coleridge pointed out,

> that morality might be built upon its own foundation like a castle built from the rock and on the rock, with religion for the ornaments and completion of its roof and upper storeys,[15]

is yet fundamentally conditioned by this religious tradition. Priestley finds, for example, in Godwin's doctrine of self-abnegation and duty verbal substitions for the Christian duties of self-denial and love of one's neighbor.[16] Godwin derives much from the Dissenter's traditional belief in man's natural right to freedom of conscience, seen as a duty as well as a right,[17] from which they reasoned that it was a man's obligation to "follow that road towards which his rational conscience directs him."[18]

In Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam, Shelley follows closely Godwin's equation of virtue with social action. His millenial visions move toward fulfillment

largely through the efforts of "votaries of virtue" or prophet-leaders who are descendants of both the biblical line of suffering servants of mankind and Godwin's benevolent man, who recognizes that "Emotions are scarcely ever thrilling and electrical without something of social feeling" (P.J.IV.V.311). An emphasis on the connection between individual virtue and social improvement is also to be found in Puritan thought. For Milton, according to Fixler, this assumption is basic:

> ...the relationship between ecclesiastical and spiritual perfection on the one hand, and social perfectibility on the other hand, was so close that the achievement of the first would necessarily facilitate, if not ensure, the successful achievement of the second.[19]

Fixler goes on to explain that in Milton's earlier writings there is evidence of his belief in the eventual renovation of mankind and earth, based upon the promises of the Kingdom of God in Scripture:

> ...the perfect glorification would involve the total renovation of Man and nature, consequently the influence of this belief was exerted upon the expectation that the progression toward perfect glorification would gradually transform not only men, but also the conditions under which they lived.[20]

Shelley affirms in Queen Mab that individual virtue is capable of enacting the transformation which Milton anticipated. Such virtue he (as well as Milton and Godwin) makes clear must leave the cloister in order to accomplish its social objective. His vision of that objective extends, however, well beyond the expectations of his predecessors.

W.L. Renwick in his volume of the Oxford History of English Literature declares that Godwin translates the basic tenets of Puritanism into secular terms.[21] In his millenial vision it may be observed that Shelley offers a message of social renovation which in many respects renews the religious framework of its traditional inheritance. Shelley departs from the restraint at the heart of Godwin's views where man is perfectible in that he is "...capable of going on to that still greater perfection, in comparison of which all that has been already done will perhaps appear childish" (P.J.II.V.1973 ed.Vol.III,p.260). Man cannot "rest in any given state of improvement ... The true politician has undertaken a labour without end" (P.J.IV.II. 266). Godwin does not anticipate a day of social perfection and concludes regretfully that only if no individual had the desire to possess the belongings of another, if every man could be satisfied with the necessities of life and forget the luxuries, only then would it be possible to found a society in which "private interest would visibly accord with the public good . . . and civil society would become what poetry has feigned of the golden age" (P.J. I.III.15).

Perhaps inspired by Godwin's reference to the golden age (which he did not foresee), Shelley goes beyond him as he envisions in Queen Mab a renovation similar to what the Puritans believed the world would experience when perfect glorification was realized, a new world with its

roots in scriptural assurances concerning the Kingdom of God--a kingdom of perfect man in a perfect world. Ignoring Godwin's definition of the perfectibility of man (his susceptibility to perpetual improvement), Shelley seizes Godwin's optimistic gradualism and transforms it. In Shelley's millenial visions, however, man does not continue to develop according to the outlines of the eighteenth century concept of natural progress, but rather enjoys (or endeavors to enjoy), finally, a millenial existence, no longer plagued by inner conflicts of reason and passion, living in harmony with a regenerated external world.

To perceive Shelley's vision in proper perspective, we must go back further than the Puritans who believed that "The establishment of the condition for religious or spiritual perfectibility which must take place within the world, was not impossible."[21] We must turn, as Shelley did, first to the Bible.

For all quotations from and references to Shelley's poetry, I have used the Thomas Hutchinson edition, corrected by G.M. Matthews, of Shelley Poetical Works (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970).

FOOTNOTES

[1]M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1971), p.65.

[2]Abrams, p. 256.

[3]Abrams, p. 32.

[4]Frederick Pottle, "The Case of Shelley," PMLA 67 (Sept. 1952), pp. 595-608.

[5]Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, II trans. from 2nd ed. by D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p.113.

[6]All quotations from Political Justice are drawn from William Godwin, Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its influence on Morals and Happiness, ed. F.E.L. Priestley, University of Toronto Department of English Studies and Texts No. 2, 3 vols. (1946; rpt. Toronto, Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969).

[7]Milton Wilson, Shelley's Later Poetry: A Study of his Prophetic Imagination (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1959), p. 125.

[8]Donald H. Reiman, Percy Bysshe Shelley (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1969), p. 121.

[9]Bennet Weaver, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, University of Michigan Publication Language and Literature, vol. 9 (1932: rpt. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1966), p. 24.

[10]In the notes to the poems of 1816 and 1817 which accompanied the first edition of Shelley's collected works, Mary mentions Shelley's study of the Bible. She reports--"In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening." Shelley Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, corrected by G.M. Matthew (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 551.

[11]The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed., Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, 98.

[12] Michael Fixler, Milton and the Kingdoms of God (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), p. 45.

[13] F.E.L. Priestley, ed., Political Justice, by William Godwin, III, p. 8.

[14] Antony Lincoln, Some Political and Social Ideas of English Dissent, 1763-1800 (1938; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 20.

[15] Coleridge in a letter of March 26, 1811 quoted by F.E.L. Priestley, ed., Political Justice by William Godwin, vol. III, p. 105.

[16] F.E.L. Priestley, ed., Political Justice, p.22

[17] Antony Lincoln, p. 111.

[18] Lincoln, p. 111.

[19] Michael Fixler, p. 213.

[20] Fixler, p. 213.

[21] R.L. Renwick, Englsih Literature 1789-1815, in The Oxford History of English Literature (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1963), p. 24.

[22] Fixler, p. 85.

CHAPTER I

THE MILLENIAL VISION AND QUEEN MAB

According to Norman Cohn in The Pursuit of the Millenium, millenarianism springs specifically from the Christian belief that Christ, after his Second Coming, would establish a messianic kingdom on earth and would reign for one thousand years before the Last Judgement.[1] Millenarian sects and movements (which appeared sporadically throughout Christian history, generally overlapping with periods of social unrest) envisioned a final transformation of life on earth for the faithful, to be accomplished with the help, in some sense, of a supernatural agency. A cataclysmic conflict would precede this transformation of fallen earth into a redeemed world.[2]

Norman Cohn traces the original sources of the Christian millenial tradition to a collection of ancient prophecies and asserts that these prophecies were devices by which religious groups, at first Jewish and later Christian, comforted or encouraged themselves in encounters with real or threatened oppression. In the prophetical books of the Old Testament, he finds the seminal predictions of a day of wrath and judgment from which a remnant of Israel will survive to dwell with God in a Zion

where the poor are protected, dangerous beasts are tame, and disease and misery unknown. The chosen people will live in peace and joy according to God's law and sin will be obliterated.

The "central phantasy of (this) revolutionary eschatology"[3] is the belief that as the tyranny of demonic evil becomes more and more outrageous and the sufferings of its victims more and more intolerable, a point will be reached when the chosen holy people, who hitherto have been oppressed, will become rulers of the earth, ending history. In this millenial scheme the collective figure of demonic evil is the anti-christ of biblical and Sibylline tradition, the "god-hating Tyrant of the Last Days, part of "the common stock of Jewish and later of Christian apocalyptic lore."[4] Described as a false prophet armed with Satanic power and notable for his ability to mask his wickedness in cunning, the anti-christ figure, enriched with some of the features of the Persian God of Evil, Ahrimanes, became a personification of destructive power.

To contend with this force, millenial belief looks to the messiah figure, "originally imagined (in the Old Testament) as a particularly wise, just and powerful monarch of Davidic descent who would restore the national fortunes [of the Jews]."[5] The messiah was gradually transformed through biblical history into a warrior-king of miraculous power who establishes an age of bliss. In the

New Testament he is, of course, identified with Christ in his return to earth.

Michael Fixler in Milton and the Kingdoms of God contends that the potential for revolutionary millenarianism, originating in Old Testament sources, described above, was activated during certain periods in Calvinistic thought when the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was interpreted as "the divine idea of history" manifesting itself "through the sanctification of men and institutions."[6] The Puritan outlook on history was influenced, Fixler explains, by Joachim de Fiore's concept of three historical ages: The father and the Old Testament, The Son and the New Testament, and the age of the Holy Spirit, which is the gospel foretold in Revelation (XIV.6-7). The Holy Spirit as Christ's vicar would go beyond Jesus and complete its work in the "New Jerusalem of the last age."

Responsibility for failures in social organization, in this historical view, could be placed upon the sins of men, and the establishment of a new social order could be seen as restoration of original divine intention or a forward movement through divine intervention. The Puritan considered the early church and Christ's teaching to have been corrupted through ignorance and tyranny until the beginning of the Reformation. It was his responsibility to see that sanctification was brought first to the church and later to the world, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

A tradition of divine election, also with its origin in the Old Testament, was another part of millenial lore variously incorporated in the thinking of Protestant groups. This belief encouraged Christians to see themselves as the chosen people of the Lord, chosen both to bring about and to enjoy the millenium.

Almost all the major elements of Old Testament and later Protestant millenarianism can be found in the millenial vision which Shelley presents in Queen Mab. He awaits the same cataclysmic change--a total transformation of earth and man that is to take place through a combination of the efforts of the "votaries of virtue," represented in this poem by Ianthe, and the all encompassing will of Necessity. In Queen Mab, evil, oppressive kings, priests, and statesmen, is given demonic stature:

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

The tyrant who "...delight'st/In numbering o'er the myriads of (his) . . .slain" (IV.240-241) and burdens "With cowardice and crime the groaning land" (IV.244) resembles the traditional anti-Christ symbol more than an historical king. The traditional Hebrew-Christian God is described in Book VII as a tyrant-king, writ large. A malicious, revengeful, negative force, he is also representative of the compendium of evil which must be overcome

before the millenium can be enjoyed.

Although the messiah figure is not developed in Shelley's millenial works until The Revolt of Islam, the votaries of virtue, whose numbers the poem is dedicated to increasing, strongly resemble the saints of millenial tradition who must be ready to take up the sword. In broad outline the progressive version of history offered in Queen Mab, as well as in Shelley's other works concerned with the theme of social salvation, follows the millenial tradition (and its revolutionary potential) as it was absorbed into Puritan historical thought. Godwin (and Shelley after him) shares with the Puritans a concept of the process of social perfection through time. Shelley in Queen Mab turns to the inevitability of Necessity as his authority for progress, in much the same way as the Puritans referred to Providence for authorization of social change. Kenneth Neill Cameron points out that Shelley saw history as a movement toward new accomplishments and believed that "behind history as behind nature, was law; and this law-Necessity-guaranteed ever greater futures. . ."[7]

The goal of Queen Mab is to move forward on the straight line of history. The past is the scene of error. Ianthe, representative of the faithful who will usher in the millenial future, must review the past in order to perceive clearly the new path. The stated purpose of Shelley's history in Mab is to "glean (from the past) a

warning for the future" (III.7-8). His review of preceding ages focuses on "ruined palaces (II.110), now reduced to "the memory/Of senselessness and shame" (II.114), which ". . . give/An awful warning" (II.118). Having eliminated the "Monarchs and conquerors" (II.121), who were the "earthquakes of the human race" (II.123), he is ready for a new world. In "brighter morn" (V.251) "Time" (V.257) will be "a penitent libertine," who will "start" (V.258) when he faces his past and "shudder at his younger years" (V.259) in order that the "moral desert" (II. 162-163), which has in modern times replaced the ancient glories of Athens, Rome and Sparta, may be eliminated.

The past, according to this poem, records man's departures from the intended path of history. A distortion of true human nature is responsible for the detour, but regeneration is possible. Queen Mab declares that it may be accomplished through a return to "Nature's suggestions" (III.191) and functions as a call to virtue or a summons to the individual soul to know its immortal nature, to abjure, above all, selfishness, and to devote itself to good works, so that the heavenly future toward which Necessity moves will become a reality. It is the young Shelley's sermon to the world, designed to point out the road to salvation. The would-be "votary of virtue," mindful of his inevitable reward and of a millenial world to come, after reading Queen Mab, " . . . oer bounds/Those

obstacles, of which an earthly soul/Fears to attempt the conquest" (II.94-96). The thrust of Queen Mab, as Cameron expresses it, is ". . .agitational . . .to inspire men to act,"[8] to raise up the level of the human spirit by prophesying its future. The past with all its evils is the anti-christ, and the elect, virtue's votaries, must fight the powers of custom which allow the past to govern the present and block the millenial future.

Shelley's outlook combines historical and religious considerations. The millenial future depends both upon the destined unfolding of Necessity and the efforts of the dedicated. This dual responsibility for the future is also implicit in the writings of the Hebrew prophets, for whom the future is a necessary and inevitable consequence of past events and present conditions, at the same time that it is dependent upon the right action of men. Although it is in The Revolt of Islam that the parallels between the approach to history in Shelley's works and that of the Hebrew prophets is most evident, the double vision of the Old Testament is reflected also in the basic premises of Queen Mab.

In Gothic imagery, a carry-over from Shelley's youthful reading, Queen Mab opens upon speculation as to whether Ianthe, a maiden with a form "fair/As breathing marble" (I.43-44), is sleeping or dead. After a moment's

doubt it becomes clear that death, "whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres" (l.9-10), has not taken her. In the poet's promise that she will rise again from sleep is the prefiguring of the poem's major theme--man's way to re-generation. As Ianthe overcomes the suggestion of death in the opening of Queen Mab, so she will find, through the instruction she is about to receive, her own way to salvation by contributing to the cause of salvation for all. Queen Mab, the emissary from the spiritual world, arrives to the sound of a gothic strain "That round a lovely ruin swells" (l.47), amid light "like the moon-beams when they fall/Through some cathedral window" (l.54-55).

Mab addresses the soul of Ianthe, which is identical to her physical body, but cleansed of its "earthliness" (l.135) to re-assume its "native dignity" (l.137). Shelley insists upon the traditional Christian concept of the contrast between the soul which,

> . . .aspires to Heaven
> Pants for it sempiternal heritage
> And ever-changing, ever-rising still,
> Wantons in endless being. (l.148-51)

and the body, the "unwilling sport of circumstance and passion. . ." (l.152-53) which,

Fleets through its sad duration rapidly:
Then, like an useless and outworn machine,
Rots, perishes, and passes. (I.54-56)

The "good and sincere" (I.124) can share in the "envied boon" (I.123) which is to be Ianthe's. They will participate in Mab's immortal nature, learning the truths of existence--past, present, and future--in order that they may know the purpose of their lives and "How soonest to accomplish the great end" (I.183-184) which is their reason for being. Only the virtuous life is "Worthy a soul that claims/Its kindred with eternity" (II.209-210). Each virtuous soul, according to Shelley, has his reward--the "mmed of virtue" (I.186), "That peace which in the end all life will share" (I.185), if each one uses his abilities to promote "eternal weal" (V.230).

It seems clear that immortal life in Mab (since "earthly life"/Extinguished in the dampness of the grave/ (only) "Awhile there slumbers") (VI.150-152) means the personal immortality of souls that "claim kindred with eternity" (II.209-210). The "bther world" is a consideration not easily dismissed. Although Shelley pays passing tribute to recognition by posterity in his "deathless memory of that (virtuous) man," whom kings/Call to their mind and tremble" (III.164-164), he almost immediately reminds us that the central reward for virtuous behavior

leading to the regeneration of the world is the "remembrance/With which the happy spirit contemplates/Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth" (III.166-168). This memory "can never pass away" (III.169). Using a decidely Christian terminology, Shelley deliberately invites the interpretataion that this happy spirit, who contemplates his already finished work on earth, is the soul or spirit of the dead heroic individual now in his heavenly home.

A votary of virtue (I.177) experiences on earth the emotional fervour of religious conviction, an "ecstatic and exulting throb . . .when he sums up/The thoughts and actions of a well spend day" (I.176-178). Self-satisfaction thus springs from that very Protestant source--good works, as Shelley's "good man, who lifts with virtuous pride/ His being, in the sight of happiness,/That springs from his own works" (VI.205-207) well knows. Ianthe, the prototype of all virtuous souls, has been granted immortal vision before physical death. During her ascension with Mab, her earthly dreams become the reality she finds in heaven. Shelley insists that it is the duty of the virtuous not to be distracted as they work toward the achievement of their dreams on earth--the millenial vision. While traveling through the beauties of the cosmos, Ianthe is warned not to let the beauty she sees lure her into forgetting her true covation. She is reminded that it is not "virtue's only meed to dwell/In a celestial palace, all

resigned/To pleasurable impulses" (II.61-62).

Shelley's excursion into history in Mab, part of Ianthe's instruction, has often been criticized for naiveté and one-sidedness. It should be read, however, not as a scholarly assessment of the past, but as a gathering of deliberately selected historical examples designed to map out the pathway to a new Eden through illustrations of former wrong turns. His first point is that a misguided interpretation of immortality, in addition to a failure to identify man's world as just one among many aspects of nature, leads to errors of inordinate pride among rulers. Shelley illustrates this thesis with examples of monuments, like the palaces of Palmyra and the pyramids of the Nile, which cost the lives of millions because conquerors vainly persist in seeking immortal fame in material accomplishments:

> Where is the fame
> Which the vainglorious mighty of the earth
> Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
> From Time's light footfall, the minutest wave
> That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
> The unsubstantial bubble . . (III.138-143)

War is treated in detail as another distortion of human nature. Because the Old Testament celebrates the victories of the Hebrew nation, Shelley indicts the Hebrews and particularly Moses: "But what was he who taught them that the God/Of nature and benevolence hath given/A special sanction to the trade of blood?" (II.155-

157). (Here, as always, a Shelleyan attack on the Old Testament is an attack on what Shelley sees as an abuse, a distortion, or a violation of true religious spirit.)

The lust for wealth, also connected to unnatural pride, is singled out as a path to sin, and the fall of once free Greece and Rome to deceiving popes and tyrants is offered as a prime example of man's folly. Ianthe, grateful, assures Mab that she has learned from the "errors" and "folly" (III.9-10) just recounted. She is then led to the present for further instruction.

Kingship becomes the chief example of the present failure of virtue. Shelley defines the role of king as inherently vice-ridden, since a surfeit of luxury blinds the king to the needs of others. The origin of a social system based on royalty is vice. Its fruits are ". . .discord, war, and misery" (III.129). Once royalty is recognized as a natural enemy of virtue, kingship, Shelley affirms, will decay. That this has not happened before, he explains, is due to the troublesome human habit of following custom,[9] which blinds man to the truth that power in excess is as evil as obedience in excess. Obedience can make slaves of men, but all powerful authority will remain blind to newly emerging needs.

Virtuous souls pay heed to the "suggestions" of "Nature" (III.192), where cooperation among various physical forces insures peace and fruitfulness. The vir-

tuous, Shelley declares, must not seek power and must dedicate themselves to the perpetual criticism of the guilty and the relief of the distressed. Shelley's code of conduct for the virtuous is based upon a concept of the essential equality of mankind. Men are equal because deity (non-creative but all encompassing source of nature, change, and movement through time) is diffused into all things and each human heart. Out of this diffusion grows the power of inner, individual judgment, apparently a version of the Protestant view of conscience, "which surpasseth/The show of human justice/As God surpasses man" (III.224-225). Placing responsibility for mankind's miseries on inferior social organization, such as royalty and religion, for exerting baneful influences which have withered this human potential for "deeds of high resolve" (IV.55), Shelley absolves the eternal spirit of guilt, and looks toward the profitable exercise of individual effort in the reordering of society.

In a finger-pointing digression the poet, through Mab, addresses the powerful, exhorting them to recognize their vices and the secret fears which spring from them, while warning them in biblical voice that their sons shall pay for their sins. At this point a motif which recurs in all his mature poetry is introduced--the parallel between the fertilizing properties of dead leaves and trees and the new life embodied in the decay of

"suicidal selfishness" (V.16), from whose soil shall spring "all virtue, all delight, all love" (V.19). Optimism about the future expressed in this image springs from the conviction that things were not always the way they are now. The standard for human happiness to which Shelley aspires was set in Eden. Ianthe asks,

> Will not the universal Spirit e'er
> Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?
> (VI.21-22)

She is told that the means to restoration will be "some eminent in virtue" (VI.33) who with "The truths of their pure lips, that never die,/Shall bind the scorpion falsehood" (VI.35-36). When the virtuous gather together, man and nature will coalesce in "regeneration's work" (VI.43).

Included in his survey of the present is Shelley's long attack on the Judaeo-Christian conception of God and organized Christianity. Probably strongly influenced, Kenneth Neill Cameron points out,[10] by Volney's The Ruins, this lengthy, furious assault disturbs the poem's balance. However, Shelley sees correction of the past as the means to future progress. All aspects of religious tradition that serve as obstacles to the regeneration he anticipates must be destroyed; whatever is of worth will be incorporated into his doctrine. The Old-Testament "avenging god" (VI.104) is likened to an earthly king whose history is replete with "murder, rapine, violence, and crime" (VI. 129). Religion has been not true religion but the "twin

sister" of "selfishness" (V.22).

Modifications are quickly offered. Shelley's version of deity does not admit of praise or prayer; yet it moves the world, inevitably, toward physical and moral improvement. The elimination of organized Christianity, a false religion, is a key step in bringing manking forward. In the absence of the hostile social institutions with which Christianity is inextricably wound, crimes against society will be unmasked. The "priests (who) dare babble of a God of peace,/Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood" (VII.44-45), have made Christianity an inversion of every holy value.

In the millenial world of Shelley's vision, Ahasuerus, the eternal votary of virtue, the supreme example of the human potential to resist hypocrisy, will be the model for all men. The "glorious destiny" (VIII.10) outlined in cantos VIII and IX will become reality, and a new man of untained mind and body, pure desires, and inner harmony between reason and passion will enjoy a regenerated world, the product of "consentaneous love" (VIII.108), virtuous effort, and the blindly working will of the spirit of Necessity (VIII.4).

In preparation for this millenial change Shelley compares the present earth to the heavens, the millenial model, and points out the contrast in a variety of poetic effects. The motif of stainlessness characterizes the stellar world and distinguishes it from man's world,

marred by "The taint of earth-born atmospheres" (IV.153). The Christian religion in its established form is an obstacle to transformation because it "taintest all . . . (it) look'st upon!" (VI.72). Ianthe is recognized as a pure spirit when "Each stain of earthliness/Had passed away" (I.135), and all men will be as she is ". . . taintless in body and mind" (VIII.199) at the millenium.

Another recurring motif, that of activity and movement in the right direction, is emphasized as the means to change. Inaction and passivity are condemned, while life is defined as the spirit's "state of action" (IX.158). It is the role of the votary of virtue to "urge The restless wheels of being on their way" (IX.151-152). Shelley's God is himself a spirit of activity and life (V.147), and the very nature of life is to be "Still pressing forward where no term can be,/Like hungry and unresting flame" (VI.236-237). The god of Hebrew-Christian myth is mischievously attacked in these same terms, since he awoke to creation after an "eternity of idleness" (VII.106). Progress on the linear path of history requires movement. Inaction is clearly negative. If man is not a "glory," he is a "burden" (VIII.141). Man's current life is a "feverish dream of stagnant woe" (VIII.156), and oppressed man deprived of his arena of individual action becomes an inanimate object, an "article of trade" (VIII.176). The virtuous are those who are active in the work of change,

those "restless souls that ceaselessly/Throng through the human universe" (IX.23).

Shelley's central concern with the dichotomy between earth as it is and the "Happy Earth! reality of Heaven!" of millenial vision (IX.1) is also supported by distinctive syntactical patterning. All through the poem, groups of three nouns (sometimes adjectives or verbs) underscore those heavenly qualities represented in the present by the virtuous votaries, but destined to characterize all mankind in the happy future. He is confident that "youth, integrity, and loveliness" (X.14), as well as "all virtue, all delight, all love" (V.19), will spring from the decay of the present world and interact with that Spirit of the universe who is (in another triad) "active, steadfast, and eternal" (VI.156), to create a world of "virtue, love, and pleasure" (IX.75), at a time when life will be "peace, harmony and love" (III.196). This repetition of yoked words (sometimes a series of four or more) related to present hope or future vision functions as a structural element of the poem, recurring to keep before us both the object and the means of the good life. Manhood will become the "ripeness" of "Love, freedom and health" (VIII.15-16), and men who have within them "spirit, thought, and love" (IV.97) can become beings of "cloudless brain,/Untainted passion, and elevated will" (V.155).

Earthly life as it is, however, contrasts starkly with what it may become largely because of the "vulgar great,/The vainly rich, the miserable proud" (V. 56-57), and those who "quake, believe, and cringe" before them (IV.219). The latter series form part of a thread of opposing elements which describe unregenerated man. He is a victim of selfishness which is "frozen, unimpassioned spiritless" (V.25) and produces "disease, disgust and lassitude." Love in the present world has been "stifled drained and tainted" (V.43).

Many of these charged triads are cast in the rhetorical form of definition. When Shelley speaks of the "Ruin, death and woe" (IV.85) of war, he is actually defining it by a reduction to its component parts. Similarly, he defines the poor man's life in another triad as "misery, and fear, and care" (V.114). Such phrasing stimulates the reader to reconsider the meaning of these conditions, infusing such concepts as poverty and war with new power and immediacy. In defining virtue as "peace, happiness and harmony" (III.130), Shelley pinpoints the result of the social practice of virtue. Definition of terms is an essential part of Shelley's objective. He insists that his reader recognize the constituents of the world as it is, in order that he may be moved by the contrast between that negative reality and the picture of what is to come. On the basis of a clear distinction, he is confident, a

decision to work toward the future will be made.

Richard Harter Fogle in The Imagery of Keats and Shelley finds in Shelley's mataphorical language the expression of a "restless energy of aspiration."[11] This energy expresses itself also in a syntax bursting with accumulated definitions, epithets, and metaphors designed to illuminate his vision of what is and what may be. In Book V the dehumanized quality of the "hosts" (V.69) who obey the tyrant's will is conveyed through successive mataphoric identifications. Shelley thrusts the unflattering picture at us, calling them "blind and unresisting dupes" (V.69), "puppets" (V.71), "slaves" (V.72), "Scarce living pulleys" (V.76), "wheels of work" (V.77), and "articles of trade" (V.77). Adding two modifying phrases he conveys his vision through nine lines of bombardment by accumulated definitions. An extended definition of the king's "guards" also illustrates this pattern. They are called in succession: "hired bravos" (IV.178), "bullies of his fear" (IV.179), "the sinks and channels of worst vice" (IV.180), "The refuse of society" (IV.181), and the dregs of all . . .most vile" (IV.182).

The king himself is also described through an accumulation of identifications, less dramatic than those previously described because of appended modifiers, which tend to obscure the pattern. Introduced as "He" (III.29), he is then identified as "The King" (III.30), further

described as . . . "the wearer of a gilded chain" (III.30), defined in the next line as "the fool" (III.31) who is nicknamed a monarch, called "a slave" (III.32), and finally denigrated to "that man" (III.33). The monarch will be subjected to further description in this pattern in The Revolt of Islam where he is identified as "A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name" (R. of I.VII.V2874). A breathless, swift, blank verse is one of the consequences of these powerful accumulations. Sometimes unclear grammatical relations represent another consequence in Queen Mab, but often Shelley successfully orders his verbal exuberance through a parallel syntax.

Parallelism is useful also to underscore didactic intentions. As part of his attack on the abuses of Christianity, for example, Shelley specifies various hypocrisies associated with the concepts of God, heaven, and hell, affirming that the God of love is really a god of vengeance, that punishment is really extended misery for long-time victims, and that heaven is the reward for inhumanity rather than virtue. That all of these concepts have been equally distorted Shelley underscores by expressing them in parallel syntactical structure--nominative plus copula (understood) (IV.210-220). On three metaphors he hangs extended modifiers, creating what may be broken down into three, three - four line groupings:

> . . . God, Hell and Heaven.
> A vengeful, pitiless, and almight fiend,
> Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage
> Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
>
> Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
> Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
> Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
> Whose life has been a penance for its crimes
>
> And heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
> Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe
> Before the mockeries of earthly power
> (IV. 210-220)

Shelley uses parallelism to express the contrast between his vision of virtuous man, alive to his spiritual possibilities, and the majority of men who have lost their spiritual centers. By couching these extremes in parallel grammatical forms, such as the prepositional phrases of the following example, the distance between them is ironically emphasized:

> Man is of soul and body, formed . . .
> . . . . . .
> To sour unwearied, fearlessly to turn (to)
> The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste
> The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield
>
> Or he is formed for objectness and woe,
>
> To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
> To shrink at every wound, to quench the flame
> Of natural love in sensualism, to know . . .
> (IV.154-162)

Linking verbs and adjectives, and nouns in pairs, Shelley emphasizes, through this common parallel structure, their relation to the initial pair of antonyms in the quotation below. That the opposing extremes are, ironically, both

negative sources of the same unhappy results is clearly emphasized:

> But Poverty and Wealth with equal hand
> Scatter their withering curses, and unfold
> The doors of premature and violent death,
> To pining famine and full fed disease,
> (V.46-49)

Parallel phrasal parts also function to clarify the central dichotomy between oppressor and oppressed that must be overcome before earth can become heaven. In the following example, pairs of nouns and adjectives that indicate various aspects of man's oppressed condition reinforce each other to contrast dramatically with the final pair:

> Even as the slaves by force or famine driven,
> Beneath a vulgar master to perform
> A task of cold and brutal drudgery;--
> Hardened to hope, insensible to fear,
> Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
> Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
> That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!
> (V.72-78)

Because it is structurally linked, yet lexically antagonistic, to all that has gone before, the "proud and noisy pomp of wealth" (the only pair to describe the oppressor) emphasizes the connection between the drudgery of some and the wealth of others.

Shelley deliberately and consistently uses negatives in describing what is heavenly, suggesting always the superiority of the heavenly model.

Accordingly, he takes us in Mab from earth to heaven in a chariot which radiates colors that "Are such as may not find/ Comparison on earth" (I.58-59). Mab herself is "So bright, so fair, so wild a shape" (I.74) as "not the visioned poet in his dreams" (I.68) "Hath ever yet beheld" (I.75). Her palace, described through negations in a series of parallel forms, is found superior to the loveliest scenes earth has to offer:

> Yet not the golden islands
> Gleaming in yon flood of light,
> Nor the feathery curtains
> Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch,
> Nor the burnished Ocean waves
> Paving that gorgeous dome
> So fair, so wonderful a sight
> As Mab's aethereal palace could afford.
> (II.22-29)

The effect produced on observers by Mab and her chariot is also offered in negations which create an expectation that reinforces the final positive statement:

> Those who have looked upon the sight,
> Passing all human glory,
> Saw not the yellow moon,
> Saw not the mortal scene,
> Heard not the night wind's rush,
> Heard not an earthly sound,
> Saw but the fairy pageant,
> Heard but the heavenly strains
> That filled the lonely dwelling.
> (I.85-93)

Subtleties of syntactic manipulation in the service of his message to his fellow men do not end with Shelley's parallelism or negatives. Wishing to impress upon us how easily we may be duped into self-complacency,

he describes the "man of ease" (V.103) (a phrase of biblical origin).[12] In a long modifying clause which gives way five lines later to the rather startling force of the predicate "Is duped" (V.108), he causes us to alter sharply our judgment of the man of ease who did not appear at first (from the details "warm fireside," "charitable intercourse," and "common laws of decency and prejudice") to be quite so blameworthy. The syntactical arrangement "dupes" us, just as Shelley tells us the man of ease has been duped:

> The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside,
> To deeds of charitable intercourse,
> And bare fulfillment of the common laws
> Of decency and prejudice, confines
> The struggling nature of his human heart,
> Is duped by their cold sophistry;
> (V.103-108)

The overall style of Queen Mab is affected by Shelley's curious ambivalence toward the Bible and the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, from which both its millenial vision and historical outlook are drawn. Deliberate borrowings of biblical image and tone)as well as less obvious syntactical similarities) are juxtaposed against a scathing critique of some aspects of doctrine, while other concepts fundamental to the tradition are unhesitatingly incorporated into the text. Biblical overtones are as strong in Queen Mab as they are in its most obvious source--Political Justice.

In quest of an authoritative commanding voice, the youthful Shelley peppers his diction with notably biblical words. Kings are meant to feel threatened by Shelley's vision of "Palymra's ruined palaces!" (II.110), modeled upon Isaiah's thorn-filled palaces (Isaiah 34.13), and the biblical "multitudes" (Isaiah 13.4) reappear in Queen Mab in statements such as ". . .strong the arm/That scatters multitudes" (III.146). Isaiah calls the "nations" (Isaiah 34.1), and Shelley issues a similar call from the voice of a multi-faceted "Reason" ("And when Reason's voice . . . shall have waked/The nations") (III.127). Pomp, a biblical evil ("I will also make the pomp of the strong to cease") (Ezekiel 7.24), "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave" (Isaiah 14.11), is attacked in Queen Mab as characteristic of both the priest who needs "A little passing pomp, some servile souls" (Q.M.V.200) and the king ("A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self!") (Q.M.IV.245).

The biblical cankerworm ("the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar," Joel 2.25) blights anew the spirit of rising generations in Queen Mab ("Red glows the tyrant's stamp-mark on its bloom/Withering and cankering deep . . .," Q.M.IV.230-231), and lines of inheritance are once again traced through the verb "beget" (these beget/Evil and good: hence truth and false-hood spring;" A.M.IV.146). The reader's attention is also claimed by exclamations at the beginning of clauses,

typical of biblical diction, such as: "Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell/The spot whereon they stand" (Q.M. II.130-131), ("yea, than the mighty waves of the sea") (Psalm 93:4), or "Behold! where pleasure smiled (Q.M.II.112) ("And behold, there came a great wind," Job 1.19).

Bennet Weaver, who traces in The Understanding of Shelley some of the abundant biblical sources evident in Queen Mab, concludes that "we may contemplate with great enrichment the profound and almost primordial sympathies which exist between the Hebrew mind and the mind of Shelley."[13] With specific reference to Queen Mab he draws upon various letters of 1813 to Elizabeth Hitchener and Thomas Hookam in which Shelley refers to his projected work Biblical Extracts to speculate that while Shelley was composing Queen Mab, he was also engaged in a study of the Bible designed to select "all the good of the Jewish books" (Feb. 27, 1813 to Miss Hitchener).[14]

Weaver contends that the earth described in Queen Mab is also the earth of the biblical prophets, and earth divided by the,

> ...war of good and evil, which the resolute will of the righteous shall bring to a fair end. There were kings, priests, nobles, judges, and soldiers with their tyranny, their false religion, their wealth, their perversions, and their bloody game of power. There were the poor, there was suffering, there was need of love.[15]

We can extend Weaver's record of biblical references. Recurring descriptions of the heavens as a curtain ("Nor the feathery curtains/Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch") (II.24-25) echo the Psalms where God "stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Psalm 104.2). The link between pollution and oppression in Queen Mab ("Power like a desolating pestilence,/Pollutes whate'er it touches") (III.176-177) echoes Zephaniah's cry ("Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city!") (Zephaniah 3.1). Old Testament influence on Queen Mab is however, even more extensive than both these and Bennet Weaver's observations would suggest, for several of the distinctive syntactical patterns which operate in Mab may also be found in the Old Testament.

Shelley's propensity for definition and redefinition through an accumulation of metaphor has already been noted. This technique, which he molds to didactic purpose, expressing a clear and unmistakable delineation of negative and positive values, is also a favorite of Isaiah, who often illustrates his point with successive identifications:

> Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
> a seed of evildores, children that are corrupters
> (Isaiah 1.4)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength
> to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm,
> a shadow from the heat"
> (Isaiah 25.4)

. . . . . .

> And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a beseiged city.
>
> (Isaiah 1.8)

Shelley also follows biblical syntactical structure when he utilizes the "how" construction typical of the prophets and psalmists. "How vainly seek/The selfish for that happiness denied/To aught but virtue!" (Q.M. V.237-238) echoes the psalmist's, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! (Psalm 36.77) or "How terrible art thou in thy works! (Psalm 66.3). The desired impression is that of awe and wonder as in Shelley's "How bold the flight of Passion's wandering wing" (Q.M. VI.58) or "How terrorless the triumph of the grave!" (Q.M. VI.61). Several such lines in the same passage underscore the amazing attributes of human nature on a millenial earth:

> How vigorous then the athletic form of age!
> How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
> . . . . . .
> How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
>
> (Q.M. IX.65-70)

When intensity of feeling is his object, Shelley will often group together a succession of phrases beginning with the same preposition, as in this indictment of evils out of which kings arise:

> . . .From vice, black loathsome vice;
> From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong;

> From all that 'genders misery' and makes
> Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
> Revenge and murder. . .
>
> (III.122-126)

Repetition of the prepositional phrase increases the force of the message. Each new object provides a further increment to the general indictment and reminds us (through parallel form) of its predecessors. Shelley achieves an effect which is similar to Zephaniah's warning:

> yea, gather together, O nation not desired; Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.
>
> (Zepaniah 2.1-2)

A syntax dominated by successive repetition of grammatical elements supports didactic aims. Shelley questions the erring king:

> Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth
> To twine its roots around thy coffined clay,
> (to) Spring from thy bones, and (to) blossom on thy tomb,
>
> (Q.M. IV.262-264)

Although he may, as above, suppress the "to" of the infinitive, once again repetition is an effective element in the intensity of his warning. An insistent reiteration similar to common biblical patterns is the syntactical basis of the excitement in Queen Mab. In passages of greatest intensity, where the syntax is straining toward the millenial goal,

recurring repetitions of words, phrases, and clauses in parallel form pursue their object with a breathless, stubborn insistence. Repetitions suggest determination, and a syntax replete with repeated elements moves us in the straight path that reflects Shelley's view of history. The following passage proceeds, for example, from a survey of organized evil and its consequences to the millenium through noun triads and repetitions of parallel forms. An exhortation to battle adapted from biblical sources[16] appears amid these energetic repetitions which push forward to a future superior to the biblical Eden:

> From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
> Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,
> Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
> Strike at the root, the poison tree will fall;
> And where its venomed exhaltations 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
>
> (II.80-89)

The forward movement of this passage mirrors the pattern of the whole poem; an impulse toward progress that is undeterred by doubt demolishes adversary after adversary, clearing a path to the millenium. The energy of the syntax is itself an example of the motif of vigorous action which the poem celebrates. Each of Mab and Ianthe's excursions into verbal battle with evil end in renewed confidence in the millenial future. In the very first book Ianthe's fixed goal is "That peace, which in the end all life will share"

(I.185). Encounters with the evils of present and past do not diminish her confidence that,

> (man's) age of endless peace,
> Which time is fast maturing
> Will swiftly, surely come;
> (III.235-37)

Faith in both man's potential and the unerring power of nature, whose "will (man) unconsciously fulfilleth" (III. 234). shapes the assurance with which each book of Queen Mab predicts the "brighter morn (which) awaits the human day" (V.251). The final prediction of the future in Queen Mab is really an elaboration upon the changes which Isaiah foresees in his vision of millenial life on God's holy mountain. The "weaned child (who) shall put his hand on the cockatrice den"[17] (Isaiah II.8) becomes Shelley's,

> . . . .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 Shelley's millenium "frozen billows" (VIII.59) have changed to fragrant zephyrs (VIII.64), the immeasurable sand (VIII.70) to countless rills and shady woods (VIII.75). The millenium is achieved in the final vision of Queen Mab where the "happy Earth" becomes the reality of Heaven (IV.II).

FOOTNOTES

[1] Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages, 2nd ed., rev. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p.13.

[2] Cohn, pp. 13-14, 281.

[3] Cohn, p.22.

[4] Cohn, p.33.

[5] Cohn, p. 22.

[6] Michael Fixler, Milton and the Kingdoms of God, p.26. I follow closely here Fixler's formulation of Puritan historical thought.

[7] Kenneth Neill Cameron, The Young Shelley: Genesis of a Radical (New York: Macmillan, 1950), p.70.

[8] Cameron, pp.263-64.

[9] Shelley's belief that outworn custom has been a source of human misery and error is also prominent in Milton's prose, where custom and conformity are consistently seen as negative historical forces: The Areopagitica contains four negative references to custom; in the Divorce Tracts custom is explicitly equated with evil; religious belief based on awe and custom is declared pointless in The Reason of Church Government; error and custom are cited as complementary forces having the power to chase truth and wisdom from human life in Of Reformation, and custom is castigated as the chief support of royalty in The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates and in Eikonoklastes.

[10] Cameron, p.244.

11 Richard Harter Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley: A Comparative Study (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina, 1949), p. 218.

12 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud (Psalm 123.19).

> He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. (Job 12.5)

Wordsworth also uses the phrase, although to different purpose, in The Old Cumberland Beggar, ll.116-120, 133-46.

13 Bennet Weaver, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, p. 154.

14 Weaver, p. 96.

15 Weaver, p.98.

16 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? (Isaiah 10.15)

. . .and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, (Isaiah 10.33).

17 Shelley's basilisk is a synonym for Isaiah's cockatrice. Both refer to a monster supposedly hatched from a cock's egg by a serpent.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM--PROPHETIC MODE, PROPHETIC HISTORY

The Revolt of Islam is Shelley's second attempt to implement the millenial vision. The first canto recounts the experiences of a sympathetic female figure who suffers with and for a tortured serpent, symbolic of the eternal spirit of good. Having been awakened by a visit of this spirit (in the guise of the morning star)[1] to a divine mission on her behalf, she shares in "fearless deeds" (I.XLIV.517), "brave s death for liberty and truth" (I.XLIV.519), and "spurn s . . . peace, and power, and fame" (I.XLIV.520), maintaining her faith when all hope for his cause is lost. Rewarded with the prize that is won by "virtue's votary in Queen Mab--participation in the divine, she is brought forth as a shadow of the morning star to be forever housed in an eternal temple of the spirit:

> It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
> Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream
> Reared in the cities of enchanted land:
> (I.XLIX.559-561)

Reminiscent of the description of Queen Mab's heavenly car and palace (Q.M. 68-93, II.22-29), Shelley's use of

negation confirms the temple's location in that heavenly state toward which earth aspires.[2]

This opening canto determines the perspective in which we view the struggles of the human hero and heroine, Laon and Cythna, in succeeding cantos, as they, emulating their divine counterparts, endeavor to bring earth into a state of millenial bliss. Obvious parallels between the major characters and the divine symbols of the opening suggest a relationship between mortal leaders and immortal forces, which frames Laon and Cythna's revolutionary efforts against a background of greater than human concerns. Also, at the close of the poem, Laon and Cythna are guided toward eternal life in the temple of the spirit. They have responded positively to the moral direction made inevitable by the force of Necessity:

> . . .One [who] comes behind
> Who aye the future to the past will bind--
> Necessity, whose sightless strength forever
> Evil with evil, good with good must wind
> In bands of union, which no power may sever:
> (IX.XXVII.3706-3710)

Their actions demonstrate Donald Reiman's definition of the Shelleyan man's response to the "undergirding Creative Spirit"[3] which Shelley finds behind both man and nature. Both Laon and Cythna are able to respond to what Reiman calls "the vital creative principle" and they are examples of men acting as "co-workers with it in its task of creating a significant universe out of chaos."[4] In the

relationship between man and informing spirit which Reiman characterizes as that of co-workers, there is a strong resemblance to Old Testament conceptions of the relation of man to deity.

For the Old Testament, man is "the partner of Deity in an historical enterprise. His life is invested not merely with purpose but with divine purpose."[5] According to Gerhard von Rad, it is the prophets in particular who are concerned with man's obligation to historical events, which they considered to be divided into "divine and human constituent parts."[6] In The Revolt of Islam Laon and Cythna are the human constituents who respond to the historical opportunities offered in the unfolding of Necessity. Out of the workings of Necessity, which Gerald McNiece (in Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea) recognizes as Shelley's "way of explaining history,"[7] grow the possibilities for change in the social order. The course of history is, however, contingent upon man's reaction to these possibilities. (Shelley says, after Paine, that man cannot make opportunities, but "may seize those that offer.")[8] This view of the dynamic partnership of man and Necessity is very close to the Hebrew concept of a God who speaks to his people in and through history.[9] The Hebrew was called upon to respond properly to those divine manifestations in the history of his nation, known as saving events, historical landmarks, or turning points in the life of the people which affirm God's concern and, if suitably answered, his providential

design. Similarly, for Shelley the positive direction of Necessity is expressed in certain proud accomplishments of man's history--the flowering of Athens, early English democracy, and the new world which inherits the mantle of the promised land (XI.XXII).

The notion that man has the capacity to respond to the energies of a vital principle, such as Shelley's Necessity, is predicated upon a positive view of human capability. Gerald McNiece in Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea discusses what seems to be a conflict in Shelley's perception of man. He finds Shelley wavering from a view of man as a passive creature of circumstance to a portrayal that credits him with the capacity to will and to perform what is good.[10]

McNiece attempts to resolve this contradiction by postulating a theory of mind that includes both higher and lower levels of passivity.[11] There is, however, ample biblical precedent for Shelley's two-sided presentation of man. The Old Testament prophet is both a passive recipient before divine inspiration and an active communicator of the "word," as well as an initiator of action. The higher passivity, which McNiece characterizes as the knowledge attained by "hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration" (Defense of Poetry, Clarke, p. 297), corresponds directly to the receptivity of the biblical prophet. Man can be at once passive in terms of receiving higher inspiration and yet capable of activity in terms of fulfilling those higher expectations, or in moving others to

fulfill them. Exhortation, a form of prophetic activity, is a great positive in both Shelley and the Bible.

In order to appreciate the parallels between Shelley's conception of history and the reciprocity in the relationship of man to God celebrated in the writings of the prophets, it is essential to explore in detail Shelley's use of the figure of the biblical prophet in shaping the heroes of The Revolt.[12] When Laon takes up the suffering serpent's burden and identifies himself with the cause of good, he, like the Hebrew prophets, by an act of will makes what Abraham Heschel calls an emotional identification with the "divine pathos."[13]

His identification with a higher good manifests "that concern and involvement" which, according to Heschel, is the place in Old Testament theology where "the divine and the human meet."[14] Shelley suggests, in fact, that very meeting of the human and divine at several symbolic points in the poem. For example, the spot to which Laon and Cythna, deceived by the tyrant, flee in canto VI, is the "home of things immortal" (VI.XXXVI.2571) as well as the repository of history. The spot itself is a ruin where gather "Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go/And must inherit all he builds below" (VI.XXCII.2572-2573). It is a spot "for ever haunted/By the choicest winds of Heaven" (VI.XXIII.2536-2537). In addition to wind and mountain images that imply Laon's access to a

higher power and knowledge, his suffering on a rock-based column, "Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky" (III.XII.1208), indicates his status as a prophet. He has stood higher and therefore seen more clearly, so clearly that he ". . . tore the veil that hid/Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,--/As one who from some mountain's pyramid/Points to the unrisen sun!" (IX.VIII. 3523-3526). As proof of his power the "shades flee" (IX.VII.3527).

Already set apart from his fellows by his vision of the "unrisen sun," Laon's association with divine power is specifically symbolized in his final voyage to the Temple of the Spirit, which Gerald McNiece characterizes as the fifth ingredient of Shelley's revolutionary pattern "the final turn to extramental and extrahuman consolations and sources of strength."[15]

Extrahuman connotations are to be found in Shelley's presentation of Cythna as well. She, appearing for Laon's rescue just at the moment when he, "Vanquished and faint," is feeling "the grasp of bloody hands" (VI.XVIII.2499), puts a "sudden terror" (VI.XIX.2497) into his foes. Arriving on "A black Tartarian horse of giant frame" (XI.XIX.2499), she looks "like to an Angel, robed in white, . . . waving a sword" (VI.XIX.2502-2503), like a "Phantom swift and bright" (VI.XIX.2505). At the sight of this phantom or angel "the hosts recede/And fly" (VI.XIX.2503-2504), as they do before the horseman who

"lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear" leaving a ". . .multitude of slain" in the prophecy of Nahum (3.3). Their steed's hoofs ". . . ground the rocks to fire and dust" and they leave in a turbulence likened to the biblical symbol of God's voice "a whirlwinds gust" (VI.XXII.2524-2526).

Laon and Cythna display all of the fundamental attitudes and responses that characterize the Old Testament prophets. Just as the contemporaries of the biblical prophets recognized the prophet's accord with God, Laon and Cythna's followers regard them as the bearers of true wisdom. Laon is as sure of his doctrine as the biblical prophet was sure that God had taken him into his confidence. The prophet's mode of fulfilling personally the demands he receives in revelation Abraham Heschel describes as "An emotional religion of sympathy."[16] The unique aspects of this prophetic state of sympathy are self-dedication involving the re-direction of emotion, the opening of the self to the presence of others, and action, since only action "will mitigate the world's misery . . . and relieve the tension between God and man."[17]

This prophetic religion of sympathy, with which the Old Testament prophet responds to the divine situation, is a dominant feature of Laon and Cythna's behavior. Laon "wept unwilling tears" over human history (II.III.686) "And in no careless heart transcribed the tale" (II.IX.740),

while Cythna through understanding sympathy wrought miraculous changes in enslaved human beings: "And sympathy made each attendant slave/Fearless and free. . ." (VII.VII.2890-2891). To her receptive sympathetic powers, to what Heschel calls "living with another person," rather than "living the situation of another person,"[18] Cythna ascribed her power to kindle in the minds of others a desire for renovation. Because she can enter into the inner lives of other human beings, she can exert an influence upon them.

> . . .thus I grew
> Familiar with the shock and the surprise
> And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
> The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew
> (VII.XXXIV.3132-3135)

Cythna (like biblical prophets who considered themselves chosen for their calling) declares that her spirit and Laon's are fated "to make the woes/Of humankind their prey" (VII.XXCII.3077-3078). Laon's dedication to waking "The multitude" (II.XIV.784) also rests upon him as a burden

> And ever from that hour upon me lay
> The burden of this hope, and night or day,
> In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
> Among mankind, or when gone far away
> To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest
> Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.
> (II.XV.796-801)

However, as Gerhard von Rad points out, the prophets were chosen, but they in turn also chose their burdens and the suffering which their burdens entailed,

so that the Old Testament prophet in "some mysterious way [was] free to choose suffering and so to stand up to God's test."[19] He traces, from Jeremiah on, the concept of the prophet's burden, which Shelley depicts in Laon's suffering as he stops blows with his own flesh and readily accepts the necessity of pain. Although bound by the Tyrant's men, Laon appears ". . .exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears" (XII.II4467). We learn that "his heart seems reconciled/To all things and itself, like a reposing child" (XII.III.4476). Laon in this guise represents the Old Testament prophetic tradition of the suffering servant, who, for the sake of his people, accepts his burdens "in patient mood" (VIII.XI.3296).

Dreams, visions and revelations also play a role in his leadership, connecting him once again with biblical tradition. His initial vision of the conflict between good and evil occurs within the context of a dramatic war-like storm, where "lightnings yawn/Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps/Glitter and boil beneath" (I.III.146-148). Dream functions as a warning of real events when Laon dreams of "Legions of foul and ghastly shapes" (III.V.II49(and awakens to find his cottage filled with the tyrant's soldiers (III.VI). Underscoring the prophet identification in various ways, Shelley rejects typically negative attitudes[20] toward this role in Cythna's report ("Some said I was a maniac wild . . ." IX.VIII.3532) and "Some said, I was a fiend from my wierd cave" (IX.VIII.3535). In Laon and Cythna are

blended all the traditional biblical aspects of the prophet figure. They indict the miscarriage of justice and the exploitation of the weak, and assume political leadership. (Laon's role as both politician and military leader has antecedents in the legends of Elisha, who appointed kings and hatched revolutions, as well as in the writings of Isaiah, who sees the "real significance of divine law . . . in . . . political contexts").[21]

The essential power of the biblical prophet, however, rested in his words. According to von Rad, the conviction that the word possessed creative power is the starting point of Hebrew thought.[22] "God's thoughts and designs," he explains, begin "their historical fulfillment [as] . . . words on the lips of the prophet."[23] Like his biblical models Laon's true strength lies in his words. They are his weapons (II.XX.842).[24] The hermit affirms this power in Laon's verse (IV.XVIII.1570) and Laon himself declares that ". . . all things became/Slaves to my holy and heroic verse" (II.XXX.933-34). It is Laon's lips which Shelley calls divine (XII.XXIV.4661), and his words become a divine activity as they give life to "Thoughts. . . whose powers can sleep no more!" (C.V.6.2260). [Cythna's tones also, associated with divinity by their likeness to the "lingering winds"] (C.V.LII.2276), boast charismatic power, for her speech ". . . could teach/To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach " (C.V.LII.2279-2280). The word is to "clothe in

light fields and cities of the free" (V.5.2256), while virtue itself is characterized by its "adamantine eloquence" (IV.XIX.1581). In eloquence lies the power of change. Cythna tells Laon that millions had gathered in hope drawn by his own "wild songs" (IX.XII.3574).

Metaphoric usage confirms the relationship between Shelley's motif of the power of the word and biblical thought. Laon's holy words are driven "over the earth" in the form of "winged seeds" of truth (IX.XXI.3649-3650). In The Revolt of Islam, Shelley elaborates his central nature motif of autumn, winter, and spring, in relation to moral regeneration. The original source of his identification of the seed with the word of truth is likely to have been Isaiah, who (speaking for God) declares:

> For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
> So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: (Isaiah 55.10-11)

In Shelley's conceit the prophets are the autumn winds ("We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade/Expiring in the frore and foggy air") (IX.XXV.3686-3687) whose function is to spread the knowledge of truth. They are also likened to the whirlwind which carries associations to God's voice in Job. ("He has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven/Truth's deathless germs...?) (IX.XXIII. 3669-3670). The seeds do not sprout immediately, how-

ever. Winter intervenes, according to Shelley, and "human hearts, are bound in "repose abhorred" (IX.XXIII.3675). Fulfillment of the seed's promise will not come until spring (IX.XXV.3688). Meanwhile, "The seeds are sleeping in the soil" (IX.XXIV.3676), but they will blossom forth into "a . . .Spring of hope and love, and youth, and gladness" (IX.XXII.3658). Again, we may turn to biblical imagery of the seasons for a link between moral regeneration and spring. Isaiah declares:

> For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.
> (Isaiah 61.11)

The essence of Shelley's millenial vision is contained in the future orientation of this spring-seed and regeneration conceit. It is not accidental that its source is biblical, since the idea of fulfillment in the future is a major premise of the eschatological view of history (the historical outlook common to the prophetic writings of the Old Testament). The prophets envisioned God meeting Israel with a new event which would supersede the present. This "Eschatological element"--a "turning toward the future,"[25] was rooted in the conviction of the coming of a new era. The prophets anticipated a new historical action, reflecting both the termination of Israel's existence at that time and the inauguration of a new age.[26] Acting on this belief, their message was to

make clear that the trust of their contemporaries in God's salvation was illusory. Past history up to their own time, they declared, had been a failure. Gerhard von Rad asserts that the "prophets increasingly wrote off the reigning members of the house of David of their own day and . . . that they regarded the whole history of the Monarchy from the time of David as a false development.[27]

In Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus Unbound Shelley follows the basic premise of this historical view. He sees the course of world history as having failed. The world has been in an "unquiet trance" (II.XLV. 1068). As the result of following a false course, Laon's land in the Revolt of Islan--"by a fell bane/was withered up" (II.IV.694-95). Reviewing the past Shelley finds in The Revolt, as he did in Mab, that error has corrupted man's path. Man's course is totally wrong ". . .he is pursuing/O, blind and willing wretch!--his own obscure undoing" (VIII.XIV.3323-3324). History has served only to bring the world (potentially, the "home of happy spirits" II.VI.712) to a state that Laon describes as ". . . a dungeon to my blasted kind" (II.VI.713). This course of history is not, however, to continue. The biblical prophets saw their nation as "standing on the threshold of an entirely new action on God's part,"[28] and Laon, too, teaches that a change is approaching:

> . . .The victor Fiend,
> Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
> His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
> An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.
> (I.XXIV.429-439)

Although that change will come, it may be postponed until a future generation.[29] Both Old Testament writers and Laon recognize that their promise may have to await its fulfillment. Laon declares that for his contemporaries:

> . . .evil casts a shade,
> Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
> the nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.
> (XI.XV.4357-4359)

The interval that may intervene, cannot, however, be allowed to obscure the bright outlook for the future. Shelley's much criticized optimism, an essential part of the millenial motif in all of his poems about the salvation of man, is rooted in the open-ended future-oriented expectations of the prophetic view of history. Hope for the future is a key element in each one of Shelley's works that refers to a millenial future. In the Revolt of Islam he symbolized this key concept in Cythna's child, who suggests both hope's place in the natural world and its divine origin. We are told that the child was for Cythna a ". . .dream divine" (VII.XVIII.2987). She had the power to destroy her mother's "mortal fears" (VII. XIX.2998). Hope was ". . . the dream for which (her) . . .spirit yearned with more than human love. . ." (VII. XXIV.3044-3045). The child was also ". . .like a rainbow

braided/Within some storm . . ." (V.XXIV.1927-1928). Even to the symbol of evil, the tyrant, hope is available. The child, hope, was "the only living thing/ . . .who solace sought to bring/In his abandonment!" (V.XXI.1901-1904). Because the king, however, a victim of custom and selfishness, cannot avail himself of the possibilities that she offers, with him hope remains "a nursling of captivity/ [who] Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be" (V.XXVII.1961-1962). For Shelley, as well as the Old Testament writers, hope represents a projection of the future into the present. The child in The Revolt of Islam seems to serve the function reserved for the signs or symbolic acts of the prophets in the Old Testament. Such a sign is considered to be a "creative prefiguration"[30] of the future which the prophet foresees. The sign or symbol itself begins the process of realizing that future, becoming "an intensified form of prophetic speech."[31] In the same manner Laon and Cythna's often stated convictions about hope are concentrated in the figure of their child, whose behavior toward the tyrant is both a solace in the evil ridden present and a prefiguration of human behavior in the millenial future.

In Shelley's millenial vision there is one element more vital than hope. That element is love, which is given only passing attention in Queen Mab, but assumes greater significance in The Revolt of Islam, and finally becomes central to the argument of Prometheus Unbound,

remaining an essential force in all other instances of Shelley's poetic concern with the millenial theme. The love shared by Laon and Cythna is an amalgamation of romantic feeling and dedication to social welfare. It symbolizes their own partnership with an immortal principle of good. What they seek in each other transcends a fulfillment of desire--it is a growth of the self, through love, to its greatest potential:

> Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,
> Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
> So to become most good and great and free.
> (II.XL. 1020-1022)

Expansion and expression of the self involves, for them, duty to mankind. Their love for each other cannot be separated from their obligation to prophesy and work for change. When Laon imstakenly believes that Cythna is dead, he likens himself to the cloud, which having lost the sun's beams still goes on to his task of pouring "rain upon earth" (IV.XXXI.1690).

Their sense of obligation to a higher duty suggests the meaning of the Hebrew word "hesed," which, according to Harold Fisch, translates as "Covenant love," a love rooted in a natural relationships, close to the idea of "loving kindness" and descriptive of God's relationship with man.[32] Shelley follows Old Testament motifs in his portrayal of the union of Laon and Cythna. In biblical tradition, marriage is a form of covenant and the marriage metaphor represents God's unique covenant with Israel

(Proverbs 2:17; Malachi 2:4-14).[33] Sexual union becomes the symbol of the covenant, suggesting the partnership between God and man. That Laon and Cythna's love is also a covenant marked by the assumption of a prophetic burden, which puts them into a special relation with the divine, Shelley emphasizes when his protagonists recognize, declare, and consummate their relationship amidst divinely associated symbols of light, wind, and heavens:

> A wandering meteor by some wild winds sent
> Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
> A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
> Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,
> Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
> A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue/
> (VI.XXXII.2617-2622)

To underscore the transcendent nature of their union, he explicityly identifies their love with immortal power. Canto VI, verse XXXVI asks:

> . . .What are kisses whose fire clasps
> The failing heart in languishment . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . .What is the strong control
> Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
> Where far over the world those vapours roll,
> Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?
> (VI.XXXVI.2650-2658)

and Canto XXXVII answers:

> It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
> But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
> Whose divine darkness, fled not, from that green
> And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie
> Our linked frames till, from the changing sky,
> That night and still another day had fled:
> (VI.XXXVII.2659-2664)

A meteor appears at the moment of Cythna and Laon's physical union, a moment when time is transcended. Through their dedicated love they conquer time (a power promised to those devoted to virtue in Queen Mab):

> Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
> The seasons and mankind their changes know,
> Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?
> (VI.XXXV.2647-2649)

As the prophet with his message and his faith is a sign and an assurance, in biblical terms, of the fulfillment of his prophesy, so the love of Laon and Cythna is a microcosm and an assurance of the universal love that will be man's portion in the millenial future. Love enables them to go beyond the limitations of the present, to the future which they help to enact. Sitting next to Laon, hidden away for a short respite in the midst of the Tyrant's bloody victory, Cythna can say that ". . .violence and wrong are as a dream/Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream." (IX.XX.3647-3648). Love is the matrix for regeneration in both Queen Mab, where "all things are re-created and the flame/Of consentaneous love inspires all life" (VIII.107-108), and The Revolt of Islam, where the union of Laon and Cythna is a sacremental occasion, albeit without benefit of clergy. Various allusions to Eden suggest that Laon and Cythna are conveived as a new Adam and Eve attempting through love to re-create the world

after its wrong turn in history. They participate, for example, in a vegetarian feast which recalls the vegetarianism of Milton's Eden (V.LVI). Cythna's words after martyrdom with Laon "aye, this is paradise and not a dream" (XII.XXII.4643-4644) and Laon's recognition of the paradise within (IX.XXVI.3698) also suggest this identification.[34]

The classification of genre most suitable to The Revolt, in fact, may well be saga, saga in the biblical mould.[35] Shelley narrates an idealized version of a seminal event in the history of western civilization. Although he uses the French Revolution as his source for the abortive rebellion in The Revolt of Islam, he treats this event in the same manner that biblical narratives handle events in the history of Israel. The central significance of the revolution is thrust into the future, with the various parallels to actual french history playing a minor role. Eventual success for a revolution in the social order is indicated by the poem's autumn leaves conceit, its hope motif, and the divinity symbolism. Fashioned about an "historical kernel,"[36] as are the narrations of the Bible, Shelley's narrative, like that of the prophets, omits what is not pertinent to his design. (The Napoleonic period, for example, does not appear in The Revolt of Islam, which concludes with the restoration of the monarchy.) The meaning of Laon's revolutionary attempt extends far beyond the conclusion of his efforts.

As the divine future, according to Gerhard von Rad, is the focus of the biblical narratives of the Partiarchs, the story of the wandering in the wilderness, and all of the biblical sagas down to those of David's rise to power,[37] so the future enactment of the millenial vision is the major concern of The Revolt of Islam.

The revolution occurred once and failed; yet, the poem suggests, it continued (to eventual success) wherever virtuous leaders are willing to come forward. After Laon's sacrificial death, one "uprose among the multitude" (II.XXVII.4686) to predict:

> And to long ages shall this hour be known;
> And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
> Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.
> (II.XXIX.4708-4710)

To demonstrate the fearlessness of those who love mankind (XII.XXIX.4714-4716), he stabs himself, evoking a "murmur from the crowd, to tell/Of deep and might change . . ." (XII.XXX.4718-4719). We learn nothing more about this change, but the vitality of Laon's ideas and deeds have already suggested that his defeat is merely temporary. The Revolt of Islam closes in failure, but not in pessimism. There is confidence that Laon's model revolution will come to fruition in future human events.[37]

FOOTNOTES

[1] This symbol is derived from Hebrew-Christian tradition, although it is used within a mythological scheme borrowed from Peacock's Ahrimanes. Carlos Baker In Shelley's Major Poetry (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp.73-74 calls attention to its sources in Isaiah where the fall of the Assyrian king is compared to the descent of Lucifer, the morning star. He explains that some of the Church Fathers connected the passage with the fall of Satan in Revelation, giving rise to the equation of Luficer and Satan.

Following Hunt's suggestion, Baker also sees the double metamorphosis of the Serpent of Good at the end of the first canto as modeled upon Satan's return to Pandemonium in Book X of Paradise Lost. This is one among many allusions to Milton (and through him to the Hebrew-Christian tradition) in The Revolt of Islam. Brian Wilkie in Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition (Madison, Wic.: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p.127n. links them all to an implicit,

> . . . .broader metaphor which, through evoking the story of the Fall, implies Shelley's belief that evil and oppression are not part of the original order of things; in this respect at least Shelley's philosophy in The Revolt is closer to the Judaeo-Christian emphasis on historical act than to non-temporal myth.

[2] Similar examples are noted above chapter I, pp.35-36.

[3] Reiman, Percy Bysshe Shelley, p. 45.

[4] Ibid., p. 45.

[5] Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 107.

[6] von Rad, Old Testament Theology, II, 163.

[7] Gerald McNiece, Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), p. 144.

8 McNiece takes note of this sentiment at the beginning of Shelley's Irish Association pamphlet and refers to Paine's declaration that man can't make circumstances, but ". . .has it in his power to improve them when they occur." (I, 301). Shelley and the Revolutionary Idea, p. 175.

9 von Rad, II, 358.

10 McNiece, pp. 175-176.

11 McNiece, pp. 178-179.

12 Brian Wilkie, Romantic Poets and the Epic Tradition (Madison, Wisc.: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1965) p. 131, claims that Laon and Cythna, "are neither historical nor legendary; they are not already surrounded by an aura of associations, so that the reader cannot think of their deeds as having shaped the order he knows or of himself as extrapolating the protagonist's values".

This view disregards the entire biblical prophetic tradition, which Shelley's depiction of Laon and Cythna clearly recalls.

13 Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, II (1962; rpt. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971), p.99.

14 Heschel, p. 9.

15 McNiece, p. 196.

16 Heschel, p. 88.

17 Heschel, p. 89.

18 Heschel, p. 89.

19 von Rad, II, p. 76.

20 Heschel discusses early and modern attempts to denigrate prophets and prophecy in chapter 13, "Explanations of Prophetic Inspiration," The Prophets, II.

[21] von Rad, II, p. 150.

[22] von Rad, II, p. 86.

[23] von Rad, II, p. 95.

[24] Brian Wilkie cites several of the same quotations, pp. 139-40 and also points out the use of mural persuasion as a substitute for maritial struggle in The Revolt.

[25] von Rad, p. 113.

[26] von Rad, p. 113.

[27] von Rad, II, p. 171.

[28] von Rad, II, p. 402.

[29] The message of the biblical prophet was also applicable to future periods (cf. von Rad, II, pp. 41-49).

[30] von Rad, p. 96.

[31] von Rad, p. 96.

[32] Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 98.

[33] Milton Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 43

[34] Wilkie, pp. 127-128 also cites these allusions as a part of his review of "Miltonisms" in The Revolt of Islam.

[35] Wilkie, p. 119, attempting to fit The Revolt of Islam into the epic genre, admits as a problem for this labeling, the troublesome fact that in this poem ". . .the cosmic background . . .is more often the perennial truth of human nature in the continuum of history" than the traditional "one eternal and timeless" of epic. When The Revolt is viewed as a saga written in the biblical manner, however, its use of history as both the medium and the expression of the ideal

falls easily into the pattern of biblical narrative.

[36] von Rad, II. 420.

[37] von Rad, II, p. 423.

CHAPTER III

SYNTACTICAL MODES: *PROMETHEUS UNBOUND* AND *THE REVOLT OF ISLAM*

One aspect of Shelley's success in creating the messianic vision of *Prometheus Unbound* rests in the strength of his poetic syntax--a syntax that invokes biblical parallels and itself elicits the very responses commanded by the greatest of the Old Testament writers. While the obvious yea's and lo's of Mab disappear in *The Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*, the underlying repetition and parallelism of the earlier work persists, only in more subtle form.

Successive phrases, sometimes prepositional, as in the quotation below, suggest the syntax of Isaiah. They become emphatic through repetition and impress the reader with a comprehensiveness that grows from an accumulation of details. These effects contribute to the tone of authority which marks the prophetic voice in Shelley:

> The wild-eyed women throng around her path:
> *From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust*
> *Of meaner thralls, from the oppressors wrath,*
> (*R. OF I.* IV.XX.1585-1587)

and in Isaiah:

> For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.
> (Isaiah 21.5)

When noun phrase follows noun phrase in Shelley's frequent successions of "naming," the speaker seems to touch all possible aspects of his subject. His very inclusiveness impresses us as evidence of wide knowledge, here of an outer landscape:

> The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
> And the deep airs' unmeasured wildernesses,
> (P.U. IV.335-336)

Similarly in Isaiah:

> . . .and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.
> (Isaiah 19.3)

and in Job's inner landscape:

> Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightedness of thy ways?
> (Job 4.6)

Shelley often suppresses the preposition in his prepositional phrase series, unlike the biblical writers who repeat it, but the insistence of his tone is unaffected:

> . . .but others came
> Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
> Of the past world, (of) the vital words and (of) deeds
> Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
> (R. of I. II.II.679-682)

> And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.
> (Isaiah 25.6)

One outgrowth of Shelley's overall preference for repeating syntactical forms is the triad pattern-groups of three linked nouns, adjectives (or less frequently), verbs or adverbs--noted earlier in Queen Mab. This pattern can also be found in Shelley's favorite Old Testament writers. A typical noun triad, for example,

> Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
> Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
> (P.U. IV.300-301)

follows the syntax of Isaiah's"

> but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores:
> (Isaiah 1.6)

Shelley's verb triads share the same structure as those of Isaiah:

> . . .and on the heap
> Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow
> When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,
>
> . . .and they
> Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; . . .
> (P.U. IV.315-316)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> . . .and everything sown by the brooks
> shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.
> (Isaiah 19.7)

In Queen Mab, The Revolt, and Prometheus Unbound, repetitions of the same part of speech often go beyond the

three word pattern and become series--sometimes including phrasal and clausal modifiers. This series pattern clearly contributes to Shelley's rhetorical goal of definition, which is basic to the structure of his three visions of social salvation. The series, generally, defines a preceding noun. In the following quotation, for example, a series of nouns (some modified) defines the opening phrase "some comfort":

> All else who live and suffer take from thee
> Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
> And love though fleeting . . .
> (P.U. 0.187-189)

The same pattern also may be found in Isaiah. In the quotation below, the noun series defines the phrase "precious things," which precedes it:

> And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: . . . (Isaiah 39.2)

A series such as the following, defining birthright, can yield a breathless effect, a common characteristic of Shelley's style:

> . . .but he refused
> The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
> The skill which wields the elements, the thought
> Which pierces this dim universe like light,
> Self-empire, and the majesty of love;

None of Shelley's series requires as much breath, however, as Isaiah's catalog of what the Lord will take from the

daughters of Zion:

> In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of Their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,
> The chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers,
> The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings . . . etc.
>
> (Isaiah 3.18-20)

Within both the series and triad patterns, Shelley consistently uses recurrent general or abstract nouns which carry particular thematic significance. We can follow the interweaving of these abstractions as, through repetition and their distinguishing syntactical form, they assume the status of highly charged key words or "watchwords." If they are traced in all appearances in Mab, The Revolt, or Prometheus, they constitute leitmotifs of various values, a review of Shelley's vital themes. Prominent watchwords serve Shelley's didactic intent in the same manner that biblical keywords serve the similar purpose of the Old Testament prophet and psalmist.

Shelley's declaration in The Revolt of Islam that:

> Virtue, and Hope, and Love like light and Heaven,
> Surround the world.--
>
> (R. of I. IX.XXIII.3667-3668)

includes three watchwords in series, while in another instance his familiar use of negatives appears in this same syntactic form:

> To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
> Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
>
> (P.U. II.IV.47-48)

Old Testament keywords are also expressed in both negative and positive syntax:

> Justice and judgement are the habitation of thy throne:
> (Psalm 89.14)

> Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
> (Psalm 85.10)

> . . .for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.
> (Hosea 4.1)

These abstract nouns play a fundamental role in the rhetoric of Shelley's vision. They carry the burden of the contrast between the bitter earth we know and the millenial earth we could know. The vision and the reality are communicated through definition and redefinition. Recurrent watchwords act as banners or symbols of the two poles, describing and defining, by means of comparison and contrast, two opposing planes of existence in similar syntactical form. At one pole we may find a visionary triad:

> Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone.
> (R. of I. IV.XXXI.1685)

describing the promise of the future world, which Laon associates with the face of Cythna. Or we may come across the equally visionary:

> . . .of Liberty
> And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
> (R. of I. V.LIV.2296-97)

the subjects of the revolutionaries' conversation during

the brief victory of the new world.

The other pole constitutes the world where the watchwords

> . . .shame, and fear, and awe, of the armies did divide.
> (R. of I. X.XXXIX.4143)

Here, the discord in the hearts of men is seen on their faces:

> All that I read of sorrow, toil and shame
> (R. of I. VIII.XVII.3347)

The triad above describes the negative side of the picture, as does the similarly alliterated, "distorted, bowed and bent" (R. of I. VII.VIII.I.2897), portraying the tyrant's eunuch. In the series form we find also lists of nouns--minor and major watchwords--defining an ugly but redeemable universe. Asia receives the answer "He reigns" (P.U. Act II. Sc. IV.I.28) to her question:

> And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
> . . . . . .
> Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
> And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
> (P.U. II.IV.19-25)

In addition to defining the two poles of his poetic structure, Shelley uses this pattern of triad and series composed of watchwords to express graphically a particular part of his selective revision of Hebrew-Christian doctrine. He specifically repudiates the concept of a stern, awe-inspiring God. Blaming Judaism for the Christian inheritance

of a rigid God figure, an exacting holy law, and a doctrine of obedience, Shelley lumps together all these (to him) untenable doctrines in the watchword "fear." He interprets the biblical admonition to fear God as a call for ignoble cringing. He sees in the traditional relationship between man and God exactly what Bultman in Primitive Christianity declares the Christian is not supposed to feel before God--"craven terror."[1] Bultman asserts that the biblical fear of God rules out all fear of men,[2] but Shelley comes to the opposite conclusion. Fear of God, he views, as the beginning of fear of king and judge. Shelley also associates fearing God with hating man and observes that fear kills, "all natural pity" (R. of I. X.XL.4150) making "high virtue . . . fail" (R. of I. V.VIII.1789).

Using the triad and watchword syntax, Shelley attempts a redefinition that would dissociate the concept of fear from the concept of divinity. He wishes to negate the doctrine which he attributes to the Iberian Priest in The Revolt of Islam. The Priest saw "In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;" (R. of I. XII.XI.4541). Shelley would substitute for the watchwords "pain, and fear, and hate" new watchwords with which to describe both divinity and the divine world of his messianic vision: "love and beauty" (R. of I. XII.XI.4542). He uses triad and series form to discredit the notion of "fear," coupling it over and over again with a variety of evils. For example, the multitudes

who build Laon's funeral pyre are victims of "Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still" (R. of I. X.XLIV.4181).

"Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny. . .spread/
. . .nets which snare the living and the dead" (R. of I. I.XXIX.386-387). The pre-millenial world is one where:

avenging poisons . . .
. . .feed disease and fear and madness,
(R. of I. V.V.2248-2249)

Fear is a visitation of evil, a calamity in the same category as famine or epidemic disease:

That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
(R. of I. XI.XVIII.4384)

The Christian doctrine of Faith joins fear in many of these pointed groupings.[3] Mankind will be free, Shelley tells us in The Revolt of Islam, when "Fear Faith and Slavery" are in a "flowery grave" (R. of I. VII.XXXIII.3124-3125). In a negative series, "...nor fear nor shame,/Nor faith, nor discord . . ." will "dim" hope in the new world (R. of I. IX.XVII. 3620-3621), Shelley's attack on the watchword target "Faith"--the "obscene worm" (R. of I. V.L. 2168) reflects his animus against the gospel doctrine of the Righteousness of Faith, where eternal life is granted to those who believe and denied to those who do not. New Testament faith is faith in Jesus, and Shelley emphatically denies Jesus' "claim that the destiny of men is determined by their attitude to him and his word,"[4] although he incorporates many other aspects of Jesus' doctrine and meaning into the poems we are examining. The Christian interpretation of Faith, as Bultman defines it,

"an act of obedience, in which man surrenders all his 'boasting,' all desire to live on his own resources, all adherence to tangible realities,. . ."[5] was an abhorrence to Shelley.

We find Faith in a triad that Shelley describes as "A ghastly brood": "Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter" (R. of I. X.XVII.3944-3945) and again as part of a series composed of favorite targets: ". . .Faith, and Folly,/Custom and Hell and mortal Melancholy (the antonym of immortal hope)" (R. of I. V.I.2185-86). Trying to bury the triad of "Fear Faith and Slavery" (R. of I. VII.XXXIII.3125), Shelley offers in their stead "Pity Peace and Love" (R. of I. V.II.2211). For the "new world of man" (P.U. IV.157), which he creates in Act IV of Prometheus Unbound, Shelley utilizes his prominent watchwords to reject an order which grows from a fear-inspiring God. In the new creation, he renders chaos ". . .calm by love, not fear" (P.U. IV.171).

Repeating in triad and series a selection of nouns, all with negative connotations, he builds up an image of evil, a huge compendium of malevolent forces, which resembles closely the biblical-messianic symbol of destruction--the antichrist. In Queen Mab the tyrant figure became the antichrist. In The Revolt of Islam he is similarly characterized as the Fiend (defined in a series):

> The Fiend, whose name was legion; Death, Decay
> Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,
> Winged and wan diseases . . .
> (R. of I. I.XXIX.379-381)

He is contrasted with the true divinity also described in series

> . . .Nature or God or Love or Pleasure
> or Sympathy . . .
> (R. of I. V.II.2205-2206)

We can trace the outlines of Shelley's messianic view of history through triads and series forms. Man's true nature has been violated through a false doctrine:

> . . . the many to the few belong
> By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity
> (R. of I. IX.XIV.3590-3591)

All his attempts to extricate himself from initial confusion have only compounded his problems:

> They sought, and in their helpless misery blind
> A deeper prison and heavier chains did find
> And stronger tyrants:
> (R. of I. I.XXVII.366-367)

However, this condition will not last. In line with messianic vision, Shelley prophesies a rebirth following a period of great misery. In numerous triads and series this rebirth, symbolized in Spring, is associated with a recurrent group of watchwords. It is a spring "of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness" (R. of I. IX.XXII.3658) from which a new man emerges.

That man has been reborn is in all three poems of salvation partly due to the efforts of a prophet-figure. In Queen Mab Ianthe is honoured with a celestial visit, designed to confirm her efforts as virtue's votary. Laon emerges as a full-fledged prophet in The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus

retains several aspects of the prophet in his complex role in Prometheus Unbound. Prometheus's prophetic function is revealed by a band of prophetic spirits sent by the force of primal, maternal Earth. Their role is to make Prometheus aware of the larger consequences of his decision to revoke the curse. The chorus of spirits predicts that he will "quell" "Ruin" which is now "Love's shadow." (P.U. I.780). Prometheus' conception of his role deepens as the spirits answer his question: ", , ,how know ye this shall be? (P.U. I.780) with assurance that the struggle of certain forces (four major watchwords) confirms the prophecy which Prometheus will fulfill:

> Wisdom, Justice, Love and Peace
> When they struggle to increase,
> Are to us as soft winds be
> To sheperd boys, the prophecy
> Which begins and ends in thee
> (P.U. I.798-800)

In a fashion similar to Laon and the Old Testament prophets, Prometheus gains insight through visions (the pivotal vision is, of course, that of the Furies) and through his encounter with the spiritual force that is embodied in the chorus of spirits. These spirits, which emanate from Nature (Earth) but "make their homes in "the dim caves of human thought" (P.U. I.659), share the symbolic associations already linked with prophecy in The Revolt. They are like "flocks of clouds" (P.U. I.665) and "inhabit as birds wing the wind/ Its world-surrounding aether. . ." (P.U. I.660-661). While they are associated with water in their likeness to "fountain

vapours" (P.U. I.668), from them issues a sound that may be the "music of the pines." (P.U. I.669)-- another wind-association. Shelley underscores these prophecy symbols in Prometheus Unbound by introducing them again in Act II, where the wind blows down the blossoms which carry the directions to Asia-- "Follow Follow" (P.U. II.I.141). "Dense white fleecy clouds" reappear in "thick flocks" (P.U. II.I.145-146) bearing the same message, while "low sweet sounds" (P.U. II.I.158) follow "A wind . . .among the pines" (P.U. II.I.156) to call out these same words which lead to the prophecy's fulfillment.

Having identified the prophetic impulse with nature symbols and maternal Earth, thus suggesting its source as outside of man, and having further revealed that the spirits make their homes in "...human thought" (P.U. I.659) (as if this were not their original abode), Shelley leaves the question of the link between a divine force and man's prophetic impulse open to interpretation. The spirits float "above the grave" (P.U. I.686) "Through the boundless element" (P.U. I.689), suggesting their more than human origin and lending to Prometheus a prophetic dimension.

Shelley is perhaps drawing upon the analogy between the road of the prophets and that of Jesus, suggested in Luke, as he fashions his heroes, Laon and Prometheus, on the pattern of both. In his long poems of salvation through the social order, Shelley follows the typological thinking characteristic of the Old and New Testaments, creating protagonists who are also prophets. The message of each of his

heroes shares the promise of long time validity, which von Rad argues distinguishes the exhortations of biblical prophets: "Though one generation turns a deaf ear to it, *it does not fail.*"[6] Shelley joins to the prophet figure the biblical tradition of the sacrifice of the suffering servant.

Beginning with Ahasuerus, the wandering Jew of Mab, whom McNiece describes as "an outcast and an emblem of suffering humanity," [7] the suffering servant theme is further developed through The Revolt and Prometheus Unbound. Laon Cythna, and Prometheus, following this tradition, face isolation from their fellows, reject revenge and demonstrate a calm endurance through suffering, which closely identifies them with Christ. Shelley uses the triad form in The Revolt of Islam to give syntactic emphasis to the Christ motif. Laon's voice is "Calm, solemn and severe" (R. of I. XI.XX. 4401). He exhorts his people to be "Glorious, and great, and calm!" (R. of I. XI.XVIII.4380). Despite the treachery he encounters, he remains ...Earnest, benignant, calm" (R. of I. XI.XIV.4346).

Christ's meekness is as important as his calmness. Laon and Cythna emulate the Christ symbol, the Form in the Temple of the Spirit that is "Majestic, yet most mild-calm, yet compassionate" (R. of I. I.LVII.639):

> . . .
> What a spirit strong and mild
> Was Cythna!--which death or pain or peril could despise,
> Yet melt in tenderness!
>
> (R. of I. II.XXII.951-952)

Meekness as the key to change is singled out in the last stanza of the chorus of spirits, Act II of Prometheus Unbound:

> Resist not the weakness,
> Such strength is in meekness
> That the Eternal, the Immortal
> Must unloose through life's portal
> The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
> by that alone.
> (P.U. II.iii.93-97)

As we turn from The Revolt to Prometheus Unbound, suffering moves into the foreground as a major theme. What was one aspect of Laon's experience now becomes central to Prometheus. The man-god is defined in a triad as a form animated by "wisdom, courage, and long suffering love" (P.U. III.iii.2). The conditions of his suffering are made explicit in a negative triad: "No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure" (P.U. I.24). Bennet Weaver in Toward the Understanding of Shelley observes that there are many traits and qualities in Prometheus which are similar to Job.[8] In what follows, however, he focuses on parallels between Shelley and Job, failing to note the biblical allusions in Act I which confirm the Old Testament figure as one of the models upon which Prometheus is shaped.

Among the sufferings of Prometheus is the burning sensation in his bones, from which Job also suffers:

> . . . the bright chains
> Eat with their burning cold in my bones
> (P.U. I.32-33)

> . . .my bones are burned with heat.
> (Job 30.30)

There is also the piercing:

> The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
> Of their moon-freezing crystals . . .
> (P.U. 1.31-32)

> My bones are pierced in my in the night session . . .
> (Job 30.17)

Prometheus talks of men's groans:

> . . .the groans of pining slaves
> (P.U. 1.128)

and so does Job:

> Men groan from out of the city,
> (Job 24.12)

They both speak of ghastly visions:

> . . .and shapeless sights come wandering by,
> The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
> Mocking me:
> (P.U. 1.36-38)

> When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:
> (Job 7.14-15)

We learn that at the beginning of Prometheus' sufferings

> . . . there stood
> Darkness o'er the day like blood
> (P.U. 1.102)

This is reminiscent of Job's various references to darkness at day.

Let that day be darkness;
(Job 3.4)

They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night
(Job 5.14)

There is, finally, a suggestion of syntactical echoing of Job's appeal to nature in Prometheus' addresses to Earth"

I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen?
(P.U. 1.25-27)

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

Or
speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee:
(Job 12.7-8)

Prometheus recognizes--"Pain is my element" (P.U. 1.477). He affirms his nature:

. . .I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The savior and the strength of suffering man,
(P.U. 1.815-817)

His acceptance of suffering reflects his recognition that the capacity to suffer on others' behalf defines the humanity in the human being. To the Fury who summarizes the horrors of the human condition Prometheus replies:

Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes
And yet I pity those they torture not
(P.U. 1.631-632)

Prometheus pities every man "who does, not suffers wrong" (P.U. I.239). The capacity to bring about change is kindled only in those with the capacity to suffer for the sake of others. When Prometheus rejects the Furies' allegation that the sufferer for mankind generally increases the woes of both man and himself, he affirms the worth of the Hebrew-Christian suffering servant concept and the validity of the prophetic effort.

Again engaging in the process of selective incorporation of the Hebrew-Christina tradition, Shelley plucks Christ out of Christianity to place him in the line of his own typology ending with Prometheus. The name, Christ, he dismisses because of the evil committed under it (P.U. I.603-604). However, he pays homage to a Christ who wails "for the faith he kindled" (P.U. I.555) through the substantial number of Christ allusions attached to Laon, Cythna, and Prometheus. For example, Laon loves, as Christ did, a repentant sinner and so instructs his followers that:

> . . . every one on them [the soldiers] more gently
> Because they had done evil [smiled
> (R. of I. V.XVII.1868-1869)

Cythna, reflecting the Hebraic tradition incorporated into the interpretation of the death of Jesus as an atoning sacrifice, takes upon herself the burden of others' sins:

> I was the child of God, sent down to save
> Women from bonds and death, and on my head
> The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid.
> (R. of I. IX.VIII.3538-3540)

Laon, like Christ, betrayed by a false friend (a situation which recurs in the Psalms), is destined to "tread life's dismaying wilderness" (R. of I. II.XIX.832). With Cythna he calmly dies a martyr's death, demonstrating to the last a Christ-like lack of bitterness. Similarly, Prometheus, for whom ". . . the present is spread/Like a pillow of thorns. . ." (P.U. I.563), is addressed by Ione as ". . .thou of many wounds" (P.U. I.I.228), but he remains confident that Jupiter will one day "kiss the blood/ From . . .[his] pale feet" (P.U. I.50-51).

The doctrine upon which Prometheus' achievement rests--forgiving injury--is generally recognized as central to Christian thought. In The Revolt of Islam Laon also condemns the revenge ethic. He alludes to Christ's dictum about casting the first stone (R. of I. V.XXXIV) and tells the soldiers who have stabbed the revolutionaries as they sleep ". . .but they forgive you now" (R. of I. V.X.1809). He specifically asks his comrades to forbear revenge and hatred:

> . . .let the past
> Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
> To evil thoughts . . .
> (R. of I. V.XII.1819-1821)

Forgiveness is thus one significant aspect of the prophet's outlook in The Revolt. Laon's fervent wish is to help his enemies:

> . . .O, that I whom ye have made
> Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
> From pain and fear!
> (R. of I. XI.XV.4355-4357)

It becomes central in Prometheus Unbound, however, where Prometheus' forgiving invokes the future time when the typological tradition of Old and New testaments will be broken, when the visions of the furies ". . . shall be no types of things which are" (P.U. I.645).

Shelley portrays in Prometheus the last type of the "new" and presents his saving act in terms that reveal the shaping influence of biblical substance and style. As examination of some of the most poetically and thematically significant passages of the poem yields evidence of this influence. The most striking connection between the following passage, describing the human condition, and biblical doctrine is found, of course, in line 631. Here, Shelley has borrowed Christ's "they know not what they do," prompting the reader to supply what is an apt reference to the basis of Prometheus' saving event, "Forgive them, Father":

> They dare not devise good for man's estate,
> And yet they know not that they do not dare.
> The good want power but to weep barren tears.
> The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
> The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;

> And all best things are thus confused to ill.
> Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
> But live among their suffering fellow men
> As if none felt: they know not what they do.
> (P.U. I.623-631)

They must be forgiven because they are ignorant. Ignorance, the failure to know, which Shelley holds partially responsible for man's situation, is introduced also in lines 623-624 in the syntactical form of the line 631 reference. Both syntax and idea recall Christ's injunction, which was also a continual concern of the prophets. Amos, in the same syntax tells us, for example:

> For they know not to do right, saith
> the Lord who store up violence and robbery. . .
> (Amos 3.10)

Milton borrows this syntax in Paradise Regained when Jesus describes the herd "confused":

> They praise and they admire they know not what;
> And know not whom,
> (Paradise Regained, III.52-53)

In his attribution of man's misery to a lack of knowledge, Shelley follows the doctrine of the prophets who censured their people's moral ignorance. Hosea declares "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4.6), and his God warns the people: ". . .because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hosea 4.6). Isaiah explains things the same way: "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge" (Isaiah 5.13).

Man's present ignorance Shelley traces, as we have seen in The Revolt of Islam, to an early confusion of good and evil. This doctrine is reaffirmed in Prometheus Unbound by the various forms of ignorance (i.e., an ignorance of love in the wise and an ignorance of sympathy in the strong and rich) which lead to the misery of mankind: "And all best things are thus confused to ill" (P.U. I.628). For Shelley, as for Isaiah, the remedy for man's condition lies in the correction of the confusion between good and evil. The savior whom Isaiah envisioned--Immanuel--would save by virtue of his knowledge:

> Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good.
> (Isaiah 7.15)

In his vision of the transformation of the world, Isaiah supplies to a variety of men those missing parts necessary for a new harmony:

> They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding. . .
> (Isaiah 29.24)

> The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.
> (Isaiah 32.4)

The "liberal," the "churl," the "rash," and the stammerer above (Isaiah, 32.5) are specified. We also find Jeremiah addressing himself to specific categories of men:

> Let not the wise men glory in his wisdom, neither
> Let the mighty man glory in his might,
> Let not the rich man glory in his riches:
> (Jeremiah 9.22)

Shelley, much in the prophet's manner, points his finger at "the mighty and the wise" (R. of I. XI.XVI.4361) as well as the "powerful and the wise" (R. of I. V.2218). As early as Queen Mab we find, in fact, Shelley's fondness for these categories. He speaks of "the virtuous man" (Q.M. III.150), ". . .kings and parasites. . ." (Q.M. III. 118), "The vainly rich," and the "miserable proud" (Q.M.V.57). This pinpointing of targets, a biblical characteristic, contributes to the power of the prophet or poet's attack and further enhances the authority of the speaker, because he appears to be far enough above the multitude of mankind to recognize and analyze its component parts. Among the categories of men that Shelley mentions in the passage quoted from Prometheus Unbound (i.e., the "good," the "wise," the "powerful," those who love, I.625-627) are the ", , , strong and rich" (who) would be just/But live among their suffering fellow men/As if none felt" (P.U.I.624-631). These are the same men whom Shelley attacked (as we noted in Queen Mab) as the "men of ease"--those who are indifferent to others. His concern and the phrase itself is close to that of the prophet Amos:

> Woe to them that are at ease in Zion . . .
> . . . . . .
> Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the

> seat of violence to come near: That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, . . .
> . . . . . .
> but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.
> (Amos 6.1-6)

In the Prometheus Unbound passage Shelley describes the various social categories of men and their missing parts within an economical balanced syntax that ably carries his message of paradox. For example, the line, "The powerful goodness want" (P.U. 1.626) is a compressed statement which, when expanded fully, means: There are men who have power but they lack goodness. Similarly, the line--"The wise lack love" (P.U.1.627) is equivalent to--There are men who have wisdon, but they lack love. In both instances the absence of the second element (i.e., goodness, love) means that the first element is useless for moral purpose. The powerful without goodness can be only a scourge upon mankind, and the wise without love are the more deadly for their intelligence. In this pattern of paired elements in which the absence of the second nullifies the value of the first, Shelley suggests the paradox of possessing something whose function is useless to you. It appears to be a syntactic structure influenced by an Old Testament pattern. For example, the Psalmist says:

> They have mouths, but they speak not;
> They have ears, but they hear not;
> (Psalm 135.16-17)

Isaiah warns:

> For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase:
> (Hosea 4.10)

In each quotation, the expectation excited by the first element is negated by the second, Mouths do not serve for speech, ears for hearing, eating for satisfaction, nor copulation for birth,.

Shelley experimented with this mode in The Revolt of Islam:

> . . .the slightest pain
> Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep,
> But ye have quenched them
> (V.X.1803-1805)

Here, the act of quenching eliminates the possibility of weeping, as in the following quotation, also from The Revolt of Islam, the second element "woe" defeats the healing function of the "smiles":

> . . . there were smiles to steep
> Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
> (R. of I. V.X.1805-1806)

Shelley has similarly written of those who "sigh for pleasure they refuse to give" (Q.M.V.242), where the second element of refusal effectively denies the possibility of the first--pleasure, and has groped toward the "powerful goodness want" line of Prometheus Unbound in: "Who covet power they know not how to use (Q.M.V.241), where the lack of wisdom will render the prized power useless.

In l.625 of Prometheus Unbound Act I, Shelley compounds the irony of the basic nullifying formula ("The good want power"), where the "goodness" of the "good" is paralyzed by their lack of power, by adding to this negation, "but to weep barren tears." We now have the irony of having but one power--the power to weep, which is useless since its product, "tears," remains "barren". This statement is not the ultimate one, however, for these words are spoken by the Furies, and it is Prometheus who has the final word. The significance of the suffering servant motif in Prometheus Unbound insures that tears cannot ultimately be barren. Shelley inverts the earlier irony of line 625 when Prometheus tells the Furies that he pities those who are not tortured by the state of human nature and the human condition (P.U. l.631-632). The torture or suffering of the good is, after all, not useless. Suffering, pain (P.U. l.635), and lack of peace (P.U. l.638) are, at least, a reflection of the sacrifice of the suffering servant. At most, suffering, as in the case of Prometheus, leads to the rebirth of the world. Those who are not Prometheus may, however, enjoy an identification with that Shellyan category of men who suffer, rather than do wrong.

The ironic syntax of balanced elements is only one of several distinctive syntactical formulas with which Shelley experiments in Mab and/or The Revolt of Islam, and brings to fruition in Prometheus Unbound. The basic structure of the well known final lines of the play, for instance,

is a series of parallel infinitive clauses gathered up in three closing lines of definition through the copula. Shelley explored the poetic possibilities of the infinitive in The Revolt of Islam, opening four successive stanzas of one canto with an infinitive first line and working in a second infinitive in three of the stanzas.

> To see far glancing in the misty morning (V.XXXIX.2062)
> . . . . . .
>
> To hear one sound of many made, . . .(V.XXXIX.2065)
>
> To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,
> (V.XL.2071)
> . . . . . .
> . . .to know its height the morning mists forbid!
> (V.XL.2079)
>
> To hear the restless multitudes for ever (V.XLI.2080)
> . . . . . .
>
> To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
> (V.XLI.2085)

He treats the stanzas above as related parts of one whole, summarizing all in a Wordsworthian first line with copulative verb in stanza XLII:

> To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
> Lethean joy . . .
> (R. of I. V.XLII.2089-2090)

Infinitives in two other stanzas of The Revolt move further in the direction of the last lines of Prometheus Unbound. Nine infinitive clauses specifying various modes of behavior appear in stanzas xi-xij of canto VIII:

XI

To give to all an equal share of good
To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves
She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's
dearest blood,
(R. of I. VII.XI.3294-3297)

XII

To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot
To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
. . . . . .
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;
To live, as if to love and live were one,--
(R. of I. VIII.XII.3298-3304)

Here again, as we have seen in the first infinitive quotation, Shelley ties up all the infinitives with the copula, this time cast in his characteristic negative form:

This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.
(R. of I. VIII.XII.3305-3306)

Just as triad and series patterns contribute to the fundamental rhetorical feature--contrast through definition--of Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus Unbound, so the infinitive pattern, in characteristic parallel structure, serves also to define. Through parallelism a syntactic tension is maintained until the closing copulative definition.

Some elements from the passage quoted above appear to be a first version of the Prometheus Unbound infinitive lines. Shelley moves from the rather weak ". . . to suffer all in patient mood" (R. of I. VII.XI.3296) to the richer

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite" (P.U. IV.570). He progresses from the stilted sentimentality of "To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest blood" (R. of I. VIII.XI.3297). "To forgive wrongs darker than death or night" (P.U. IV.571). Describing many of the same paths of behavior, the more concise but less restricted Prometheus Unbound infinitives also place a new emphasis on endurance that echoes the Christ-related motifs described earlier. Seven infinitive clauses, including one in negative form carry the various directives:

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change nor falter, nor repent;
> (P.U. IV.570-575)

Shelley links them together and concludes in the same syntactical form that we have noted in The Revolt of Islam. The infinitives are joined by the copula as parts of a definition of several terms--drawn from the stock of familiar Shellyan watchwords:

> This like thy glory, Titan, is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.
> (P.U. IV.576-578)

He also utilizes watchwords in series with the copula a few lines earlier to define the seals that insure the survival of the world's renewal. Stark, unmodified, and joined by a single conjunction, each word seems the product of deliberate and sober choice:

> Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
> These are the seals of that most firm assurance
> Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
> (P.U. IV.562-564)

His selection of watchwords to recapitulate his dominant motifs also directly reflects the influence of the biblical tradition. "Gentleness" and "endurance" sum up the Christ-suffering theme, while "virtue" and "wisdom" represent motifs that run through all three poems. He called the exercise of both "virtue" and "wisdom" a "privilege" in Mab (Q.M. II.54) and made "wisdom" the banner of the revolutionaries in The Revolt of Islam. Shelley's linking of virtue and wisdom is congenial to biblical thought and the Psalmist describes the wicked man as one who ". . .hath left off to be wise, and to do good" (Psalm 36.3). The four watchwords of line 562 are "seals" over the "pit of destruction," that is the biblical "pit" which the psalmist feared. (", , ,be not silent to me, lest if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit") (Psalm 28.1).

Love, at the center of Shelley's vision of regeneration, also carries a direct biblical allusion. On the great day of change, "Love . . .(after a series of parallel prepositional phrases) ". . .folds over the world its healing wings" (P.U. IV.557-560). A winged God is similarly visualized by the psalmist who declares to Him "...yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge . . ." (Psalm 57.1) and ". . .therefore the children of men put

their trust under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 36).

Love is also closely connected with hope, another Shelleyan watchword, which appears three times in the final passage of Prometheus Unbound. In order to achieve the quality of existence possible in the renewed state, one must,

> Suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite
> . . .hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates
> (P.U. IV.572-574)

Hope is the indispensable material with which the new world will be built. It marks the difference between the old earth and the new, since the new is identified by the absence of Dante's inscription: "All hope abandon ye who enter here" (P.U. III.135-136). Hope even encompasses love: Prometheus tells Panthea "I said all hope was vain but love: . . ." (P.U. I.824). The high valuation which Shelley accords to hope is typical of Old Testament literature. Among the prophets and the psalmists "Hope" is almost synonymous with God:

> . . .but the Lord will be the hope of his people,
> and the strength of the children of Israel.
> (Joel 3.16)

> For thou are my hope, I Lord God: thou art my trust
> from youth.
> (Psalm 71.5)

Hosea, speaking of the renewal to come when Israel betrothes herself to God, declares:

> And I will give her vineyards from hence, and the
> Valley of Achor for the door of hope:
> (Hosea 2.15)

Hope is not, however, the only watchword which Shelley abstracted from the biblical attributes of God to apply to his newly-shaped divine forces. "Joy" appears twice in the two lines of watchwords which define the code of behavior necessary for reforming the world (P.U. IV.576-578). It represents the quality of life in the new order and is simultaneously an attribute of those who are responsible for the renewal. Asia likens the arrival of the always symbolic spring to Joy:

> . . .like joy which riseth up
> As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
> The desert of our life.
> (P.U. II.I.10-12)

Prometheus himself is a spirit of joy and the effect he produces is joy:

> Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
> When thou dids't from her bosom, like a cloud
> Of glory arise, a spirit of keen joy!
> (P.U. I.II.156-158)

For the Old Testament writer joy is inseparable from God, for when the day of destruction comes from the Almighty he asks:

> Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea,
> joy and gladness from the house of our God?
> (Joel 1.16)
>
> . . .in thy presence is fulness of joy
> (Psalm 16)

When Israel is cut off from God it loses joy:

> Rejoice, not O Israel, for joy, as other people:
> for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God,
> (Hosea 9.1)

Shelley sees joy as a path to salvation:

> Justice or Truth or Joy! these only can
> From Slavery and religion's labyrinth caves
> Guide us . . .
> (R. of I. VIII.XI.3291-3293)

At the same time, it is one aspect of the divine forces at work in the new world. In The Revolt of Islam, Shelley predicts that fear,

> The Fiend-God, when our charm'ed name he hear,
> Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
> While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost
> (empire reigns!
> (R. of I. V.6.2269-2271)

Joy also has a twofold aspect in Old Testament writings. It is a mode of communication with God; the righteous, for example, are instructed to "rejoice before God" (Psalm 68.31), and, at the same time, it is an expression of God's involvement with the world. In Isaiah God declares:

> And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people:
> (Isaiah 65.19)

And Zephaniah affirms:

> . . . he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing
> (Zephaniah 3.17)

(Truth, it should be noted, a well-used Shelleyan watch-word [. . ."Truth, liberty love" P.U. 1.1.651], although not chosen for the final passage of Prometheus Unbound, as are the others above, is yet another attribute of God [". . .Send out they light and thy truth"] [Psalm 43.3] which Shelley has adopted.)

In the new order, born through the saving action of Prometheus, there is no longer a division into sacral and secular. Renewal represents the integration of Goodness and Power, which was the Old Testament prophet's dream and the necessary foundation for the fulfillment of the sacred community called for by the Covenant.[9] Such integration rested upon the change in men's hearts which the prophets exhorted. The biblical prophecies of ultimate salvation become senseless, Eric Voeglin asserts in Order and History, if they are accepted as "flat predictions of future events, without any bearing on the attunement of human to divine order through the change of heart."[10] At the center of Prometheus Unbound there also lies an attunement without which the sequence of events would be meaningless--an attunement that is not achieved in The Revolt of Islam.

Milton Wilson in Shelley's Later Poetry states that:

> Neither "Demogorgon's mighty law" nor Love can stand by itself as the molder of the ultimate historical event which Shelley is about to celebrate.[11]

Although "the downfall of Jupiter has to occur," he explains, "it need not include Prometheus' release or the advent of the millenium."[12] What Shelley creates in Prometheus' act of forgiveness is an attunement to the progression of Necessity, which follows closely the Isaianic dynamics of history. In Isaiah, order depends upon the human response to the "Kabhod" or the "divine substance." As the "historical metastases of the world . . . into the realm of God the King required (in the terms of the Old Testament prophet) "the resoonsive change of heart," and actually begins in the "person"[13] of the prophet, so Shelley's millenial renewal begins in Prometheus' change of heart--the renunciation of the curse.

We find no delineation of the specific tenets on which the new order will rest in either Isaiah or Shelley. Nor is there in either any concern with problems arising from the possible reluctance of men to bend themselves to the fulfillment of the Kabhod.[14] In both visions human nature has been transfigured. Renewal means that both the organization of society and the movement of history reflect the divine substance. In both the Bible and Prometheus Unbound this new internal order may not affect external appearances at all. What is secular becomes sacred without

outward change. In Act III of Prometheus Unbound the spirit of the Hour reports that in his first wanderings in the new world he:

> was disappointed, not to see
> Such mighty change, as I had felt within
> Expressed in outward things.
> (P.U. II.Sc.IV.II.75-75)

The same condition prevails when Moses and his men encounter God.[15] Here, as in the end of Prometheus Unbound, ". . . divine order becomes established in history, while externally nothing happens at all."

> And they beheld God,
> and ate and drank
> (Exodus 9-11)

The new society is presented in Prometheus Unbound, as in Hosea, as an act of creation that surpasses the old order. Hosea speaks of the new day in which " . . . the earth shall bear the corn and the wine, and the oil . . ." (Hosea 2.22), and Shelley suggests a new creation in both The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound through various references to the Miltonic and biblical Eden (the pure water and fruits consumed at the festival of man in The Revolt of Islam, the Genesis echoes in the diction describing the festival participants ("All shapes might throng to share, that fly or walk or creep") (R. of I. V.LV. 2305-2308), and the re-creation of the moon in Act IV of P.U.). M.H. Abrams, who describes all of Prometheus Unbound, Act IV as cast in the form of a "nuptial masque,"

notes that "the thematic word is "Unite!" and the consequence of union is the rebirth into vital life of the previously sterile moon.[16]

The prophetic concept of a new creation involves, according to Eric Voeglin, a special time sense typical of Old Testament writers, for whom history constitutes the ". . .moving through time, on a meaningful course, toward a divinely promised state of perfection."[17] Such a society lives in the historical present which radiates "its form over (the) . . . past." That past may be given ". . . negative accents" and treated as that "from which man must escape," or it may receive a more positive treatment as the preparation which man must undergo before reaching a higher state of freedom. The past in either case is ". . . incorporated into a stream of events that has its center of meaning in the historical present . . ."[18] Voeglin adds that it is the "Either-Or of life and death (that) divides the stream of time into the Before-and-After of the great discovery."[19]

It is upon the outlines of just such a formulation of history and time that Shelley's poems of social salvation are molded. Voeglin tells us that in this historical scheme ". . .the actions of the society and its members are experienced as fulfillment or defection."[20] The two poles that form the basic structure of Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, and Prometheus Unbound might be so

described. The vision of fulfillment of the heaven that could be is opposed to the nightmare of the reality that is, through image, and syntactical definitions which cluster about one or the other pole, signifying either fulfillment or defection. Furthermore, in these poems all history antecedent to the moment of transformation is viewed negatively. The past with its institutions of established church and monarchy becomes, from Queen Mab through Prometheus Unbound, an amalgam of evil, a spiritual death, transformed at the saving moment. Noting that sudden change comes about in the manner of biblical history, Abrams describes the transformation in Prometheus Unbound as a ". . .right-angled breakthrough from misery to felicity."[21] Shelley's depiction of this breakthrough from the old to the new depends upon Prometheus, who may be seen as a type of Moses insofar as he creates a new order, while Jupiter in his reaction against Prometheus becomes a type of Pharoah. Endurance and suffering alter the will of Prometheus, just as God overcomes the resistance of Moses to a new way, whose sanction and source is divine.

Although in Prometheus Unbound we do not find the source of the new order in the traditional Hebrew-Christian God, Shelley manages to spiritualize and emphasize, through syntactical manipulation, various qualities originally associated with that God, leaving us with a distinct

impression of a transcendent source of order responsible for the guidelines of his renewal. When Shelley offers his "seals of assurance" that will restore the millenial renewal if it should be lost, he speaks within the terms of a biblical sense of history, in which the effort to "regain the order" reflective of a transcendent God from "the pressure of mundane existence" is recognized as a "perpetual" one.[22] It is appropriate that Demogorgon speak the words of this formula of "assurance" for the future, since in his role as the source or principle of the progression of events in time, he would experience recurrently this problem of recovering the right order.

Abrams aptly describes Demogorgon as the "principle. or power, behind all process"[23] and points out that the only one of Asia's questions to which Demogorgon replies unambiguously is that of the time of arrival of the hour of release.[24] That he should be able to answer a question that concerns a moment in time, while he does not answer questions that concern ultimate purpose is consonant with his function as that aspect of the Hebrew God which is revealed in history. He fits, in this regard, the Hebrew conception of divinity ". . .as a being hidden in his depth,"[25] for in order to reach him Asia is directed to go:

> To the deep, to the deep,
> Down; down!
> (P.U. II.III.54-55)

The Hebrew divinity is at the same time ". . . manifest in many forms of his choice,"[26] as is Demogorgon who is

> . . . neither limb
> Nor form, nor outline, yet we feel it is
> A living spirit
> (P.U. II.IV.II.5-7)

Through Prometheus' act, the opportunity for a morally meaningful movement in a fundamentally unknowable history is realized. When Prometheus substitutes compassion for hate, the potential in Demogorgon becomes manifest. Prometheus has followed the counsel in the spirit's song:

> Resist not the weakness,
> Such strength is in meekness
> That the Eternal, the Immortal
> Must unloose through life's portal
> The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
> By that alone.
> (P.U. II.IV.93-98)

Lodged in Demogorgon is that dimension of inevitability and destiny that marked the force of Necessity in Queen Mab. All spirits are drawn on the "secret way" "By Demogorgon's mighty law." The "destined soft emotion,/ Attracts, impels them (P.U. II.II.50-51). Shelley emphasizes the specific hour of the transformation. Prometheus says to Jupiter, for example:

> . . . let the hour
> Come, when thou must appear to be
> That which thou art internally;
> (P.U. I.297-299)

And later, Prometheus declares,

> . . . I wait
> Enduring this, the retributive hour
> (P.U. I.405-406)

suggesting that a providential hand has mapped out the course of events. Asia awaits Panthea in Act II, declaring,

> This is the season, this the day, the hour;
> At sunrise though should come . . .
> (P.U. II.I.13-14)

The inevitability of the millenial reunion of Asia and Prometheus is impressed upon us again in the "follow follow" line, which M.H. Abrams sees as Shelley's version of the "yearning toward the apocalyptic bridal union in Revelation": "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come."[27] We sense in Asia's journey to Demogorgon the release of a predetermined course of events. Demogorgon impresses us as the repository of the "maturing time" of Queen Mab, in which peace was lodged.

> . . .his age of endless peace
> which time is fast maturing
> will swiftly, surely come
> (Q.M. III.233-37)

But Demogorgon's time--the progression of events or historical time--represents only one aspect of the treatment of time in Shelley's poems concerning the social order. Time as emblematic of the present state of the unhappy earth carries negative connotations. In this latter sense Shelley sees time as something to be overcome through a compression, or coalescence, of the present with the future. Time in Queen Mab was negative, "the king of

earth" opposed only by "the fixed and virtuous will" (Q.M. IX.34-35). Laon and Cythna transcend time's limitations in The Revolt of Islam through seeding the present with the revolutionary changes of the future, and, in effect, creating that future in the microcosm of their own love--the model for the love-ruled world to come. Time is the enemy who will be forced in the millenial world to tear the "gloomy shroud" (Q.M. VIII.6) from the "cradles of eternity" (Q.M. VIII.9). The future will be wrenched from eternity into the present. An illustration of this process is to be found in the description of the millenium in Mab where autumn and spring appear simultaneously:

> And Autumn poudly bears her matron grace,
> Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,
> Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
> Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.
> (Q.M. VIII.120-123)

Prometheus also transcends time when he relives the past (through the uttering of his curse) in order to renounce it and bring the future renewal into the present. His victory over the conqueror is involved with his own capacity and willingness to accept a suffering that surpassed all boundaries of time.[28] He is released from time through his ability "To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite" (P.U. IV.570).

Shelley declares in Prometheus Unbound that man, even upon reaching the millenium, is not exempt from the triad of "chance and death and mutability" (P.U. III.IV.

201). The attunement of the heart to the potential inherent in Demogorgon will not change man's mortal nature. However, a counterpoint of suggestion to the contrary also exists in these works. A number of lines hint at the elimination of death from man's world. Time is openly conquered ("We bear Time to his tomb in eternity") (P.U. IV. 14) and Demogorgon addresses the "happy dead" (P.U. IV.534). The chorus of spirits is on its way to "colonize: Death, Chaos and Night" (P.U. IV.143-144) and the divinely associated powers of "Love, Thought, and Breath" are now strong enough to ". . .quell death" (P.U. IV.150-151). The spirit of love, according to Earth's testimony, ". . .wakes a life in the forgotten dead," (P.U. IV.374). These references suggest a salvation that goes beyond the concern with the improvement of mortal life central to these poems and intimate a shift of emphasis reflected in Shelley's later works.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Rudolf Bultman, Primitive Christianity: In Its Contemporary Setting, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (1956; rpt. New York: Meridian-World, 1972), p.25.

[2] Bultman, p.25.

[3] Donald H, Reiman, in Shelley's "The Triumph of Life": A Critical Study, Illinois Studies in Lang. and Lit., No. 55 (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1965), discusses the central importance of recurring words or phrases in interpreting the full significance of Shelley's poetry (p. 11) and affirms Shelley's view of Faith as "a moral liability" (p. 17).

[4] Bultman, p. 93.

[5] Bultman, p. 202.

[6] von Rad, Old Testament Theology, II, 43.

[7] McNiece, Shelley and the Rev. Idea, p. 148.

[8] Weaver, Toward the Understanding of Shelley, pp. 146-147.

[9] Harold Fisch, Jerusalem and Albion, p. 165.

[10] Eric Voeglin, Israel and Revelation in Order and History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1956), I, 462.

[11] Wilson, Shelley's Later Poetry, p. 144.

[12] Wilson, p. 145.

[13] Voeglin, p. 476. I follow closely here Voeglin's interpretation of Isaiah.

[14] Voeglin, p. 476.

[15] Voeglin, pp. 423-424.

[16] Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 306-307. It is possible (although Abrams does not make this connection) that Shelley may have been inspired in his renovation of the moon (P.U. IV) by Isaiah for whom ultimate salvation touches the cosmos as well as man. For the millenial future Isaiah predicts a day when,

> Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound. (Isaiah 30.26)

[17] Voeglin, p. 126.

[18] Voeglin, p. 128.

[19] Voeglin, p. 131.

[20] Voeglin, p. 131.

[21] Abrams, p. 300.

[22] Voeglin, p. 418.

[23] Abrams, p. 302.

[24] Abrams, p. 305.

[25] Voeglin, p. 413.

[26] Voeglin, p. 413.

[27] Abrams, pp. 303-304.

[28] Arthur C. Hicks, "The Place of Christianity in Shelley's Thought," Diss. Stanford Univ. 1932, p. 244.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAVERING OF THE VISION IN THE MASK OF ANARCHY, THE ODE TO LIBERTY, THE ODE TO NAPLES AND HELLAS

In Mab, The Revolt, and Prometheus Unbound we have explored several motifs central to Shelley's works concerned with salvation through the social order: a vision of the renewal of the golden age, a representation of the crucial role of the prophet in the work of renewal, and a deliberate engagement with the values and traditions of the Bible (particularly the Old Testament) on behalf of his vision, yielding criticism, incorporation of certain biblical values and the transformation of others. In the works to be examined, later in order of composition, thematic concerns remain unchanged, but Shelley's use of millenial notifs no longer produces a visionary whole that is intimately connected with biblical tradition. Various of the motifs persist, but they stand increasingly outside the biblical center of Shelley's earlier vision, confirming Judith Chernaik's disagreement with Browning in The Lyrics of Shelley:

> Browning was certain that Shelley, had he lived, would have moved toward Christianity, and that acceptance of the divinity of Christ and the regeneration of life was implicit in his symbolism. But Shelley's use of terms consistent with religious faith, especially in his last poems, was the product of a loss of interest in theology, not a turning toward it.[1]

Mab, The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound, we have argued, have much in common with Old Testament prophetic history, style, and values. The poems which follow deal with the same basic subject matter and motifs as the earlier works, but tend to share externals rather than the heart of the biblical vision. The Mask of Anarchy is perhaps closest to the initial millenial vision (written in the autumn of 1819, perhaps concurrently with the final act of Prometheus Unbound). We find here characteristic dual structure--the vision of what life is and what it could become--biblical reference, and syntactic technique (elaboration through definition, specifically the copula, use of parallelism to underscore didactic intent, and a liberal sprinkling of triads and series.) The Goddess Liberty, who now embodies the divine and makes possible the regeneration of hope, is, however, quite clearly a descendant of secular myth, enhanced by biblical terminology but distinctly political in nature. She fails to suggest the wider, all encompassing divine source of the earlier works. Although the narrative tone is biblical,[2] the deity is not. The vatic stance is retained, but the prophet exerts solely visionary (rather than active) power.

The biblical frame of the poem is obvious, however, in the first thirty-six stanzas, which Carlos Baker describes as,

> . . .a development in miniature of the image of the four horsemen in the Book of Revelation . . . Shelley intended his four horsemen, like those of St. John, to be concepts rather than people.[3]

From these concepts or abstract nouns Shelley again constructs a two pole structural framework. Categorizing various "Destructions" (VII.26), he defines and symbolizes Murder (II.5), Fraud (IV.14), Hypocrisy (VI.24), and Anarchy (VII.30) in triad form (i.e., "God and King and Law" IX.37 , "the sceptre, crown, and globe" XX.80 , "the Bank and Tower . . . and Parliament" XXI.82-84). Against these negatives Shelley's great positive is posed--Hope is introduced in XXII as a "maniac maid" (XXXII.80) who "looked more like Despair" (XXII.88).

This contrast describes England at that low point which precedes the sudden twist or change in historical direction typical of all Shelley's poetic histories. After years of darkness ("My father Time is weak and gray/With waiting for a better day" (XXIII.90-91), at a time when Hope is preparing for her death before the triumvirate of "Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy" (XXV.101), the "Shape" (XXVIII.112), is a presence felt rather than seen (XXX.120), is a rushing light of clouds and splendor (XXXIV.135), moves "with step as soft as wind" (XXX.118), and is capable of inspiring the minds of men (XXI.125).

The death of Anarchy and the revival of Hope bring forth a message from the suffering English earth directing the "Men of England" (XXXVII.147) to "Rise like Lions after slumber" (XXXVIII.151). At this juncture, Shelley reinforces the bipolar structure of the poem through his emphasis upon a pair of antonyms--the abstractions Freedom and Slavery. Parallel expanded definitions in copula form comprise a definition of slavery in stanzas XL through L:

> Tis to work and have such pay
> As just keeps life from day to day (XL.160-161)
> . . . . . .
> Tis to see your children weak
> With their mothers pine and peak (XLII.168)
> . . . . . .
> Tis to hunger for such diet
> As the rich man in his riot
> Casts to the fat dogs that lie (XLIII.172-174)

After a summation in XLIX-LI, the question of Freedom is posed in Stanza LII, and defined negatively in LIII ("Thou art not, as imposters say/A shadow soon to pass away" (LII.213-214). Repeating the syntactical form of his definition of slavery, multiple copulative definitions of freedom move from concrete details ("thou are bread") (LIV.217), "Thou art clothes, and fire, and food" (LV.221), to equation with other abstract nouns, familiar as key words in the earlier works. "Thou are Justice" (LVII.230), "Thou art Wisdom" (LVIII.234), "Thou art Peace" (LIX.238), and "Thou art Love" (LXI.246). Freedom is defined further through triads:

> Science, Poetry, and Thought
> Are thy lamps . . . (LXIII.254-255)

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,
All that can adorn and bless
Art thou . . . (LXIV.258-259)

Having carefully distinguished between the existing state of slavery and the freedom which could replace it, the poem moves to its final section, a specific prescription to augment the needed change. The governing syntactical structure at this point is a repeated conditional clause, embodying with clear didactic intention one of Shelley's practical suggestions for non-violent revolution in England. Addressing both the poor and the few interested rich he suggests:

Let a great assembly be
Of the fearless and the free (LXV.262-263)

Once again those who will be moved to act are those who have suffered:

Ye who suffer woes untold,
Or to feel, or to behold
Your lost country bought and sold
With a price of blood and gold (LXXII)

The "Let" clause urging organization:

Let a great assembly be (LXV.262)
. . . . . .
Let the blue sky overhead (LXVI.266)
. . . . . .
Let a vast assembly be (LXXIII.295)

becomes charged with another dimension of meaning as Shelley extends the parallel structure. Now, the "let" construction expresses the intent of passive resistance:

Let the tyrants pour around (LXXV.303)
. . . . . .
Let the charged artillery drive (LXXVI.307)
. . . . . .
Let the fixed bayonet (LXXVII.311)
. . . . . .
Let the horseman's scimitars (LXXVIII.315)

Their defense (which takes on scriptural overtones) is to be the law:

Let the laws of your own Land
Good or ill, between you stand (LXXI.327)

Laws become "Children of a wiser day" (LXXII.333) and "sacred heralds" (LXXXIII.337).

Millenial excitement is communicated through the syntax. The gathering of the "many" to exert pressure against the "few" (XXXVIII.155) is for example, described in repeated prepositional phrases:

From the corners uttermost (LXVII.270)
. . . . . .
From every hut, village, and town (LXVII.272)
. . . . . .
From the workhouse and the prison (LXVIII.275)
. . . . . .
From the haunts of daily life (LXIX.279)

Series and triad forms are prominent: Men under slavery are defined in series ("so that ye for them are made/Loom and plough and sword and spade" (XLI.165), as are the various "Destructions" disguised in human form ("All disguised, even to the eyes,/Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies" (VII.28-29). The enemies of freedom are a triad of "wealth and war and fraud" (LXII.252), while Freedom itself grows as "A mist, a light, an image . . . (XXVI.104).

Several biblical references affirm their original meanings, such as "the wine of desolation" (XII.49), which echoes the psalmist's "wine of astonishment" (Psalm 60.3), but more often their intent is hostile, as in this thrust at hypocrisy:

> Clothed with the Bible, as with Light,
> And the shadows of night,
> Like Sidmouth, next Hypocrisy
> On a crocodile rode by. (VI)

That Shelley is moving away from the biblical tradition which permeates his earlier vision becomes increasingly clear when we turn from the Mask of Anarchy to the Ode to Liberty, written early in 1820. We find in the later poem a vatic motif more characteristic of the 18th century sublime than of the Old Testament.[4] Biblical echoes are largely devoted to framing the sentiments of classical republicanism.[5] The general influence of the biblical tradition weakens, as the prophet becomes unequivocally the artist, whose soul which "clothed itself" (O.L.I.7) in "the rapid plumes of song" (O.L.I.6) will, "Hovering in verse (O.L.I.9), make its home in the "Heaven of fame" (O.L.I.10). In the brief history of the world, offered in this ode, Shelley rewrites Genesis, equating initial creation with Chaos (O.L.II.20-30) because Freedom (whose first creative expression was Athens) had not yet flowered. Biblical references appear with predominantly critical intent in order to reinforce Shelley's

dismissal of the civilization of the Old Testament:

> The spirit of the beast was kindled there
> And of the birds, and of the watery forms
> And there was war among them and despair
> (O.L.II.24-26)

In stanza O.L.III, man is contemptuously described as an "imperial shape" (O.L.III.31) who "multiplied"/"His generations" (O.L.III.31-32) within the environs of "palace and pyramid"/"Temple and prison" (O.L.III.33-34) (an alliterated series describing the negative reality typical of Shelley's millenial rhetoric). Mankind, called, with negative connotation and biblical echo, the "multitude" (O.L.III.35), having submitted to this situation, is seen as (in another series) "savage, cunning, blind, and rude" (O.L.III.36). With the coming of liberty, a triad of . . . "joy, and love, and wonder" (O.L.VI.84), a "Spirit vast/ With life and love" (O.L.VI.89), a great change occurs. The golden age arrives in the form of Athens and the republic at Rome.

Shelley's history of the world becomes in this ode the history of the goddess of political liberty (treated at length in Hellas). When they fail her, she abandons her people for long periods (O.L.VII.99-102), much as the God of Israel withdraws from his people when they depart from his ways. After a thrust at Christianity which contributes to the end of the ancient reign of freedom

(It is the Gallilean Serpent . . .[that] made thy world an undistinguishable heap") (O.L.VIII.119120) and ushered in the "eclipse" of "a thousand years" (O.L.XII.167), Shelley notes the beginnings of "renewal" in Italy and England, when "Frowning o'er" (O.L.IX.127) the triad of familiar enemies ("Kings and priests and slaves" (O.L. IX.128), Liberty reappears. She is addressed in a variety of metaphors summarized in the opening of stanza XII--"Thou Heaven of earth" (O.L.XII.166)--indicating once again Shelley's solution to the conflict between current evil and possible good by means of the millenial transformation of earth into heaven.[6]

As in the earlier works, millenial change is preceded by suffering, which has "Dyed (the) . . . liquid light (of Freedom) with blood and tears" (O.L.XII.169). The watchwords "Wisdom" (O.L.XVIII.260) "Truth" (O.L. XVIII.263) "Love, Justice and Hope," as before, are the means and companions of Liberty. We find also Shelley's biblical appeal to men, in groups or categories, to take the steps necessary to bring about the millenium:

> Oh that the *free* would stamp the impious name
> of Kings into the dust! (O.L.XV.211-212)
> . . . . . .

> Oh that the wise from their bright minds might kindle
> Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
> That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle
> (O.L.XVI226-28)

Both of these groups are linked to the suffering motif: ". . .have not the wise and free/Wept tears and blood like tears?" (O.L.XVIII.270). But these biblical categories are addressed here specifically for the sake of Italy. What is held sacred now are the beauty and arts that Italy has nurtured. To Italy is transferred the biblical allusion to the holy places:

> Oh Italy,
> Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
> The beasts who make their dens thy sacred places.
> (O.L.XIV.208-210)

In addition, the Ode's exhorting prophet who has been, along with all of Shelley's prophet figures, associated with the clouds, is suddenly cut off. He is linked to a dissolved cloud" (O.L.XIX.278), to a taper that "fades with fading night" (O.L.XIX.279), to a brief insect (that) dies with dying day" (O.L.XIX.280)--all images of short duration, suggesting that the prophet of the Ode to Liberty may play no active or sustained role in the quest for millenium. His power is suddenly withdrawn in the same way that the "wild swan" (O.L.XIX.273) sinks "when the bolt has pierced its brain" (O.L.XIX.277). The "great voice" (O.L.XIX.283) which had sustained his prophetic

song now closes over it (O.L.XIX.282), suggesting a final betrayal, similar to that of the sea which in Shelley's simile suddenly becomes the swimmer's antagonist:

> As waves which lately paved his watery way
> Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.
> (O.L.XIX.284-285)

The uncertainties raised by the final stanza, describing the death of prophetic inspiration, are underscored by the questions which the poet-prophet himself poses within his song--In stanza XVII he questions whether man's nature will ever permit the millenial renewal he urges:

> . . . Oh vain endeavor!
> If on his (man's) own high will, a willing slave,
> He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
> (O.L.XVII.243-245)

He wonders whether earth's technical capacities and man's potential power to bring the future into the present,[8]

> What if earth can clothe and feed
> Amplest millions at their need,
> And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
> (O.L.XVII.246-248)

as well as the potential power of the arts (O.L.XVII.249-253) are strong enough to meet and combat the negative qualities of man's nature. Of what avail, he asks, are all the human capacities listed,

> If life can breed
> New wants . . . (O.L.XVII.253-254)

so that no resources of mind or matter will be sufficient to provide the basis of social harmony. Of what avail, the poet wonders, is all human potential for good, if among men there is an inherent human greed which prompts the rich to take from the poor the gifts of both nature and life, in an exchange as manifestly unfair as "a thousandfold for one":[7]

(If)

> . . .wealth from those who toil and groan
> Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one!
> (O.L.XVII.254-255)

The poet concludes that freedom alone cannot combat the threat that lies within human nature. The overwhelming power ascribed to divine Freedom early in the poem is qualified at the end. Liberty, if it should come to men who are without love, justice, a sense of history and hope for the future, would not function as liberty at all:

> Blind love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
> Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
> O Liberty! If such could be thy name
> Wert thou disjoined from these . . .
> (O.L.XVIII.264-267)

Although this recognition is reminiscent of the insights of those final watchwords in Prometheus Unbound, its

conditional presentation, here, reinforces the undercurrent of doubt which is reflected in this Ode as well as in the Ode to Naples, written approximately one half year later.

The Ode to Naples opens with an elaborate vatic motif which does not in this instance indicate a close connection to the biblical tradition. The poet is inspired by the weight of the Divine which broods upon his life (O.N.Epode Ia.21-22). Like the sculptured leaves he admires, he seems to have been spared by Time (O.N.Epode Ia. 14-15) for his task. Borne by "gentle winds," he is seized by "articulate prophesyings" (O.N.Epode IIa.50), which he initially expresses in an outpouring of apostrophes to Naples (these are examples of the parallel definitions which Shelley uses recurrently to express expectation and excitement). After Naples is hailed in classic ("Elysian City") (O.N.Strophe I.54) and biblical ("Metropolis of a Ruined Paradise") (O.N.Strophe I.57) references, the stanza closes with a history in miniature that suggests the former existence, the loss, and the renewal of a golden age of freedom:

> Thou which wert once and then didst cease to be
> Now art and henceforth ever shalt be free
> (O.N.Strophe I.62-63)

This optimistic rhetoric is cut off, however, by the

addition of a refrain expressed in a conditional syntax which emphasizes the precarious nature of the optimism:

> If Hope, and Truth and Justice can avail
> Hail, hail, all hail (O.N.Strophe I.64-65)

Similarly, after the aggressive tone and didactic style of succeeding stanzas which recount Naples' political achievements, instructing her:

> Nor let thy high heart fail
> (O.N.Strophe II.73)

and exhorting in parallel clauses and bare imperatives:

> . . .thy shield is as a mirror
> To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
> To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer
> (O.N.Antistrophe Ia.78-80)
> . . . . . .
> Be thou like the imperial Basilisk
> Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
> Gaze on Oppression till at that dread risk
> . . . . . .
> Fear not, but gaze . . .
> (O.N.Antistrophe Ia.83-87)

the qualifying refrain, interposes once more:

> If Hope, and Truth, and Justice, may avail,
> Thou shalt be great - All hail!
> (O.N.Antistrophe Ia.83-87)

This pattern continues. Confident excitement expressed in alliterated repetitions:

> From Freedom's form divine
> From Nature's inmost shrine
> . . . . . .

> Oe'r Ruin desolate
> Oe'r Falsehood's fallen state
> (O.N.Antistrophe 2a.91-95)

and rapid leaps, moving from one subject to another within the same line (just as the revolution is to spread quickly among Italian cities):

> . . .The Sea
> Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
> In light and music; widowed Genoa wan
> By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
> Murmuring "Where is Doria?" fair Milan,
> (O.N.Antistrophe IB.106-110)

is followed by variations on the same questioning refrain:

> If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail
> Art thou of all these hopes - O hail!
> (O.N.Antistrophe Ib.114-115)

The note of doubt, to which the refrain returns us, contributes to the "elegiac undertone"[8] of this ode, augmented by the heavy sense of the Italian past, weighing on Naples. Chernaik points out that "Italy is presented as a land permeated with the spirit of the past, its art, literature, myth."[9] (The prophet's inspiration is directly connected to the classical ancient world through Homer and Virgil in the second stanza). The weight of this heritage does not blend easily with the forward thrust of the millenial spirit called for by the poet as he envisions Italy's renewed battle with the "Anarchs of the North" (O.N.Epode IB.137), who embody the destructive principle, pushing history backward while they "lead forth their

legions/like Chaos oe'r creation, uncreating" (O.N.Epode IIa.147-148).

It is in hope of a positive outcome to this great battle (the analog of the final battle between good and evil in all millenial histories) that the prophet utters the Ode's closing prayer. At first glance, Shelley seems in this ending to have moved close to a traditional deity once again. The prayer addresses the "Great Spirit" (O.N.Epode IIB.149) and in echoes of the Old Testament pleads that the oppressors be punished:

> Oh, bid these beams be each a blinding brand
> Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!
> Bid the Earth's plenty kill (O.N.Epode IIB.160)

If there can be no direct intervention against the enemy, the worshipper asks that man be granted divine inspiration:

> Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill
> And raise thy sons, . . .
> . . . . . .
> Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
> The instrument to work thy will divine!
> (O.N.Epode IIB.165-169)

so that the enemy may be overcome.

The divinity, so addressed by Shelley, finally proves, however, to be of specifically Italian origin and concern:

> Great Spirit, deepest Love!
> Which rulest and dost move
> All things which live and are within the Italian shore;
> Who spreadest Heaven around it,
> Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
> (O.N.Epode IIB.149-153)

Chernaik affirms this view in her description of the prayer as

> a development of his [Shelley's] objective sense of Naples and her environs as it is conveyed in the introductory epodes, where divinity is an emanation of art and nature. Love is the tutelary deity of the stanzas that hail Naples' freedom.[10]

The seeming return to a more traditional Divinity, Chernaik suggests, represents only Shelley's conception of ". . .the appropriate dress for an ode to an Italian city."

The Odes to Liberty and Naples represent a departure from Shelley's earlier vital use of biblical modes. Biblical borrowings tend to be external. The main supports of his millenial outlook are even more deeply shaken in his final work devoted to the theme of the salvation of the social order, written in the autumn of 1821. In striking contrast to the fundamentally positive spirit of Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound, pessimistic shadows intrude upon Hellas as they do upon the Odes to Liberty and Naples, betraying the enthusiasm of the millenial spirit, which is rooted always in hopefulness. In this final salvation drama, hope is almost overridden by despair, despite the presence of many of the familiar elements of Shelleys millenial rhetoric.

Examples of biblical images and diction are easily located. The Turkish batteries "knead . . . down" . . . the rebel Greeks with the forces of the Old Testament God--"fire and iron rain . . ." (H.381), echoing the biblical "fire," "brimstone" and "horrible tempest" of Psalm 11 or the "tempest of hail" and "destroying storm" of Isaiah (28.2). We recognize Isaiah's harvester (". . . and it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn and reapeth the ears with his arm. . .") (Isaiah 17.5) in Shelley's sickleman ". . . till, like a field of corn/Under the hook of the swart sickleman" (H.11.382-83). In similar fashion, Shelley's recurrent seed motif ("And if the trunk be dry yet shall the seed/ Unfold itself even in the shape of that/Which gathers birth at its decay . . ." (H.889-891) carries strong accents of Job: ("For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again . . .Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet . . . it will bud and bring forth boughs. . .") (14:6-7). A fondness for the prepositional phrase as modifier: the "cloud of desolation" (H.495), the "lamp of our dominion" (H.237) recalls the biblical "God of glory" (Psalm 29:3), "the rod of thy strength" (Psalm 110:2), as well as the "fire of thorns" (Psalm 118:12).

These biblical allusions and syntactic patterns

contribute, however, to what is only a partial millenial spirit in Hellas, for millenial motifs in this work are dwarfed by the rolling cycle of history which shapes the drama. Similarly, Shelley's reliable abstract nouns ("Conscience feeds Revenge and wrong with despair") (H.729-731), even those elevated to key words in the preceding major works, ("Pity," "Wisdon") (H. 734), and once again sanctified here as the path that leads from the negative triad of "Ruin degradation and despair" (H.47), do not function as basic factors in the rhetorical structure. Hellas, unlike the earlier long works, is not built upon a vision of two worlds. Its rhetoric is not shaped to persuade us of the superiority of the heavenly world which earth might be, nor does it expend much effort to teach us how to effect a conversion.

Rather, the basic structural tension in Hellas lies in the conflict between the millenial idea (in its typical rhetoric) and the cyclical historical theory against which it is posed. It is the clash of a goal-oriented formulation of hope and action with an historical perspective that is unsure of its premises and constantly in danger of lapsing into helpless resignation. The ancient cyclical view of history threatens to overtake the nineteenth centure German variation which Shelley employs in Hellas and in the process it overwhelms the Shelleyan polemics of change. Because Shelley's biblical

millenial rhetoric is fundamentally at odds with the cyclical theory of history, Hellas is a revolutionary poem whose zeal is undercut by the very nature of its premises. The roll of the historical wheel in this work precludes the traditional millenial sharp-angled cut-off point where earth becomes heaven, and an essentially Greek view of history clouds the revolutionary spirit which Shelley brings to his celebration of the fight for Greece's freedom.

J.B. Bury in The Idea of Progress points out the essence of the Greek cyclic theories in Plato, who saw inevitable decay prescribed by the nature of the universe.[12] In Plato's theory of degradation, the uniformity and order of the first half of the world gives way to decadence in the second half, leading to a repetition of the cycle. Polybius, according to Bury, also saw history as a natural process of growth and decline--the fate of all states. Change was gradual and continuous, not involving sudden breaks in the pattern. The theory of world cycles was, Bury tells us, a periodic theory widely current and suggestive of "an endless monotonous iteration,"[13] not unrelated to a basic Greek philosophical outlook that may be described as closer to resignation than optimism: No period of Greek history could be considered, Bury affirms, as,

> . . .an age of optimism. They were never . . . lured into setting high hopes on human capacity.[14]

The lack of optimism inherent in the ancient cyclical theories finds its way into Hellas, despite the greater hopefulness of the contemporary Germanic variation,[15] which, according to Earl Wasserman, in Shelley: A Critical Reading, Shelley adopted. Wasserman finds in the philosophy of history which informs Hellas, affinities with the metaphysics of Hegel. He interprets Shelley's view of history in terms of a gradual approach by the collective human soul to the absolute, through cycles of time, observing that,

> The teleology of Shelley's history provides for . . . the world's unceasing approach to an absolute perfection that must ever elude it;[16]

The cycles of history are to be seen as successive cultures and

> . . . each successive culture degenerates from its prime and returns to a new state of possibility, but with each return Spirit gains new strength and greater purity[17]

Shelley's Hellas, however, does not sustain the long-viewed optimism which this theory suggests. Wasserman admits that Hellas closes with "a . . . human voice . . . capable only of uttering a plea that the evil of the past be not renewed in the next cycle of time."[18] However, he fails to recognize that the doubt implicit in that plea is reflected throughout the structure and syntax

of Hellas and is not merely affixed to its final moments. Wasserman's explanation of the final cry is that the "mere mortal (as opposed to the poet) is free to doubt"[19] and that "Shelley is honestly and skeptically aware that he has been guided by a hope and a desire, not an assurance."[20] The alternations of optimism and despair which characterize this poem cannot be accounted for, however, in the theory of spiraling historical cycles. It seems, rather, that Hellas reflects the conflict between Shelley's hope that the cycle may spiral and his despair over the possibility of a merely repetitive cycle and recycle as in the original ancient tradition.

Bereft of faith in a prophet-hero of change, Shelley's vision of salvation through the social order in this poem involves a forward movement, an attempt to graft his earlier millenial outlook on to the cyclical spirals, and a subsequent slide backward to a vision of defeat in terms of never-ending, never-improving, historical circles. If we examine Hellas in the light of the earlier works of social vision, we see a weakening of Shelley's use of millenial motifs in the re-ordering of his structural patterns and in the loss of hope and confidence, reflected in the syntax. The most striking shift of focus is the absence of the prophet-leader, the chosen votary of virtue, who must carry the burden of change.

Although the model for this figure is present in the Christ of the Miltonic prologue, speaking in favor of a Greek victory with the familiar enthusiasm and sincerity of Shelley's millenial syntax and diction (characterized by repetition of parallel prepositional phrases, anaphora, prominent abstract nouns, and typological reference), he is missing from the poem proper.[21] The absence of this figure sharply affects the impact of the revolutionary message. At the heart of the millenial vision is the prophet-leader, who in earlier dramas was himself a guarantee of the future which he worked to bring into the present. This task is now given over to the cyclical movement of history, where it is precariously balanced on the hope for upward spiraling. At the same time the tyrant-king moves to the center of the poem.

We recognize at once in the syntax and diction that portray the monarch an extension and elaboration of the anti-king motif of Mab, The Revolt, and Prometheus Unbound. Once again, Shelley defines tyrants in a variety of noun phrases and clauses designed to expose their power as ultimately a pretense: They are "weak conquerors,. . ." "giants who look pale" (H.425). The "heart of monarchy is hollow" (H.954-955), the dreams of a tyrant are "ghastly" (H.942), and their words are hypocritical ("peace . . . means death when monarchs

speak") (H.969). Shelley introduces once more the theme of anxiety at the heart of monarchy as Mahmud the Turkish tyrant admits:

> Kings are like stars--they rise and set, they have
> The worship of the world, but no repose (H.195-196)

and stresses again "fear" as a key determinant of royal behavior: The king is

> . . .at once slave and tyrant
> His wishes still are weaker than his fears (H.557-58).

Kings

> . . . like beasts
> When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fears
> Cower in their kingly dens . . . (H.356-358).

The obedience which Mahmud demands, no less than the obedience demanded by the Old Testament God,[22] as Shelley critically envisions him, is subtly criticized in echoes of Milton's sonnet XIX (when I consider . . .)

> Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
> . . . . . .
> The Anarchies of Africa unleash
> Their tempest-winged cities of the sea
> (H.297-300)

> . . . his state
> Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speek
> And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
> (Sonnet XIX, ll.11-13)

Other motifs associated earlier with the tyrant figure

also reappear, such as the abstracts "Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmity" (H.905) and gold, typically coupled with death as here in the form of a Mab-like aphorism: "Blood is the seed of gold" (H.246).

Shelley emphasizes the basic relationship between tyrant and rebel in a recurrent metaphor of the hunter and the hunted:

> . . . The Greeks
> Are as a brood of lions in the net
> Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
> Stand smiling (H.931-934)

The contemporary political situation is explained in these terms as the Russians become "Tigers," and Greeks "deer" facing the Turkish "hunters" (H.537-39), and Austria's "slow dogs of war" (H313) howl at the "panther, Freedom." (H.316). To Mahmud, the rebels are "hounds of a base breed" (H.468). Interwoven bird imagery also supports the hunting metaphor as the Moslems become birds of prey-the "vulture" (H.940) or "kite" (a member of the Falcon family) (H.308)-at war with the Greek "cranes" (H.308,480) or "wild swans" (H.293).

Tyrants, whose daily fare is an alliterative triad of "curses groans and gold," (H.935) are alternately, as in the preceding works, excoriated and threatened with the veiled hint of punishment after death. The Greek hero cries out:

> . . . There is a refuge tyrant
> Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm
> Shoulds't thou pursue; there we shall meet again
> (H.393-395)

They are also threatened with disaster in this life. In series, triads, repetition, and typical negative abstractions suggesting biblical overtones of imminent destruction, the tyrant is warned of his fate:

> Upon your camps cities towers or fleets
> The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
> Of these dead limbs,--upon your streams and mountains,
> Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops
> Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly
> Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
> With poisoned light-Famine and Pestilence,
> And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!
> (H.433-440)

In this pending doom we hear again the echo of the great conflagration which in biblical tradition marks the end of the reign of evil and the beginning of the millenial era. Shelley prepares for the encounter--"Nature from all her boundaries is moved/Against ye. Time has found ye light as foam (H.441-442),--and, borrowing an image from Coleridge, once again sets history at the great turning point:

> The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
> Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
> On this one cast (H.443-445)

Despite the presence of these various features of Shelley's anti-monarchial motif, all of which fit so well into the negative side of the millenial vision of earlier works, this theme in Hellas does not function as it did formerly (a prime symbol of the negative earthly world that must be renewed). Mahmud, himself, in fact, evokes a much more sympathetic response from the reader than we might expect. To some degree, the very fact that the narrative is recounted from his viewpoint accounts for our sympathetic identification, but the historical frame of the poem explains more. Observed from the standpoint of the eternal rolling cycles of history, Mahmud seems more a pawn in the hands of an historical destiny than a man who has willed evil. Shelley's emphasis on the cycle which Mahmud recognizes is about to close in upon him dwarfs the monarch's individual responsibility and blurs the dark line between good and evil which marks the pure millenial view.

Earl Wasserman in Shelley: A Critical Reading observes that Shelley follows Aeschylus' perspective by focusing on the tyrant rather than the rebels and portraying the drama through the eyes of the tyrant.[24] He points out that this presentation " . . . allows no joy in triumph over evil:"[25] and permits "the tyrant . . . to be pitied,"[26] all in accordance with Shelley's ethics.

This perspective also suits, however, the central focus of Hellas, which is no longer to replace "what is" with "what could be," but rather the education of the tyrant in the proper interpretation of history, in the understanding of the rhythm of history to which he must ultimately acquiesce.

Wasserman notices, as well, that Ahasuerus, the sage, teaches Mahmud, much as Demogorgon in Prometheus Unbound instructs Asia,[27] and, we might add, toward the same purpose for which Ianthe encounters history past, present and future. If Mahmud could be brought to understanding, the breach between wisdom and power would be closed. Ahasuerus, as the spokesman for the wisdom of history, is related to Demogorgon, from whom the movement of history emanates; but the emphasis of the historical vision has shifted and now the future is ordained within the cyclical progression.

Ahasuerus wishes to teach Mahmud that loss of temporal power is inevitable:

> Poised by the flood, ee'n on the height thou holdest
> Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
> Ebbs to its depths. (H.847-849)

According to Wasserman, he attempts to have Mahmud look ". . .beyond time, into eternity . . ."[28] in order to see ". . . human existence . . . in the light of the transcendent, immutable, and eternal One."[29] He would

have him learn that "thought alone . . . together with its animate components (in another Shelleyan definition through series), Will, Passion, Reason, Imagination--cannot die (H.795-797) and represents . . . "the presence of the transcendent One . . ."[30] in the human world. In what Wasserman terms Shelley's "dizzying metaphysics"[31] there is, however, no denial of the validity of time in the world of human perception[32]--historical time moves in cycles and because it does the human mind can comprehend present and future in terms of the past. When Ahasuerus brings the past in the form of the Turkish ruler Mahomet II into the present of Mahmud, Shelley echoes his description of the current Greek-Turkish warfare in the narration of Mahomet's battle, now buried in history.

Relying heavily on onomatopoeic effects, Shelley recalls the hiss (H.720) the "roar" (H.722) and the crash (H.724) of the contemporary battle in the alliterated hiss of the fire, the falling of the bastions (as a clashing mouthful of consonants) (H.814-816) and the "clash" "clang" (H.820) and "crash" (H.821) of the battle of his predecessor Mahomet. If Mahmud's future is destined to become what is now Mahomet's past, the whole concept of imperial power becomes meaningless. Mahmud's position at the height of Empire which "seemed an Elysian isle of

peace and joy" (H.924-25) is now seen as only a "gloomy crag of Time to which I clind"(H.926). (Here Power clings to its historical crag of time, as opposed to Love which in Prometheus Unbound springs from its crag of agony P.U.IV.560).

The chorus expresses its recognition of the essential emptiness of any momentary monarchial victory when, at an Islamic cry of triumph, it asks to be borne to the abode of tyranny's success, located metaphorically in devasting, but markedly temporary phenomena ("isles of jagged cloud . . . mid . . . oceans of lightning" [H.957-959] or a "toppling promonotory . . . of solid tempest" [H.960-961]). Mahmud's empire like Mahomet's before him will crumble and the wheel of history will turn forward toward a cycle of greater freedom.

Mahmud himself, despite Ahasuerus' explanations, cannot go beyond a cynical and nihilistic view of mankind, and he functions as an ironic distortion of the prophetic role when he comments (upon a noise heard outside) "Evil doubtless like all human sounds" (H.186). His response to the moving cycles of history is:

> . . . woe to all!
> Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe
> To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!
> Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
> Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!
> (H.894-895)

With a characteristic biblical use of "woe" and paired nouns, Mahmud goes on to contradict explicitly the distinction emphasized in Prometheus Unbound between those who do and those who suffer evil: "Woe both to those that suffer and inflict" (H.898). There is, however, no positive leader to offset Mahmud's nihilism--no strong figure to affirm the millenial hopes of the chorus that the cycles of history shall rise successively higher. The chorus is itself doubt ridden, and its syntax is tentative. The cycles seem constantly in danger of falling to their former levels. Mahmud's pessimism is, in fact, supported by various syntactical patterns in the text.

For example, it is the ancient cycle of history that is suggested in Hellas' recurrent phrasal pattern--"noun on noun" which appears in its most memorable form in the first line of the second great chorus of Hellas ("Worlds on worlds are rolling ever") (H.197). This motif is repeated ("oblivion on oblivion," "spoil on spoil"/"Ruin on Ruin" (H.877-878), "Deluge upon deluge," (H.690) reinforcing the cyclical idea with a syntactical repetition that in its circular movement ends with its beginning. As in the description of the earth in the prologue which rolls ". . . from realm to realm/And Age to Age (H.2324), there is nothing to suggest an ascent

or an improvement. These phrases intimate the monotony and endless sameness that a similar syntax (describing terrible suffering after the abortive revolution) conveys in The Revolt of Islam: "Day after day the burning sun rolled on" (The Revolt C.XIII.3901). The earth might, however, "roll" differently, with direction and a suggestion of improvement, as it does in the fourth act of Prometheus Unbound:

> Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
> The love which paves thy path along the skies,
> (P.U. IV.520-521)

Hope has waned in Hellas and the weakening of faith is reflected in a syntax disposed toward balanced alternatives, rather than sustained conviction: We are at the point of despair, not assurance:

> Let Freedom leave--where'er she flies
> A Desert, or a Paradise! (H.90-91)
>
> Let the beautiful and the brave
> Share her glory, or a grave. (H.92-93)

Because they are joined by "or" the alternatives seem equally possible, equally probable. It is just this pattern which occurs in the final lines of the drama:

> The world is weary of the past,
> Oh, might it die or rest at last! (H.1100-01)

The passionate millenial conviction of eventual triumph has been lost. The continuous turns of the cycle have

worn out hoepful faith and the final response must be either relief or an end to history.

Loss of faith is also reflected in the treatment of those watchwords central to Shelley's millenial style. Offered as resilient "seals of that most firm assurance" (P.U.IV.563) in Prometheus Unbound, they reappear in Hellas, but without the power of assertion. Now presented in a parallel conditional syntax, each attribute is questioned, rather than affirmed, in a dependent conditional clause introduced by "If":

> (If understood) If Liberty
> Lent not life its sould of light,
> Hope its iris of delight,
> Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
> Love its power to give and bear.
> (H.41-45)

Reintroduced by Semichorus I at a later point the power of each attribute is again paralyzed by the lamentation "Alas" which introduces it in the context of a recitation of its enemies:

> Alas! for Liberty!
> If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
> Or fate, can quell the free!
> Alas! for Virtue, when
> Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
> Of erring judging men
> Can break the heart where it abides.
> Alas, if Love, whose smile makes this obscure
> world splendid
> Can change with its false times and tides,
> Like hope and terror,
> Alas for Love!
> And Truth . . . (H.973.984)

Not only the "seals of assurance" (P.U.IV.563) but their spokesmen in Hellas as well, are thin echoes of the prophetic conviction of earlier poems. The Greek captive chorus is both physically (as slaves) and spiritually blocked in their representation of the millenial spirit. The chorus must literally speak softly in fear of the tyrant, and Shelley makes much lyric profit from this situation at the beginning of the poem. At a great distance from battle-rousing rhetoric is the subject matter of the opening stanza: "sleep," "opiate flowers," the "tyrant's pillow," and "orient bowers." (H.1-3), all part of a song laden with "the soul of slumber" (H.15) that is sung by the captured Greek slaves as Mahmud rests. Stillness and calm characterize the mood; the rhyme scheme emphasizes "sleep"; the short lines suggest the tone and simplicity of lullaby. When the millenial message is told, it must be whispered. The rhyme-extended repetition of "low" renews the "sleep" theme, blunting the spirit of defiance:

> Breathe low low
> The spell of the mighty mistress now!
> When conscience lulls her sated snake.
> And tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake
> Breathe low low
> The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
> Through the veins of the frozen earth--low, low!
> (H.27-33)

Identifying Freedom with divinity references that have appeared in the works previously considered (with

light H.42), with wings (H.56-58,86-87), and later with the biblical God, as the semichorus declares "Let there be light," said Liberty (H.682), the chorus attempts another Shelleyan version of the world's early history as essentially a golden age. Several echoes of Milton's On the Morning of Christ's Nativity introduce the millenial theme of renewal. The first line "In the great morning of the world (H.46), reminiscent of Milton's "This is the Month, and this the happy morn"[33] (OMCN,l.1), is followed by Freedom's dispersal of the anarchs, (And all its banded anarchs fled) (H.49) as Milton's Christ disbanded the Pagan Gods. The flight of freedom from country to country is then expressed in a succession of parallel prepositional phrases and repetitions, further united through rhyme and alliteration,

> From age to age, from man to man,
> It lived; and lit from land to land
> Florence, Albion, Switzerland. (H.61-63)

and followed, as in all millenial histories, by a turn to the wrong course. In the brief historical review in the Prologue, the "sun" fails and winter comes (H.38), while in the first chorus we get sudden nightfall (H.64) and a return to the present where the turning point of history rests at Greece (H.82=89). Later the semi-chorus follows the same outline of history concentrating on Athens, the bright beginning of Greece, whose "glorious

states" (H.86) became, in a reversal of historical progress, a triad of "ashes, wrecks, oblivion" (H.687).

The endurance-suffering motif of earlier millenial vision is also incorporated into the choral speeches as Greece is said to have fulfilled, on Freedom's behalf, the role of the suffering servant ("With the tears of sadness/ Greece did thy shroud bedew") (H.96-97).[34] Christ, still the prototype of the hero, is described in further echoes of Milton. ("Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,/Like bloodhounds mild and tame/Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight"). (H.218-220) In Milton's Ode the stars react with deep amaze

> And will not take their flight,
> For all the morning light,
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> Until their Lord himself bespake . . .
> (OMCN.VI.72-76)

References to the passing from one cycle to the next are enriched by further echoes from Milton. After an extended simile (with marked "s" "f" "w" alliteration to underline the sense of swiftness (H.225-229), Shelley alludes to Milton's pagan gods ("The Powers of earth and air Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem") (H.230-231) and recalls the lamentation of the Ode:

> The lonely mountains o'er,
> And the resounding shore,
> A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
> (OMCN.XX.181-184)

in their own lament:

> Our hills and seas and streams,
> Dispeopled of their dreams,
> Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
> Wailed forthe golden years. (H.235-238)

The last line specifically recalls Milton's "Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold" (OMCN.XIV.35)

The millenial hero, the means to the regeneration suggested in the chorus, however, never materializes. The second great chorus opens with a description of historical cycles:

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

that insists upon evanescence (supported in the alliterative underscoring of the simile, as the "b" of "bubbles" is reinforced in the predominant "p-b" repetition of l.200). We encounter a birth-to-death cycle which apparently leaves little room for the exertions of a prophet-leader toward a new order. Shelley refers to heroic effort in a qualified, nearly apologetic, syntax suggesting that, although doomed to failure, it should be made largely for its own sake. The use of "But" and "still" in line 201 indicates a defensive stance, clearly contrary to the confidence associated with the prophet-leader motif in Mab, The Revolt and Prometheus Unbound, where change depends upon the hero as both example and initiator.

> But they are still imortal
> Who, through birth's orient portal
> And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro
> Clothe their unceasing flight
> In the bried dust and light
> Gathered round their chariots as they go;
> (H.201-206)

Decay will be the inevitable winner in the movement of history, and the hero's triad of momentary triumphs seems significant as an example of his character and courage, but of no lasting value to the social order.

> New shapes they still may weave,
> New gods, new laws receive,
> Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
> On Death's bare ribs had cast. (H.207-210)

Although they express millenial concerns in Shelley's millenial voice, choral attempts to identify with the prophetic role appear (against this background of limitations) to be largely wishful thinking. Embedded in choral speeches are several of the same prophetic associations noted in earlier works. The chorus, for example, wishes it were the Shelley prophet symbol--a cloud, not to, "Bask in the deep blue noon divine" (H.667((a line which exemplifies Shelley's skill in subtle alliteration and assonance), but rather to fly to the battle scene. The chorus-(prophet) also identifies its suffering with nature:

> My golden rain
> For the Grecian slain
> Should mingle in tears with the bloody main
> (H.665-667)

With sentiments reminiscent of Mab, suffering man is

declared to be beyond true domination, although enslaved: "But the free heart, the impassive soul/Scorn thy control!" (H.680-681). Fervid anticipation of a millenial state, toward which such scorn might eventually lead, is interrupted, however, by recurrent references to impermanence. Interjections such as the following suggest the unavoidable cycle of birth and decay in the midst of millenial excitement:

> Temples and Towers,
> Citadels and marts, and they
> Who live and die there, have been ours
> And may be thine and must decay; (H.692-695)

providing incursions of doubt that eventually culminate in the crisis of faith in prophecy which marks the final great chorus.

Shelley's theme of the eternal significance of Greece for all cycles also subverts, by its very nature as consolation, enthusiasm for a renewed Greece. The Greek "seal" "set" "On all this world of men inherits" (H.702-703) seems a possible substitute for temporal victory and, consequently, reduces the revolutionary impact of the choral battle call which follows:

> Hear ye the blast,
> Whose Oprhic thunder thrilling calls
> From ruin her Titanian walls? (H.704-705)

Not even reverberations of Marlowe ("Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones of slavery . . ." H.706-707) are strong enough to blot out the reservations about history

which underlie the chorus' doubts. A change within man, which was the key to the millenium in Prometheus Unbound, is only briefly suggested in Hellas when the chorus, acting as prophet, traces the vicious circle of Revenge and retaliation[35] to its source in guilt and despair, (H.728-732), and suggests the substitution of "love for hate and tears for blood" (H.737). More typical is the attitude of questioning, the unsure plea for the millenial man. Contemplating a vision of wrong as a victorious vulture the chorus asks,

> Who shall impede her flight?
> Who rob her of her prey? (H.946-947)

The confident messianic spirit, as exemplified in the syntax of Hassan's speech: (the Greek martyrs are addressed in successive definitions as "Phantoms of the free" H.412 "Armies of the Eternal" H.413 and parallel clauses beginning with "ye who")

> ye who strike
> To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
> And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts
> And thaw their frost work diadems like dew;--
> Oh ye who float . . . and weave
> The garment of glory . . . (H.413-415)

cannot be sustained. It fades, for example, before Shelley's description of Greece as unfit for millenial battle:

> But Greece was as a hermit-child,
> Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
> To woman's growth, by dreams so mild
> She knew not pain or guilt; (H.996-999)

Temporal defeat is nearly accepted once more, again in terms of Greece's existence ". . .above the idle foam of time." (H.1007) The central response to defeat in this poem is flight. The chorus shifts from hopes of victory in Greece to hopes for Freedom's growth in the United States.

In a tightly constructed lyric of despair and transferred hope that opens with Shelley's favored biblical motif of darkness at noon and sums up the poem's various bird-of-prey references (H.1025), the movement is from the dead East to the hopeful West, from an unnatural darkness to the light of the evening star Hesperus (his emblem for the West). Typical of Mab is the careful parallel patterning of independent clauses in this passage, each followed by adverbial prepositional phrases, and all unified by marked alliteration of d's and f's:

> Darkness has dawned in the East
> On the noon of time:
> The death-birds descend to their feast
> From the hungry clime.
> Let Freedom and Peace flee far
> To a sunnier strand,
> And follow Love's folding star
> To the Evening Land! (H.1023-1030)

A transfer of enthusiasm and fervor is attempted, and the kingless continents" (H.1047) are now the focus of millenial rhetoric. The chorus, guided by Hesperus (who is addressed in accumulated definitions as "Thou Beacon of Love! thou lamp of the free!" H.1041), proclaims Greece resurrected in a breathless noun series describing the "Paradise Islands" (H.1052) of the new world:

> The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky
> The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe
> (H.1055-1056)

They are the site of renewal ". . . like morning on dream," (H.1057) and the millenial vision of a new world, . . . like Heaven on death" (H.1057). The chorus attempts the vaticinatory role, predicting that suffering Greece, like the suffering Christ, will be resurrected (in the west). But millenial enthusiasm is rapidly punctured by Shelley's insistent return to the cyclic theory in the final chorus.

Milton Wilson discussing Hellas in Shelley's Major Poetry describes the visionary hopes of the Greek chorus " as . . . mixed with pessimistic fears and distrust of this world."[36] These pessimistic fears and distrust grow directly from the cyclical theory of history and clash with a millenial vision which originates in a

very different view of history. The first line of the final chorus is of particular interest here. Tom Paine in Common Sense wrote "We have it in our power to begin the world over again,"[37] and Shelley starts off, "The world's great age begins anew" (H.1060). With the phrase "great age ", Shelley moves from a millenial faith in renewal to a typically qualified statement of the cyclic return of a period of peace and high achievement. The messianic viewpoint is lost in the shift.

The third chorus answers the wail for the golden years heard in the last line of the second chorus ("The golden years return" H.1061) in simple declarative lines and parallel syntax, again reminiscent of Milton's Ode On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, which serves as a model for Shelley's theme of a new beginning in each major chorus. Milton's lines:

> And leprous sin will melt away from earthly mold,
> And Hell itself will pass away.
> And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.
> (OMCN.XIV.138-140)

suggest the sense of Shelley's lines:

> Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
> Like wrecks of a dissolving dream:
> (H.1064-1065)

The lines:

> He saw a greater Sun appear
> Than his bright Throne, or burning Axeltree could bear.
> (OMCN.VII.83-84)

may be the source of the elaboration in the Hellas stanza of comparison, suggesting the return of the past in a form similar to but surpassing the original.

> A brighter Hellas rears its mountain
> From waves serener far;
> A new Peneus rolls his fountain
> Against the morning star. (H.1066-1069)

Mention of a new Ulysses in Shelley's third stanza (H.1076-1077), however, exacerbates the fear that is hidden within the cyclic motif of Hellas, the fear of exact repetition of historical cycles and ensuing renewal of ancient wars and tragedies (H.1078-1083). Doubt corrodes the confidence of the opening line, and the exclamation in the fourth stanza is that of the prophet remonstrating with himself, stricken by the possible consequences of his own cyclical view:

> Oh! write no more the tale of Troy
> If earth Death's scroll must be! (H.1078-1079)

An attempt to overcome this fear in the following stanza:

> Another Athens shall arise,
> And to remoter time
> Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
> The splendour of its prime; (H.1084-1087)

fails as here too, doubt suggests that not only is it possible that a renewal of Athens may mean a renewal of the agonies as well as the triumphs of her history, but further that what Athens symbolizes may not be capable of existing within temporal history at all. If it should somehow survive, there is the further possibility that the rest of the world may profit very little from her example:

> And leave, if nought so bright may live,
> All earth can take or Heaven can give.
> (H.1088-1089)

The chorus' rising fears are articulated in the dramatic final stanza, where, tortured by the implications of cycles which may not spiral, the chorus as prophet must face the end of prophecy:

> Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
> Cease! must men kill and die?
> (H.1096-1097)

There is, finally, no true place for the prophet or prophecy in a cyclical formulation of history. The essence of the prophetic role lies in change, in hope, in the forward movement which is the core of the biblical view of history. When the prophet is forced to peer into a cyclical future that may contain only a cycle of return, he can do nothing but refuse his role. Hence, the choral lines commanding an end to prophecy:

> Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
> Of bitter prophecy (H.1098-1099)

Recognizing that the wheel rolls forward only to roll back once more, the prophet is left with the despairing wish to be rid of the wheel and its burden of a recurring past. The "rest" for which the final line of Hellas calls is possible only within a linear view of history, which offers the hope of lasting improvement for the social order (although it may be necessary to invoke the "seals of assurance" to maintain that improvement). The closing lines:

> The world is weary of the past
> Oh, might it die or rest at last! (H.1100-1101)

mark the failure of prophecy as a viable motif in Shelley's treatment of the search for salvation through and on behalf of the social order. A heroic figure, according to Shelley's formulation in Hellas must function despite despair and with the knowledge that "God and man and hope abandon me" (H.390). A prophetic without hope is a direct contradiction of the prophetic motif in Shelley's earlier works on the same theme. Deprived of confidence, prophetic hope, and saving event, Hellas offers only the vestiges of a millenial vision.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Judith Chernaik, The Lyrics of Shelley (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve Unic., 1972), p.5.

[2] Carlos Baker in Shelley's Major Poetry suggests that Shelley believed that the "vocabulary and syntax of the English Bible suitably purged of the less familiar archaisms will come very close to the lingua communis which . . . [he] sought to use as an instrument of communication," p. 158.

[3] Baker, p. 161.

[4] Chernaik, pp.97-98 compares the political odes of Shelley and Coleridge to the eighteenth-century sublime of Thomson and Collins.

[5] Specific references are given in detail by Chernaik, p. 102 to support her contention that in this poem--"the vehicle is Biblical myth, the tenor rational republicanism," p. 104.

[6] Another reference to this recurrent millenial motif occurs in IV:

> And like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
> Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain
> Like aught that is which wraps what is to be
> (O.L. IV.54-57)

[7] A somewhat different interpretation of these lines may be found in Chernaik: "The last lines prophesy the breeding of new wants despite plenitude; wealth torn from those who toil and groan shall return a thousand fold for one of life's gifts and Natures," p. 106.

[8] Chernaik, p. 14.

[9] Chernaik, p. 14.

[10] Chernaik, p. 116.

[11] Chernaik, p. 116.

[12] J.B. Bury, The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into its Origin and Growth (1932; rpt. New York: Dover, 1955), p. 10.

[13] Bury, p. 12.

[14] Ibid., p. 17.

[15] Earl Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 411.

[16] Wasserman, p. 411.

[17] Wasserman, p. 411.

[18] Wasserman, p. 40.

[19] Wasserman, p. 410.

[20] Wasserman, p. 410.

[21] Critical opinion is generally dobutful of Shelley's intention to publish the prologue as part of the play. Earl Wasserman treats it as an abandoned fragment from which many themes and passages in Hellas were drawn. cf. Wasserman, p. 395.

[22] In Hellas Shelley continues his technique of simultaneous incorporation and criticism of Hebrew-Christian doctrine, concentrating on New Testament references. Wasserman discusses several New Testament allusions in detail (cf. pp. 385, 390, 393).

[23] John Milton, "Sonnet XIX When I Consider . . ." in John Milton: Complete Poems and Prose, ed. Merrit Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 168.

24 Wasserman, p. 382.

25 Wasserman, p. 382.

26 Wasserman, p. 382.

27 Wasserman, p. 393.

28 Wasserman, p. 393.

29 Wasserman, p. 393.

30 Wasserman, p. 393.

31 Wasserman, p. 394.

32 Wasserman, p. 394.

33 Critics generally mention Shelley's allusion to the flight of the pagan gods but do not discuss other parallels between the Hellas chorus and Milton's hymn.

34 Wasserman finds in Hellas "a conception of freedom whose foundation is the successful endurance of failure, p. 408.

35 The Forman reading of ll.729-730

> Fear Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind
> The foul cubs like their parents are

is consonant with Shelley's triad patterns as well as his argument. The 1822 edition based on the Williams transcript reads "For/Revenge and Fear bring forth their kind."

36 Milton Wilson, p. 192.

37 Thomas Paine in the first edition (published by W.T. Bradfors) of Common Sense says "We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand. . ." Thomas Paine, Common Sense and The Crisis (1776; rpt. New York: Doubleday, 1960), p. 59.

CHAPTER V

VARIATIONS ON THE MILLENIAL THEME: (EPIPSYCHIDION)

The millenial vision, the recreation of a paradisal existence on earth, appears once again in elaborated form in Epipsychidion. The "gray earth and branches bare and dead" (326) undergo renewal in the visionary isle that "Is a far Eden of the purple East" (417) or "a wreck of Paradise" (423). Time is arrested in the millenial world where Shelley wishes to establish himself and Emily. Reminiscent of earlier millenial visions (Queen Mab, and The Revolt of Islam, for example), the present, which encompasses the future as well as the past, continues indefinitely (Epi. 522-524). Love, once again a divine power, makes this simultaneity of time possible for the poet and his lady, as for Laon and Cythna of the Revolt (R. of I. CVI.XXXV).

Epipsychidion clearly expresses the heightened sense of "now" that is the focus of millenial fervor. While The Revolt of Islam and Prometheus Unbound take

place at the crossroads, respectively, of the political and moral history of mankind, Epipsychidion places the poet at a crossroads in his personal history. The significance of the moment is insisted upon ("The day is come and thou wilt fly with me" (388) . . . The hour is come:--the destined Star has risen") (394), as is the moment that begins the process of renewal in Prometheus Unbound ("This is the season, this the day, the hour;") (P.U. II.13).

Renewal becomes possible through Emily, who is both the symbol of a transcendent reality and a "mortal shape indued/With love and life and light and deity" (113). (This usage demonstrates the efficacy of the series form for Shelley's purpose. The various attributes of Shelley's definition of the transcendent spirit cannot be contained in one word. A syntactic mode that includes several terms is functional, allowing an approximation of meaning through multiple definitions.) For the poet's millenial intent, Emily's earthly dimension is called upon. It is Emily as "A shadow of some golden dream" (116) (twice removed from the transcendent source) or as "a tender/Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love" (117-118) that he requires, the Emily with whom he wishes to be united in terms of an earthly relation of spouse or sister."[1]

The spouse relationship (sexual union with Emily) is developed as a metaphor for the passage from the limitations of an earthly world to the possibilities of a re-

newed heavenly earth. It is a symbol that functions in what David Perkins terms a Wordsworthian manner, ". . . a symbol which itself takes part in the reality which it represents."[2] Perkins observes that sexual union as a part of human love is consistently seen in Shelley's works as a path to transcendence.[3] A love union with an earthly Emily is, however, both a means and a symbol of transcendence and consequent re-creation. Love transforms the beloved into an approximation of the ideal, while it activates a potential in the lover to bring about a wider re-creation of that ideal. Human love participates in the eternal of which it is a part precisely because it contains this power of regeneration.

Although regeneration in Epipsychidion depends specifically upon the poet's joining with Emily, it is a renewal not different in kind from the regeneration which extends to all society in the poems of social salvation. Admittedly, the social context in Epipsychidion, which concentrates on the poet's personal millenium, is suggested rather than elaborated; however, it must be remembered that expansion and diffusion are essential processes in the fulfillment of Shelley's millenial vision. Always a product of love, the creation of the millenial world grows out of an expansion from the personal to the social. Emily herself, who is described as "one intense/Diffusion" (94-95) (in a passage where the syntax imitates the very

process it narrates), expands from an individual woman "Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,/Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing" (11.96-07), to "that Beauty furled/Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world" (103-104).[4] Social love in Shelley may be seen as an expansion of or diffusion from romantic love, as a portion of one of Shelley's rejected prefaces for Epipsychidion makes clear:

> . . .those who know the world as it should be may hope that the tendencies of such high emotions shall yet, in that world (if such there be) receive their consumation. --For the love of woman which these verses express was but the form of that universal love which Plato taught.[5]

The poet's personal regeneration through Emily is not unconnected to his earlier concern with the regeneration of mankind as a whole. It is in the creation of the millenium on earth that we find the solution of the basic Shelleyan conflict between the world as it is and an ideal world, a conflict which concerns the individual mind as well as the social order.

The millenial isle in Epipsychidion is itself linked in alliterative lines with the wind, usually associated by Shelley with some form of divine or prophetic function. The poet's chambers on this isle are "level with the living winds, which flow/Like waves above the living waves below" (517-518). The chambers are also fitted with "instruments with which high Spirits call/The future from its cradle"

(520-521), implying that the poet on the millenial island will continue to be involved in his work of salvation. He works as one,

> . . . to whom this world of life
> Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
> Tills for the promise of a later birth
> The wilderness of this Elysian earth
> (186-189)

References to his experiences in "the wintry forest of our life" (249) and in the "wintry wilderness of thorns" (323), evidence of the survival of the Christ and suffering themes from earlier poems, also support a continuing connection with the theme of social good.[6]

The specific nature of this connection is suggested in the effect which Emily will have on the poet. In Shelley love is always creative. C.W. Knight points out that the poet realizes his own identity by means of his union with Emily, just as Laon becomes his intended self through his union with Cythna.[7] Such self-fulfillment leads to the development of greater power as leader, prophet or poet--all roles which Shelley sees as contributing to the progress of mankind. Emily who beats the "unfeeling bars" (14) of her prison resembles Cythna in her "warfare" with the "world's tyrant's rage" (R. OF I. II.XXII.859-860). Both women function as major influences upon their lovers. In Epipsychidion the poet's "fruit" (386) will be made perfect by the "sunny eyes" (386) of Emily, who has the power to resolve what Knight calls

"the dualism of actual and ideal"."[8] Emily will make possible paradisal accomplishments for the earthly Shelley and therefore reconcile what Wasserman describes as the poet's mortal condition with his immortal desires.[9]

The poem offers proof of Emily's influence upon the poet in the form of a philosophical disquisition on love (147-189) (the major watchword of Prometheus Unbound). This argument is the first evidence of the fruits which Emily's widsom engenders:

> Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
> Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.
> (147-148)

As Cythna's ideas and energy were reflected in Laon's achievements in threatening the established tyranny, so Emily activates Shelley in this advance action against the established order, part of the overall correction of doctrine that is necessary to the establishment of the millenial future. Since the expansion of love is a dominant factor in the cause of millenial renewal, those beliefs which inhibit its diffusion must be attacked. Love, when not confined, has the power to kill ". . . Error, the worm" (168). Inspired by Emily, Shelley presents his attack on its restriction:

> I was never attached to that great sect,
> Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
> Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
> And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
> To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
> Of modern mortals . . .
> (149-154)

A doctrine which inhibits love, according to Shelley's argument, inhibits love's power of equalization. ("I know/That love makes all things equal") (125-126). Restriction limits, moreover, the social harmony and union which are the fruits of love. Shelley is here concerned with love in both its romantic and social senses. Love is the crucial element in his vision. Hope itself, always at the center of the millenial pursuit, is also derived in these passages from the possibilities of the ever increasing strength of love, as well as pleasure and thought.

> If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
> Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
> How much, while any yet remains unshared,
> Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:
> This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
> The unenvied light of hope; . . .
> (180-185)

To prevent the expansion of love is therefore to destroy hope, which is the "eternal law" (185) for those who seek the millenium, those who till the earth for "promise of a later birth" (188).

The concern with the social order revealed in this first "Emily-inspired" attack on morals suggests that Emily's future influence, postulated in terms of poetic

fruition, will not be uncerned with social good. She will illuminate the poet, rather than the prophet, but for Shelley poetry is a chief weapon for passage through the "wintry forest" (249). Millenial zeal is channeled into the possibilities of poetic language, and poetic creativity cannot be separated from social concerns. The work of art, because it is "an attempt to mediate between man and transcendental reality,"[10] is a contribution toward the millenial cause, which unites man with heaven in an earthly paradise.

The connection between the millenial impulse, central to the thought of so many of Shelley's major works, and the form of these works becomes clearer as we review the structural patterns found in the poems already examined. In all of these poems the millenial ideal, embodying what is heavenly within earthly limitations, resolves the dynamic tension which grows out of Shelley's central conflict between man's heavenly potential and his negative earthly reality. The particular way in which the syntax of an individual poem defines these contraries and expresses the tension between them is a major determinant of the poem's shape and structure. Analyses of syntactical patterns developed in preceding chapters confirm certain general critical assertions about Shelley's work. For example, George Richards states that:

> . . . in poetry so charged with emotion, contrasts are heightened to conflicts; indeed it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that in Shelley's poetry, early and late, conflict is almost always the principle of order.[11]

The structure of the works we have already examined is indeed predicated upon conflict. Syntactical structure expresses this conflict in Queen Mab, The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound and The Mask of Anarchy through selected abstract nouns, which lose their abstractness through repetition and become, along with recurrent triads and series, symbols that define conflicting worlds. The basic movement of these poems is a progress in triad and series form from the negative reality of a familiar earth toward an earth transformed.

In Hellas and the Odes to Liberty and Naples we see the linear movement of this thrust replaced by a pattern of advance and retreat, as the central conflict shifts to a tension between hope and doubt over the possible fruition of the positive vision. The syntax reflects this rhythm of ebb and flow in recurrent conditional forms. "If" clauses, interspersed laments and outcries, as we have recorded earlier, entertain the suggestion of failure in the very midst of millenial fervor;

> Alas! for Liberty!
> If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
> Or fate, can quell the free!
> (Hellas 973-976)

We might consider the expression of the conditional mode in these works as a variation on what Albert S. Gerard in English Romantic Poetry discusses as the romantic predilection for the "If" clause in Wordsworth and Coleridge. In the earlier poets this clause generally signals that inferences just stated can be only hypotheses.[12] In Shelley this syntactic technique is extended until it becomes a structural principle, expressing one extreme of each poem's tension field. The conditional mode functions as a syntactical undertow that wears away the strength of successive waves of millenial enthusiasm.

Epipsychidion, also concerned with an attempt to create a millenial earth, involves the basic structural problem of the earlier works. It must express conflict between two worlds and the tension that accompanies the yearning to move from one toward the other. We find, therefore, a similar bipolar structure, in this instance, developed through the elaboration of a different stylistic characteristic. In Epipsychidion Shelley develops, to its furthest extreme, his tendency to define through accumulated metaphors. He has used multiple metaphoric address earlier, for example:

> Children of a sunnier star,
> Spirits from beyond the moon,
> (An Exhortation 25-26)

> Naples! thou Heart of men . . .
> . . . . . .
> Elysian City, which is calm enchantest
> . . . . . .
> Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
> (Ode to Naples Strophe I, 52-56)
>
> Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine,
> Mere wheels of work and articles of trade,
> (Q.M. V.76-77)

Now, however, the outpouring of metaphor is the means of defining the two worlds treated in the poem. In the same way that positive and negative visions are revealed through the positive and negative key words, triads, and series of earlier works, the successions of metaphor upon metaphor which define Emily, define, as well, that which is not Emily.

The coldly real world to which the poet is consigned without Emily is metaphorically realized as the stated or implied contrast to all that Emily represents. While Emily is compared to a well of "sealed and secret happiness," the non-Emily world is one of "dissonance and gloom" (58-60). While the permanent position of a star represents the permanence of the Emily world, the movement of the heavens suggests the flux of the negative real world (60-61). She is the "smile," while earthly existence without her is a world of "dark frowns" (62). She is the "gentle tone" in an unregenerated world of "rude voices" (62-63).

It is in the opening metaphor of the captive bird that this pattern of contraries is enunciated. The

conflict between Emily, the singing bird, and the "unfeeling bars" (1.14), against which she beats vainly, asserts the central tension of the poem. The poet will imitate the bird's (Emily's) attempt ("It oversoared this low and worldly shade") (16), and by means of his poem, analogous to the "bright plumes of thought" (15) in which Emily's heart seeks freedom, reach the freedom of a renewed world, an "Eden of the purple East" (417). That both the poet and Emily, as bird, will fail in their efforts is made clear in the description of the bird's shattered heart and "wounded breast" (17), which anticipates the expiring poet of the poem's closing. The effort to reach a millenial height ends in defeat.

His purpose has been to realize in this "lampless" world the "Glory" (26) of the transcendent world represented by Emily. (Light imagery again carries associations with both ideal and biblical divinity.)[13] Emily symbolizes a "Sweet Benediction" in the "eternal Curse" (25) of outer reality and is to this earth as the moon to the clouds (27). She represents the possibilities of life in contrast with the "Dead" of a non-millenial world (27-28). Only through union with her, the living symbol of the other world, may the distance between earth and heaven be bridged. Emily is the means by which the negative reality, the "woe" of this world, may be destroyed

(She is "A violet shrouded grave of Woe") (1.69). As the accumulated metaphors indicate, Emily exists as both symbol of the beauties of a transcendent world order which could be reproduced on earth (the millenial vision) and as the means to that re-creation. Union with her makes renewal possible for she is a figure of regeneration:

> A vision like incarnate April, warning
> With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
> Into his summer grave.
> (121-123)

Although the metaphors carry the chief burden of defining the two worlds of Shelley's poem and Emily's relation to them, syntactic patterns which in earlier works have borne the burden of definition are not abandoned. Emily is defined, for example, in familiar triads as a combination "Of light, and love, and immortality!" (24), "light, life, peace" (75), and "Spring and Youth and Morning" (120). The renewed world is also defined negatively, through the absence of evil in a noun series:

> It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
> Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
> Upon its mountain-peaks;
> (461-463)

The unregenerate world, a triad of "dead, blank, cold air" (92), renders the battling votaries of the new world "Wounded and weak and panting" (274). Adjectives and abstractions are, as in earlier works, framed as oppositions ("Evil from good; misery from happiness") (175),

but they represent in this work only a minor expression of the basic conflict, portrayed largely through accumulations of metaphor.

These accumulations are a significant factor in the notable speed and hurry of Epipsychidion. Syntactical form helps to express the urgency that Shelley attaches to the move from the inherited earthly world to a regenerated existence. Successive groups of defining metaphors are often structured so as to increase the intensity which their sequential pattern already allows them. For example, in the following quotation each of the first two lines carries only one identification of Emily and the non-Emily world, but in the lines that follow that burden is increased to two and finally three metaphoric apostrophes, suggesting an increase in urgency:

> Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
> Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
> Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
> Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
> Thou Wonder, and Thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
> (25-30)

In a later sequence thirteen proposed metaphorical equivalents for Emily gain intensity through proximity and the "understood" repetition of the interrogative which frames them. The insistence of the opening "Art thou not . . .?" (56) lends didactic emphasis to the metaphors which follow:

> Art thou not void of guile
> A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?
> A well of sealed and secret happiness, etc.
> (156-158)

The speed of these metaphoric flights is emphasized by sudden descents which follow the various attempts to reach desired renewal. In this pattern of rise and fall we find the equivalent of the syntax of ebb and flow that marks Hellas and the Odes. The breathless buildup of forward energy in the Emily metaphors (53-69) ends in descent:

> . . . I measure
> The world of fancies, seeking one like thee
> And find--alas! mine own infirmity.
> (69-71)

Similarly, the Emily description (75-110) that is followed by a brief metaphoric accumulation (112-113) ends in exclamation and questioning designed to threaten our confidence in the outcome of the poet's quest and to call our attention to his vulnerability:

> A vision like incarnate April, warning
> With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
> Into his summer grave.
> Ah woe is me!
> What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
> Shall I descend, and perish not?
> (121-125)

In answer to this last question Shelley attempts to secure his footing on the bridge which leads to the millenium in all his works. Because love is the path to renewal, it is through a poetic definition of love (which we discussed earlier as evidence of Emily's creative influence on the poet) (148-189) that he makes another attempt at ascent. Beginning in a relatively controlled tone,

he equates the traditional restrictions of marriage with a death-in-life existence (147-159), and then likens love to understanding and imagination, expressing at this point, largely through syntactical manipulation, a growing excitement. The new thought, imagination, crowds out its predecessors in mid-line and requires five run-on lines of description in repeated prepositional phrases, finally insisting upon its powers in a compound predicate reinforced by end rhyme:

> Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
> Gazing on many truths; tis like thy light,
> Imagination! which from earth and sky,
> And from the depths of human fantasy,
> As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
> The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
> Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
> Of its reverberated lightning.
> (162-169)

The tone of didactic insistence persists in a five line condemnation (169-174) of restrictions, which reassert in relentless parallels the main point of the argument. Couched in a subtle reversal of expected syntax, the predicate adjective "narrow" attracts attention in its initial placement and acts as the (understood) modifier of four nominatives. The central point, narrowness, is reinforced once again in the word "sepulchre," here a metaphor for the death of the soul through suffocation.

> Narrow
> The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
> The life that wears, the spirit that creates
> One object, and one form, and builds thereby
> A sepulchre for its eternity.
> (169-173)

Biography is then summoned to underline his desperate need for Emily. In this third section Shelley, like Dante in the Vita Nuova (to which Shelley's preface refers), ". . . narrates the events and emotions which led him to compose."[14] The syntax reflects his vain efforts to leap into a millenial future. Parallel clauses affirm previous bursts of energy:

> Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
> I sprang, as one sandled with plumes of fire,
> And towards the lodestar of my desire,
> I flitted, like a dizzy moth . . .
> (217-220)

This account comes to rest in the qualification that expresses his failure, "But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,/Passed . . ." (225-226).

This initial disappointment is recalled in many subsequent (apparently biographical) attempts to make contact with his visionary love, all of which further the poem's pattern of ascent and descent. Each fresh experience is, in millenial terms, a reassertion of hope, the key element in the millenial vision. No success is achieved, however, until the figure symbolized by the spirit of the moon appears and creates, for a short while, a resolution to the poet's conflict. Heaven and earth are then temporarily joined; ". . . until all was bright/ Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind," (288-289). The momentary millenium almost immediately proves illusory,

however, and the poem returns to the present encounter with Emily.

His spirit, following prophetic tradition, is "called" (338). Penetrated by the biblical "small, still, sweet spirit . . ." (331), he is sufficiently activated by Emily's presence to venture another direct attempt to reach the millenium. A reorganization of the major forces in his personal universe will now be necessary. This new energy expresses itself syntactically through the vigorous imperatives and action verbs of the fourth section (345-387). A rapid succession of repeated elements transmits his excitement, and enjambed lines drive the reader forward:

> Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
> This world of love, this me; and into birth
> Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
> Magnetic might into its central heart;
> And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
> (345-349)

Lest we be inclined to a long breath at the end of line 348, the initial "And" of line 349 indicates that the compound predicate is not yet complete. Although syntactical sense demands this breathless reading through 358, there is no confusion. Shelley maintains syntactical control, despite frenzy, through the steady recurrence of two nouns in each line, a strong element of balance and unity. "Fruits and flowers" (347) and "billows and mists" (349) join the noun pairs marked below:

> By everlasting laws, and each wind and tide;
> To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
> And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
> Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
> (347-353)

There is no true pause in the intensity of fervor until the summation that ties together the various functions of moon and sun announces the "end" (359) of the analogy. Then, crisp, confident commands support the general directive to "Govern my sphere of being" (361), and the passage closes with a reiteration of the wish for a millenial regeneration ("a brighter bloom") (367):

> And all their many-mingled influence blend,
> If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;--
> So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway
> Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
> Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
> Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
> And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
> From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
> Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
> Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
> (358-367)

Although much of Epipsychidion races toward the millenium at fever-pitch, we find intervals of curbed excitement which suggest a deliberate effort to tighten the reins of the poet's fervor. A syntactical pattern emerges which communicates the poet's inner tensions. He turns to concrete facts, delivered in discrete units, as if a clear and concise statement of the factual situation will lend his cause greater plausibility. However, these intervals, which give the impression of conscious exertions of control,

are not sustained. Each impulse toward composure soon yields to the overwhelming intensity of his feelings, lapsing into the familiar syntax of speed and fervency. Alternations of syntax express the poet's struggle with his emotions.

The invitation to union begins anew, for example, in short balanced clauses that follow his attempt at re-ordering his earthly universe to include the sun (Emily):

> The hour is come:--the destined Star has risen
> Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
> The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
> The sentinels-but true Love never yet
> Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
> (394-398)

However, associations stirred by the leap of true love return us, in a rush of millenial excitement, to the familiar level of high tension and incessant movement, expressed here in repeated phrases and series.

> Like lightning with invisible violence
> Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
> Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death
> Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
> Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
> Of arms: . .
> (399-404)

The energy of love flows rapidly to heal a triad of suffering parallel direct objects.

> For it can burst his charnel, and make free
> The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
> The soul in dust and chaos.
> (405-407)

After this outburst of affirmation, as if mastering his emotions, the poet retreats once more from the full expression of his excitement into an almost factual catalog of the conditions for departure. The pattern of one fact to each end-stopped parallel line in regular couplets suggests again a studied, objective amassing of favorable information designed to persuade Emily to implement his vision.

> A shop is floating in the harbour now,
> A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
> There is a path on the sea's azure floor,
> No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
> The halcyons brood around the foamless Isles;
> The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
> The merry mariners are bold and free;
> Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
> (407-415)

This design is maintained as the description expands from sailing conditions to considerations of their millenial island destination, and from one line to short paragraph divisons which survey the island's attractions in deliberate, highly organized fashion. Brief passages of description dwell on various attractive physical elements, such as, the skies, the seashore, and the woods, building up to the dwelling of Emily and the poet, the central feature of the isle.

At this point the poet focuses on the details of their life together. Their various activities are linked through the repeated use of the conjunction, "or," which

emphasizes the pastoral calm they share. By joining their various pastimes with "or," Shelley implies that they are equally valuable and offers a choice of tranquilities unavailable outside the millenial isle:

> We two will rise, and sit, and walk together
> Under the roof of the blue Ionian weather,
> And wander in the meadows, <u>or</u> ascend
> The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
> With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
> <u>Or</u> linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
> Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
> Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,--
> (541-548)

The repetition of "possess" begins the four enjambed lines which follow and is a clue to the return of greater syntactical excitement, although another "or" interposed at line 552 deceives us into the expectation of a more prolonged calm:

> Possessing and possessed by all that is
> Within that calm circumference of bliss,
> And by each other, till to love and live
> Be one:--or, at the noontide hour, arrive
> (549-552)

In Shelley's works, it is often word repetition that signals an alteration of pace. Introducing the breathless, high-pitched excitement of the final thirty-one lines is a repetition of "sleep." As union is to be realized, excitement in the syntax climbs to its highest peak. When intimate talk, the subject of three successive predicates and four enjambed lines, yields to physical union (560-563), thematic and syntactic energies converge in a frantic

effort to accomplish what Earl Wasserman describes as "the displacement of duality by unity."[15] This attempt is at first embodied in the repetition of "our" signifying the wished-for union:

> Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound
> And our veins beat together; and our lips
> With other eloquence than words, eclipse
> (565-567)

"Our" is quickly replaced, however, by the desired "one," in a dazzling verbal interplay of separateness and union. Repetition and alternation of the actual words "one" and "two" make the process of displacement graphic. In assertion and rejection the conflict continues, as the concept "one" gains ascendance, supported by the actual number of repetitions of the word.

> We shall become the same, we shall be one
> Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
> One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
> Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
> . . . . . .
> One hope within two wills, one will beneath
> Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death
> (573-851)

Oneness is finally the victor in four repetitions of "one" with no mention of "two".

> One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
> And one annihilation. Woe is me!
> (586-587)

Repetition of phrases has led us to a peak ready for the pause after "annihilation" (587). The words to

follow comprise the poem's final descent. We are, however, startled into an awareness of drastic change, before the poet's exclamation. The parade of "ones" has brought us, we suddenly notice, from the implication of two physical bodies ("two frames") (574) to "one annihilation" (587). We are surprised largely because "life" has been transformed into "death" without alteration of syntactical form. Lulled by the repetition and parallelism of phrases like "one passion in twin hearts" (575) and "One hope within two wills" (584), we were swept upward in the general excitement of the parallel phrase series: ". . . one death/One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality" (585-586), and did not immediately recognize where we were going. "Annihilation" (587), the last term of the series, demands our closer attention and forces us into recognition that the world which the series defines is a world of co-existing antonyms. It encompasses the contraries of life and death, heaven and hell, immortality and annihilation. We are well beyond the union of lovers in an earthly paradise.

It is possible to argue, however, in support of the contention that Shelley is referring in these lines to the fate of the lovers after death, outlined earlier in the poem:

> . . . and when years heap
> Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay
> Let us become the overhanging day,
> The living soul of this Elysian isle,
> Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
> We two will rise, and sit, and walk together.
> (536-541)

The emphasis on "one," the simultaneous experience of death (decay) and life (living) as well as the almost casual glide from death to life ("meanwhile"), all imply that Shelley's lovers in the poem's final movement have made the transition suggested above after their earthly millenium.

Whether annihilation actually follows a millenial lifetime or prematurely intercepts it, as the conclusion implies, a complete demise of the millenial vision takes place at the end of this poem. In Epipsychidion, Shelley declares that the creation of the millenium may be shifted to the world beyond this one. For the first time in his extensive treatment of the theme, death becomes the path to human fulfillment. The message he directs his words to carry is that:

> "Love's very pain is sweet,
> But its reward is in the world divine
> Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.'
> (596-598)

The conditional form, "if not here," does not allow us much hope of success on earth. Failure in an earthly attempt to build heavenly harmony no longer implies the need for

renewed future effort. The faith in future generations suggested in the scheme of The Revolt of Islam and in the renewable energies released by the "seals of assurance" in Prometheus Unbound, is absent from Epipsychidion. Failure to establish the millenium on earth now signals the postponement of the attempt until "beyond the grave." This means, of course, the death of the millenial vision, a re-creation of heaven on earth.

The power of love to build a better world is unchanged, but its chances of success are transformed from the possibilities of this world to the certainties of the next. With the death of the millenial vision, the power of poetry, the fruit of the creative imagination, is also qualified. The poet addresses his poem as "Weak Verses" (592). He has already described the failure of his words to sustain his poem (and himself) in the fire of his vision:

> Woe is me!
> The winged words on which my soul would pierce
> Into the heights of Love's rare Universe,
> Are chains of lead around its flight of fire--
> I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!
> (587-591)

His verse, now confined to the functions of consolation and comfort, is to sing of the sweetness of love's pain and of its reward in the world beyond. It has failed to

bridge the gap between the earthly and heavenly worlds and may promise harmony only after death. Symbolic of all creative exertions, the fortunes of poetry in this poem seem to suggest man's limitations in this world rather than his potential.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The biblical sources of the sister-spouse references in Epipsychidion are discussed by Earl Wasserman in Shelley: A Critical Reading pp. 419-423.

[2] David Perkins, The Quest for Permanence (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959), p. 170. Perkins states that Shelley's symbols are, in general, actually analogies.

[3] Perkins, p. 171.

[4] Love is presented as an expansion or intermingling in Prometheus Unbound. In a dream Asia reports that she,

> . . .saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
> His [Prometheus] presence flow and mingle through my blood
> Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
> And I was thus absorbed . . (P.U. II.I.79-82)

[5] Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading, p. 443

[6] Wasserman dismisses somewhat summarily the connections between the social goals of Shelley's earlier millenial visions and the personal goals in Epipsychidion. He does not give sufficient weight to Shelley's category of men described as those whose strife,

> Tills for the promise of a later birth
> The wilderness of this Elysian earth. (Epi. 188-189)

The poet-narrator of Epipsychidion is included among those tillers. Shelley clearly does not say, but Wasserman suggests that he does (p. 140), that the tillers are to be identified with the sages of the earth (Epi. II.184-185). Shelley states that the sages have extracted, from the universal truth of the expansive powers of pleasure, love, and thought (I.180), a basis for the "light of hope" (I.185). The tillers of the earth represent, however, a group larger than the sages alone.

Wasserman dismisses the poet's relationship to those who till ". . . this world of life. . ." a "garden ravaged" (p. 440) as minor.

7 C.W. Knight, The Starlit Dome: Studies in the Poetry of Vision (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1941), p. 239.

8 Knight, p. 237.

9 Wasserman, p. 427.

10 Perkins, p. 181.

11 George D. Richards, "Shelley's Urn of Bitter Prophecy," Keats-Shelley Journal, 21 (1972), 22 (1973), p. 113.

12 Albert S. Gerard, English Romantic Poetry: Ethos, Structure and Symbol in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1968), p.161.

13 Wasserman in Shelley: A Critical Reading remarks that the majority of metaphors picture Emily "as a celestial light, Shelley's persistent symbol of the immortal soul and of those perfections he associates with love and life. (p. 424).

14 Barbara Reynolds, trans., La Vita Nuova, by Dante Alighieri (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 11.

15 Wasserman, p. 459.

CHAPTER VI

THE MILLENIAL THEME IN OTHER WORKS

The Millenial Style--A Summation

Already strongly suggested in the shift of direction from Prometheus Unbound to Epipsychidion, Shelley's increasingly subjective use of the millenial theme becomes obvious in his final works. In the group of love lyrics addressed to Jane, written in 1822, fulfillment of the millenial vision is limited to individual moments of peace, harmony, and triumph over time, made possible by Jane's presence. In To Jane: The Recollection, for example, Shelley finds a momentary, highly personal calm in the quiet of the pines:

> There seemed from the remotest seas
> Of the white mountain waste,
> To the soft flower beneath our feet,
> A magic circle traced,--
> A spirit interfused around,
> A thrilling, silent life,--
> To momentary peace it bound
> Our mortal nature's strife;
> (41-48)

Jane is the ultimate source of his peace:

> And still I felt the centre of
> The magic circle there
> Was one fair form that filled with love
> The lifeless atmosphere
>
> (49-52)

The millenial moment stretches into "a sweet hour" (32) of one day isolated from past and future ("Today is for itself enough") (40) in To Jane: The Invitation. She who is the "Best and Brightest" (1), likened to a fair day, smiles on Shelley, enabling him to find ". . . one moment's good"/After long pain-- . . ." (44-45).

The same experience is repeated in Lines Written in the Bay at Lerici:

> Her presence had made weak and tame
> All passions, and I lived alone
> In the time which is our own;
> The past and future were forgot,
> As they had been, and would be, not.
>
> (22-26)

Leslie Brisman in Milton and his Romantic Heirs relates Shelley's concern with the arrest of time at this period to his interest in Faust.[1] However, it seems apparent that Shelley is treating, in these poems, another variation of his paradisal vision, drastically reduced in scope, where love, not subject to time, infuses the present with the ingredients of the millenium. s for the social order are no longer a part of the love relationship. The individual, however, may yet seek a brief paradise

if he can content himself with a quickly passing delight and is willing to pay, as Shelley suggests in Lines Written in the Bay of Lerici, a high price in suffering (ll. 37-38, 49-52).

Love, formerly the matrix of the millenial future, is associated in this poem, which George Ridenour describes as "a moving expression of Romantic disillusion,"[2] with the "delusive flame" (48) of the fisherman's lamp used to attract the fish toward the spear which will kill them. That love is now seen as delusion is a measure of the disintegration of the millenial vision.

A consideration of Shelley's millenial motif and its characteristic form within the Shelley canon as a whole must, however, be concerned with its appearance in a variety of Shelley's works which are neither obviously nor centrally concerned with his millenial vision. Often attached to apparently unlikely subjects, this motif plays minor but not unimportant roles in such works as Julian and Maddalo, Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, The Witch of Atlas, and apparently, was to be a consideration in Charles the First, which Shelley never finished.[3]

In Julian and Maddalo, for example, with its insistence upon man's potential for regeneration, the millenial motif is a source of thematic unity linking the philosophical dialogue of the opening and the central narrative of the maniac. Julian, the optimistic advocate

of the possibilities of both individual and societal development, engages the fatalist, Maddalo, in discussions "Of all that earth has been or yet may be" (43). Shelley reinforces Julian's positive outlook through a thread of observations which suggests the Edenic nature of their surroundings:

> How beautiful is sunset when the glow
> Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,
> Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy,
> Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers
> Of cities they encircle!
> (55-59)

The city itself seems to make contact with heaven:

> . . . from their many isles, in evening's gleam,
> Its temples and its palaces did seem
> Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.
> (90-92)

Later in the poem "sweet Venice" (549) is further characterized as an idyllic place in which to live, containing everything "We seek in towns, with little to recall/Regrets for the green country" (557-558).

In stark contrast stands the madhouse ("A windowless, deformed and dreary pile") (101) designated by Maddalo as the symbol of earthly reality:

> . . . the emblem and the sign
> of what should be eternal and divine!
> (121-122)

Julian, unable to accept Maddalo's pessimism, defends, in spirited millenial style of parallel and triad, man's capacity for release from the madhouse:

> . . . it is our will
> That thus enchains us to permitted ill--
> We might be otherwise--we might be all
> We dream of happy, high, majestical.
> Where is the love, beauty, and the truth we seek
> But in our mind? . . .
> (170-175)

Undaunted by Madallo's dismissal of his viewpoint as Utopian (197), Julian continues in the same vein, alluding to the Christ-prophet and social-good motifs which we have noted in all of the poems on the salvation of the social order. He rearranges Christ's words to suggest man's untried potential:

> . . . We know
> That we have power over ourselves to do
> And suffer--what, we know not till we try,[4]
> (184-186)

Julian's beliefs are characterized by Madallo as identical to those of an old acquaintance, now housed in the madhouse mentioned earlier. Madallo declares to Julian,

> . . . I knew one like you
> Who to this city came some months ago,
> With whom I argued in this sort, and he
> Is now gone mad,-- . . .
> (195-195)

Julian (who defines religion as the faith of "those who suffer with their suffering kind" [190]) and the maniac are thus identified with the role of the suffering servant of mankind, whose faith in man and willingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of others are untouched by the afflictions to which he is exposed.

Anaphora and a clustering of series and triad forms indicate the syntactical excitement which accompanies this recurrent millenial theme:

> Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry;
> Or with my silence sanction tyranny;
> Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain
> In any madness which the world calls gain,
> Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern
> As those which make me what I am; or turn
> To avarice or misanthropy or lust . . .
> (362-368)

The madman experiences the miseries of the downtrodden (". . . pain and insult, unrest and terror") (327) through the betrayal of his beloved which blots from his brain all things "fair/And wise and good" (480-481).[5] However, like Prometheus, he meets hate with love, and scorn with tears (496). He is dedicated to the social love which is the core of the Christ motif and the key to the millenial future, without which the social order remains the dismal caricature of human potential symbolized by the madhouse. The maniac is portrayed as one,

> Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
> For woes which others hear not, and could see
> The absent with the glance of phantasy,
> And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,
> Following the captive to his dungeon deep;[6]
> (444-448)

As we have seen in Epipsychidion, Prometheus Unbound and The Revolt of Islam, romantic love is the form which social love assumes in the personal life of the

poet-prophet-hero. The maniac is tortured by the irony of his situation. That he, who offered so much love to his fellow beings, should be destroyed by the cruelty of his beloved is an unbearable distortion of events. Love, the means of redemption, is now the means of destruction to the would-be redeemer. The path that should lead to the millenium (both personal and social) ends, instead, in the madhouse. Love has led "astray to misery" (349) and, contrary to its usual fruits, has brought forth hell (440-441).[7] As the absence of the will to suffer with and love others perpetuates a negative social reality, so, according to Shelley, a betrayal by love can doom an individual to the real or figurative miseries of the madhouse. The agony of the unloved madman is described in the repetitions and triads of the millenial style which Shelley uses to describe the agonies of a world awaiting regeneration:

> But that I cannot bear more altered faces
> Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
> More misery, disappointment, and mistrust
> To own me for their father . . .
> (312-315)

This question of the relationship between the personal and social millenium is pertinent also to Shelley's purpose in Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills, where a failure to consider the conclusion from the perspective of Shelley's overall treatment of the millenial motif can

lead to misinterpretation. George D. Richards, for example, describes the narrator's yearning for refuge at the end of this poem as "a whimper and a sigh," a mere evasion of truth that he [Shelley] could not bear to accept, an "escaping into daydreams."[8] He criticizes The Euganean Hills as structurally weak, stating that ". . . after his [Shelley's] incisive attacks on corruption in the heart of the poem, his yearning for a place to secrete himself in the woods comes as a feeble anticlimax."[9] To demonstrate that the "windless bower" (344) desired by the narrator is by no means to be dismissed as daydream or escapism, but is rather a microcosm of the millenial world, Shelley's object in all of the poems included in this study, it is necessary to examine the fundamental historical assumptions of the poem.

The opening metaphor of the lone and loveless mariner who has lost his own power of direction and drifts on the sea of misery "To the haven of the grave" (26) is followed by a political-historical consideration of the uncertain destinies of the Italian cities of Venice and Padua. Little optimism is to be found in Shelley's appraisal of the immediate future in a conditional syntax.[10]

> But if Freedom should awake
> In her omnipotence, and shake
> From the Celtic anarch's hold
> All the keys of dungeons cold,
> . . . . . .

> If not, perish thou and they!--
> Clouds which stain truth's rising day
> By her sun consumed away--
> Earth can spare ye. . .
> (150-163)

There is, however, implicit in Shelley's view of history, the familiar consolation of the long-range future (discussed at length in The Revolt of Islam). In the prospect of succeeding generations, he finds new hope and new possibilities for a decayed land;

> . . . while like flowers,
> In the waste of years and hours,
> From your dust new nations spring
> With more kingly blossoming.
> (163-166)

Time as well as man must be ready for the millenial leap. There are periods in history when man must wait, for the moment has not yet come. The Euganean Hills is concerned with just such a period. Shelley declares that "changes follow Time" (255), but the poem's protagonist whose suffering, like that of the maniac in Julian and Madallo, combines personal (31-44) and social concerns, is caught in a period of historical stagnation, unable to interfere directly in the course of events. His yearning for both a personal and social millenium is channeled into the wish to create within "a calm and blooming cave" (342) a "windless bower," (344) a miniature of the future.

Shelley emphasizes that this "dell" (346) amid hills and forest is not merely a personal Eden, but functions

as a means of advancing the millenium for all. He affirms his bower's ability to heal (355) those men, the anarchs who threatened Venice, for example, who pollute (356) the earth and prevent its regeneration. Within the confines of the paradisal bower which the poem proposes, the rage of the "polluting multitude" (356) ". . . would be subdued/By that clime divine and calm" (357-358), and encircled by "the love which heals all strife" (366). Contact with the poet's personal millenium would engender, finally, a chain reaction among all men (370-372), causing an alteration in the movement of history and inaugurating the millenium (373). Far from wishing for what George Richards calls "a place to secrete himself in the woods,"[11] Shelley is contemplating another way to contribute to his millenial goal.

Although the tone of the conclusion may assume the playful accents of the Witch of Atlas (370-373), the conception of the positive influence of virtuous examples is a part of Shelley's very serious treatment of the prophet-hero as activator of the millenial vision. The narrator's imaginative achievement of a pure and happy personal existence affords proof that such human heights are possible. In his way, the Euganean Hills poet thus fulfills the function of Laon and Cythna who, through their prophetic leadership, are living proof of

both the millenial ideal and its future. The bower seen from this perspective may be equated with the spark in Shelley's metaphor of the Norway woodsman, from which rise flames to threaten the dark sky of tyranny (269-279). Contrary to any notion of escape, the conclusion of The Euganean Hills permits the re-integration of the individual (who is, at the beginning of the poem, isolated from his fellows) with the social order.

It should be noted, however, that the prophet-poet hero who is to contribute to the advance of the social order must feel loved (in the romantic sense) before he can express his social love. The bower must be the home of harmonious personal relationships before it can extend its influence to the social sphere. The same pattern exists in Julian and Maddalo where the maniac, although dedicated to social good, is incapacitated for social service by his mistress's cruelty toward him. Because Shelley sees social love as rising with and from romantic love, the idea of social regeneration expressed in the millenial vision of his poetry is generally accompanied by some manifestation of romantic love, as in The Revolt and Prometheus Unbound. Conversely, a poem principally about romantic love, such as Epipsychidion, will also express social concerns.

The millenial vision receives light-hearted and humorous treatment when it is examined from the viewpoint

of divinity looking downward on unregenerated earth, in The Witch of Atlas. His elusive and complex goddess, defined by C.W. Knight as a symbol of poetic consciousness,[12] exercises among other powers the ability to transform earthly life into the millenial ideal. Able to "imparadise" savage natures (VII.104), she tames wild beasts (VI.92-93) and beats swords to plowshares (645). The witch, who can penetrate to the soul of others like Cythna of The Revolt of Islam, works miraculous changes in human nature, and rewards those she finds beautiful of soul with an indeterminate state of immortality (LXXI.609-616), similar to that which awaits virtue's votaries in Queen Mab. Also reminiscent of Queen Mab is the witch's analysis of earth's problems, for the curse of "gold and blood" (XVIII.191), along with religion and custom, is denounced as the chief source of human misery (LXII).

The historical premise in this poem is the underlying millenial outlook which we have explored in other works on this theme. His original condition of peace and tranquility has been lost to man, but may be regained. Within the witch's cave is information similar to the seals of assurance in Prometheus Unbound. They are the scrolls:

> Which taught the expiations at whose price
> Men from the Gods might win that happy age
> Too lightly lost . . .
> (XVIII.187-189)

Were men able to utilize the power lodged in the witch's scrolls, they would build a millenium with unlimited potential for development in all spheres. Through wisdom, a key word in earlier visions, man would control "all things that seem untameable" (XIX.193), including his own will (XIX.197). It is then that love's fullest powers would be revealed.

We are told that the wandering witch is young and will mature in time, but given no hope that she will ever change the earth permanently. She apparently often finds the climate uncongenial to her needs, for she constantly seeks havens from bad weather, fleeing from wintry whirlwinds, at one point to a well of liquid fire surrounded by flowering asphodel (symbolic of fame) (XXIX.276). At these times she suggests the figure of the poet withdrawn from an unsympathetic contemporary climate to his rightful sphere of eternity until time unfolds the riches of his work, as it will eventually unfold opportunities for millenial advance.[13] Trying to elude her enemies, the "spirits of the tempest" (XLVIII.432), she hides in another haven which ". . . was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven" (L.448). From this heavenly retreat she descends to earth to play the pranks, which, if sustained and extended, would result in a paradisal earth.

All of the witch's millenial activity takes place, we should note, in a state of calm far removed from the

urgent franzy that marks the millenial theme in most of the works already discussed. Because she exists in a non-human dimension, she is able to keep "The tenour of her contemplations calm" (XXVIII.271), while a witness to earthly strife. She can work millenial changes and need not struggle for them. The lines of this poem, in contrast to the breathless enjambed style discussed in other works, are described by Knight as terse, finished, almost abrupt,[14] forming compact stanzas which usually constitute completed statements.[15] The triad and series patterns, are here likely to be used in instances of single and obvious purpose, such as the piling up of exotic materials to suggest the mysterious and wonderful cave of the witch:

> While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece
> Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;
> (XXVII.256)

Parallelism, similarly, is used for specific single effects rather than as a basic syntactical expression of excitement. For example, parallel form suggests the continuous flow of nature spirits in the procession held in the witch's honor in stanza X:

> And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
> And every shepardess of Ocean's flocks, etc.
> . . . . . .
> (X.121-122)

As this quotation implies, the various syntactical characteristics of what we have called Shelley's millenial

style are not exclusively limited to expressing his millenial concerns. His syntax is generally swift, often enjambed, inclined toward parallel constructions and scattered with triads and series. What this study suggests about Shelley's style, however, is that all of the stylistic characteristics mentioned above are likely to appear with notable frequency within relatively short spaces when Shelley is treating themes related to the struggle for the millenium. At these points in his poetry, the combination of such characteristics shapes the material into a distinctive mold marked by typical recurring motifs and images, often biblical in context and sometimes in form.

Forceful, energetic and didactic, his syntax supports his theme, as in the following quotation from the unfinished Charles The First, which deals directly with the Puritan's determination to make "Heaven's Kingdom . . . descend on earth" (III.28). This one passage may serve to summarize many of the various techniques and motifs already associated with the millenial theme in other works. A negatively intended opening noun series (I.151-152), followed by familiar aphoristic parallel lines thrust at pride and pomp (154-155) with echoes in lines 159-162, is identified in a series of phrases with the inequities of earthly life:

> Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
> Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
> On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows,
> Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
> Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
> These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
> Who toil not, neither do they spin,--unless
> It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
> Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
> The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
> The tithe that will support them till they crawl
> Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health
> Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
> Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want
> And England's sin by England's punishment.
> (l.151-165)

Several biblical allusions, including a reference in triad and series form to the anti-mask as a prophetical sign (l.168) (already discussed in connection with the child symbolism of The Revolt of Islam), complete a passage which reflects the millenial motif in both form and content:

> And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
> Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
> At once the sign and the thing signified--
> A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
> Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,
> Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins
> And rotten hiding holes . . .
> (l.166-172)

. . . . . .

It is this Shelleyan voice that we have called millenial. From his distinctive treatment of the vision of a millenium for the social order grows a recognizable and arresting poetic voice heard in the variations already described, throughout much of his poetry.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Leslie Brisman, Milton's Poetry of Choice and its Romantic Heirs, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973) p. 133.

[2] George Ridenour, ed., Romantic Poetry, Prentice-Hall Periods of English Literature Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973), p. 455.

[3] Ode to the West Wind which is not directly concerned with the expression of a millenial vision, is, however, related to Shelley's poems on the salvation of the social order in its development of the prophet-theme, so often a part of the millenial motif. In part IV there are, as well, structural resemblances to Hellas, The Odes to Liberty and Naples and Epipsychidion. Beginning in a conditional syntax with repeated If clauses, the fourth section likens the poet to various prophet symbols, the wave, the cloud, and the dead leaves. Once again, the prophet's words are the source of new life:

> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like the withered leaves to quicken a new birth
> (63-64)

The wind, whom the poet resembles, ("one too like thee; tameless and swift and proud") is addressed in a series of spirited imperatives--"make me thy lyre" (57) "Be thou my . . . spirit" (61-62), Be thou me (62), "Drive my dead thoughts" (63) "Scatter my words . . ." (67). The confident ascent of these commands drops away (a familiar pattern) in the relative descent of the final question, which only the wind may answer:

> Oh wind
> If winter comes, can Spring be far behind?
> (69-70)

Available for interpretation as a divinity symbol in several millenial poems, the wind is in this poem overtly identified as a universal spirit. It suggests once again that aspect of divinity which is the impulse of historical movement. As a symbol of historical time, the wind is seen as both "Destroyer and preserver" (14) because it is able to supercede or destroy the past in preparation for a new and better order. This destruction is, however, at the same time, a preservation of values and meaning that had been lost by man early in his history when he swerved from his natural, originally destined historical path.

4 Cf. Shelley's use of Christ's words in Prometheus Unbound noted above (chap. III, p. 90).

5 Earlier (P.U., The Revolt), these words were used to define categories or groups of men.

6 A New Testament reference to John

7 Hell is defined in the familiar series pattern: "Of the mind's hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair:" J. and M. 144).

8 George Richards, "The Urn of Bitter Prophecy," Keats-Shelley Journal, 21 (1972), 22 (1973), 117.

9 Richards, p. 117.

10 Both the syntax and diction are reminiscent of the Odes to Naples and Liberty.

11 George Richards, "The Urn of Bitter Prophecy," p. 117.

12 C.W. Knight, The Starlit Dome, p. 227.

13 Here, perhaps the witch is following Shelley's counsel for the poetry of Peacock in The Letter to Maria Gisborne to:

> Fold itself up for the serener clime
> Of years to come, and find its recompense
> In that just expectation.
> (L. M. G. 245-247)

14 C.W. Knight, p. 225.

15 C.W. Knight, p. 226.

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